

Harwood Park Neighborhood Improvement Association Notes
Thursday, September 9, 2004, 7-8 pm, Harwood Park United Methodist Church Hall
Betsy McMillion, Chaired Meeting

Thank You: Linda Grimes, Ron Godfrey, M. Pauline Lisle, Jennifer Hagler, Leo & John Neault, Jozsette Cunningham, Betty on Loudon Avenue, and the One Stop Shop for allowing us to post community signs on their properties; Leo Neault for all his help at the picnic and lending us his folding tables for the desserts; Tracy Lowe for handling our 50/50 drawing to raise funds and keeping track of our association's money; Gwenn Bowers for helping everyone sign in; Jill Lloyd for securing the hall for us; Tim Raines & Mary Runkles for monitoring our neighborhood park; Candace Funk for leading the fight against new duplexes in our neighborhood; Tracy Lowe, Leo Neault, Dave Theilman & Jill Lloyd for helping with set up and/or clean up of these meetings; members of the Harwood Park United Methodist Church for their generosity in letting us use their hall for our community meeting, neighbors who share community news to other neighbors, and especially those of you who give donations to our association (pay for copying handouts, neighborhood signs, etc.).

Guests: (1) The Honorable Chris Merdon, Councilman for District 1, and his assistant, Terry Chaconas, (2) Howard Johnson, The Gables Community, Elkridge & Spokesman for Citizens Against the current development plan for the old drive-in property & (3) other Elkridge community representatives

Updates:

A total of \$8 was collected from the sale of 50/50 chances for our association fund.

GECA update. Dave Grabowski reported that the next GECA meeting would be held on Thursday, October 23, at the Norbel School. They will have a candidates' forum for the upcoming election.

Harwood Park Picnic. The picnic was held on Sunday, August 15, after being postponed previously because of rain. There were approximately 50 participants. Sam "The Muleman" Miller sang songs with his guitar. Candace Funk was voted by majority as "Harwood Park's Best Dessert Maker" and was presented an award for her pink surprise dessert. Her winning recipe and picture will appear in the next issue of the VIADUCT newspaper. Games were played: pillow case race, egg toss, drip, drip drop game, and other games with prizes for the children. This was a great day for all!

Park Clean Up. Please join us for our park clean up on Saturday, Sept. 11, located off Woodburn Avenue. Any neighbors who have children that are girl or boy scouts, please feel free to bring them and their troops to help, or anyone who needs "community service" hours! The last clean up of the year is scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 13. Please bring your work gloves, rake, broom, shovel, trimmers, hand-garden tools and any other kind of tool you can imagine to help us with this cleanup. If any of you have bags of mulch or flowers to donate, please bring them and THANK YOU.

Harwood Park Halloween party. It was suggested that we have a community Halloween party. Volunteers are needed to coordinate the event. The Halloween party was cancelled due to no willing volunteers.

Neighborhood crime update. There were numerous incidents of crimes/accidents in Harwood Park recently: (1) Armed robbery. According to the police, "A robbery was reported on August 24 at 11:15 PM. Three teens trespassing in the park after hours were robbed by two male blacks driving a small white, 4-door vehicle." (2) Automobile accident on Loudon/Highland Ave. Driver of one of the vehicles had drugs in their vehicle. (3) Bike theft (from our Hanover neighbors) and (4) Neighbor had 3 bags of mulch, box with a drill inside and a car battery (inside their car) that was stolen. Via an e-mail, one of our neighbors, George Martin offered to distribute a flier around to our neighbors alerting them to the crimes and hopefully can do this soon. We asked Chris Merdon to help us encourage the police department to give us some more presence in our neighborhood.

Harwood Park barter book. Gail Sigel is working on the book. She has been delayed because of work commitments.

Loudon Avenue bridge project update. According to county engineer, "should be opened by end of September." The County is putting pressure on contractor to finish as soon as possible.

Variance hearing update (Melrose and Euclid Avenues) – no information received to date.

Traffic light update. The light on US Route 1 and Loudon Avenue should be working by end of month per Samuel de Laurence, from the State Highway Administration. He answered our question about how the light was to be timed: "I am not sure at this time exactly how much green time the side roads will be given (usually developed days before the signal is turned on by a computer program that analyzes traffic volumes). There are sensors in the road that will tell the signal when cars are waiting on the side roads. After US Route 1 has its turn, which can vary depending on the volume detected by the side road sensors. The traffic signal should be very responsive to changes in the traffic volumes. I anticipate the signal will function in the full color mode from early in the morning (5 or 6 am) until the evening (9 or 10 pm). It will flash during the night and into the early morning. We will review the intersection after it is turned on to verify that the signal timing is efficient, and of course, we always appreciate the input of motorists who use the intersection daily."

Proposed duplex development. The first plan (submitted by the developer) for the proposed duplex housing development off Highland and Forest Avenues was rejected by the County. However, the developer may resubmit another plan.

Wanted. Old (ten years or more) pictures or stories about Harwood Park or Elkridge are wanted for our web site. Marie Vane brought us a copy of a 1982 newspaper article by Helen Voris on Harwood Park; she also had an old picture of Washington Boulevard, which will appear in the next issue of the VIADUCT.

Meeting. Neighbors were encouraged to attend a meeting to be held with the Dept. of Planning & Zoning officials on Wednesday, September 29, at 2 pm, in the George Howard

Building in the Howard County Office Complex in Ellicott City. We will meet at the Planning & Zoning Office. We invited Councilman Merdon to attend.

Opposition to US Route 1 Development. Howard Johnson gave an overview of the proposed housing/business complex for the old Drive-In Property (the large empty property across from the McDonalds off US Route 1). He is involved with a group of Elkridge residents from different communities that have come together to fight this development that will dramatically affect the US Route 1 area and the Elkridge community.

Councilman Merdon speaks. Chris Merdon talked about the County's comprehensive rezoning process and his views on the rezoning along US Route 1. He was surprised that so many Elkridge residents were opposed to the rezoning that was approved to allow multi-family housing be built along the US Route 1 corridor in Elkridge. He stated that he had only heard from a few people that were opposed to the revised zoning during the comprehensive zoning process. Mr. Merdon said that he would support our neighborhood to stop the in-fill development but we needed to contact other neighbors to get more input. Specifically, he suggested that we ask people if they would prefer: (1) two lot minimum on any new homes being built, (2) no duplexes allowed, or (3) keep things the way they are (one lot minimum per house is allowed, along with duplexes on any two adjoining lots). An e-mail will be sent to our community e-mail list (and phone calls will be made to others that do not have e-mail) on our neighborhood list to obtain feedback on the community's preference before the September 29 meeting.

DATES TO REMEMBER:

Sat., Sept. 11 – Park Clean up off Woodburn Ave. - 9 am

Sat., Nov. 13 – Park Clean Up off Woodburn Ave. - 9 am

Next meeting will be on the 2nd Thursday of the month, on October 14, 2004, at 7 pm, at the Harwood Park Methodist Church hall