

College Gardens Civic Association
2012 Spring Meeting – May 23, 2012

Minutes

CGCA President Tom Miner called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

Radon: President Tom Miner said that as a realtor, he's aware that some neighbors are discovering radon in their basements when they sell their homes and the buyer asks for a radon test. Tom will pull together information on simple radon tests and remediation and distribute it by email.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Don Mann reported that CGCA has \$10,098 in the bank and has spent \$125 since the fall meeting, on renting the room for this meeting and on signs advertising the Rockville Mayor and Council candidates' debate the civic association co-hosted last fall. He said \$5,000 of the total is money donated by Karen Carp to fund regular biodiversity studies of the Colleges Gardens Pond. (More details below.)

Election of officers: Each of the current officers was nominated to serve a second two-year term: President, Tom Miner; Vice President, Susan VanGrack; Secretary, Kathy Goldgeier; Treasurer, Don Mann. All four were re-elected unanimously. Their terms will expire in the spring of 2014.

Stream Restoration Update: John Hollida, an engineer for the City of Rockville Department of Public Works, reported on plans to repair three storm drain outfalls in the Upper Watts Branch Park Forest Preserve that runs through Woodley Gardens and College Gardens, and to study whether other outfalls also need improvement. Outfalls, near Azalea, Astor and Princeton Place were identified in a 2001 watershed study as needing repairs, which are scheduled to begin in the fall of 2014. The recent stream improvements adjacent to the lower Woodley Gardens Park ball field were part of the same project. At issue is the erosion around the concrete outfalls that allows nutrients and sediment to flow into the Chesapeake Bay, and erosion that widens the stormwater channels and carries water too close to private property. Hollida said the trees and Native American artifacts in the stream bed are always taken into consideration.

Three College Gardens residents serve on the task force that is helping to assess conditions in the stream valley and decide on other repairs: Paul O'Brien, Jim Carleton and Lou Marinelli, as well as CGCA President Tom Miner. For more information on the stream program and to see photos and task force meeting minutes, go to <http://www.rockvillemd.gov/residents/publicworks/wattsbranch.html>.

Pond Biodiversity Study: Thanks to \$1,000 from the City of Rockville and a \$5,000 gift to the civic association from CG resident Karen Carp, the College

Gardens ponds has been surveyed twice—once before the park renovation and once afterward—to measure its plant, bird, animal and invertebrate biodiversity. Chris Hakenkamp, who performed the two studies, reported that whereas the old pond had poor water clarity, a few species of pollution-tolerant invertebrates and only two types of shoreline plants, the new pond is teeming with wildlife. The new pond is much bigger, with 130 meters of shoreline and vegetation that extends three or four feet into the water, creating a much greater habitat. The pH balance is good; the water is much cleaner and reaches a depth of six feet.

The only negative findings are goldfish, which presumably came from someone dumping their aquarium into the pond, and 1-centimeter-long leeches, which could have been carried there by birds, turtles or frogs.

Hakenkamp's conclusion is that the new pond is a big improvement in biodiversity and while it is not yet as diverse as you'd expect in a mature suburban pond, it is well on its way.

City Council member and College Garden resident Mark Pierzchala noted that the College Gardens Park redesign has won seven awards, at the city, county, state and national level.

Website and Listserv: Tom Miner thanked outgoing webmaster Marshall Fisher and new webmaster Jerry Callistein, who has redesigned the website, at www.collegegardens.org. Please visit the website for civic association bylaws, meeting minutes and newsletters; historical information about the neighborhood; a link to the Garden Club of College Gardens; and neighborhood news. To add your name to the private civic association email list to receive neighborhood news, email Tom Miner at Tom.Miner@longandfoster.com. To join the College Gardens Yahoo group to share suggestions or ask questions among neighbors, send an email to collegegardens-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Directory: It is time to update the College Gardens neighborhood directory, which is done every two years. The cost will remain \$5 for one copy and \$3 for a second copy. Block captains will be knocking on doors over the summer to update information and the new directory should be out in mid-November.

Welcoming New Neighbors: One resident asked if the civic association still greets new residents with a welcome basket. The answer is no, but Karen Carp said the Garden Club brings each new family a geranium and an invitation to join, and realtor and resident Naomi Miner said she brings new residents a civic association directory and welcome information from the city of Rockville.

National Night Out: Vice President Susan VanGrack, who chairs the annual National Night Out event at the College Gardens Park (this year: Tuesday, August 7), said ours is the biggest such event in the city and possibly in the county. She asked residents to be sure to invite any new neighbors and to promote it especially to families with children. Susan Donohue, who organized the activities for kids last year and will do so again this year, asked for more middle or high school students to help.

Rockville Summit and new construction: City Council member and neighborhood resident Mark Pierzchala said the city will hold a second “Rockville Summit” in November and invited anyone who is interested to join one of the working groups exploring how Rockville can maintain its excellence in these challenging economic times. For more information, go to <http://www.rockvillemd.gov/events/summit.html>.

Mark also said this will be the last year Hometown Holidays uses the surface parking lot across from the Regal theater in the same way because construction will begin at the end of the summer on a residential building on that spot. The building will have ground-floor retail and two floors will be a hotel run by one of the Choice Hotels brands. Choice Hotels will be headquartered in the new building going up at the corner of Middle Lane and Rt. 355. Eventually, there will be two buildings on the movie theater lot, but there are no immediate plans for the second.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
 Kathy Goldgeier
 CGCA Secretary

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