

COLLEGE GARDENS CIVIC ASSOCIATION (CGCA) MEETING MINUTES

27 MAY 2015

GENERAL MEETING

Meeting called to order at 7:02pm.

WELCOME

Jerry Callistein, President of CGCA, welcomed approximately 40 attendees. He explained there was a full agenda because CGCA did not have a meeting in the fall 2014.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Naomi Miner, CGCA Treasurer, presented. She reported that CGCA spent \$862.16 on National Night Out and CGCA has a balance of \$9351.61. Approx. \$4000 of this is reserved for a study of the CG pond. The original scientist from UMD will not continue the evaluation of the pond and so Karen Carp (who donated the money) will find another person willing to evaluate and document the pond habitat.

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT (NNO)

Volunteers are needed to help with NNO. There are many tasks including shop for groceries, cook hamburgers and hotdogs, set-up, obtain items for raffle, and kids' activities. A sheet was passed around during the meeting so attendees could sign-up to volunteer.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME

Rockville police officer Corporal Ken Matney presented useful information about safety for the neighborhood. An attendee promptly asked a question regarding the safety of homes while many neighbors are present at NNO. Officer Matney could not guarantee nothing will happen to homes, but historically there hasn't been a single issue in our neighborhood.

A question was asked about a recent armed robbery College Gardens. Cpl. Matney explained that this event was an anomaly. Three people (18 – 22 years old) in a car robbed three victims. One of the three victims knew the perpetrators and notified the police. This event was targeted specifically at the people involved. The fact that it happened to occur in College Gardens was a coincidence and not an indicator of a rise in crime in our neighborhood.

Officer Matney said that since January 2015, our neighborhood has had 8 thefts from autos (5 of the cars were unlocked, 3 others unknown); all the cars were parked at home. To prevent theft, Officer Matney emphasized that residents should not have valuables visible in their cars and should lock them when they leave. In addition, the neighborhood has had 4 vandalism incidents, 6 disorderly conduct incidents (noise), 4 traffic incidents (including 1 DUI) and 15 alarm calls (which includes the 8 thefts from cars) since the beginning of the year. College Gardens is not a drive-through neighborhood and so it has a low level of crime according to Officer Matney. The crime that does occur is usually from residents within the neighborhood. If a neighbor calls 911 for an emergency, the law enforcement officer that is closest will respond which may not be Rockville police. All calls to Rockville police are kept confidential, but one can also call anonymously. **If a resident sees suspicious activity, call the Rockville Police non-emergency phone no. 240-314-8900. Call if you see something suspicious; use your '6th sense'.** A meeting attendee commented on suspicious activity in the woods off Princeton Place. Officer Matney said he was aware of this. He said it is important to call immediately. If you wait, then it will be too late for the police to do anything about it. You can see Rockville's crime statistics report from 2014 here: <http://www.rockvillemd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/10969>

COLLEGE PLAZA UPDATE

Naomi presented. According to Combined Properties, New York Mart will open in a few weeks. The lot that used to be a gas station will be an M&T Bank with a drive-thru. Presently it is under review for a building permit. In front of College Plaza, the trees along Rt 355 were cut down by PEPCO because they were interfering with the power lines overhead. Along College Pkwy across the street from the plaza, the property belongs to the gas company and is bordered by an ugly fence. The city of Rockville does not have jurisdiction. Richard Navarro suggested that neighbors ask the company to grow vines or other vegetation along the fence. The discussion evolved and Jerry will prepare an online petition for neighbors to sign requesting the gas company replace the existing fence with a nicer looking one.

ROCKVILLE MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Susan Swift, neighbor and Director of Planning for the City of Rockville, presented. Rockville's Comprehensive Master Plan describes the broad vision for the City's future. It is the core philosophy that guides development, conservation and capital improvement projects to improve the quality of life in the Rockville community. It guides where and in what form development occurs in the community and frames the City's capital improvement projects. The Master Plan is required by law to be reviewed every 10 years in a process that typically takes 1-2 years.

The City is working hard to get as much input from our residents as it can. At the community kickoff event on May 9th, the department of Community Development and Planning Services launched a survey for Rockville residents to gather their ideas and visions for the future of Rockville. You can view the results of the survey by going to <http://www.rockvillemd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/10892>.

Currently the City is holding Listening Sessions to give residents a chance to focus on issues and opportunities specific to their neighborhoods. The listening session for College Gardens will be Tuesday, November 17 at 7:00pm at the Rockville Senior Center. You can see the full schedule of sessions at <http://rockvillemd.gov/DocumentCenter/View/11887>. From these sessions, a list of top priorities will be generated. These priorities will help guide how the City focuses its attention on traffic, recreation and, parks, housing, the environment, development, and other quality of life issues.

Rockville is at a turning point. There is no empty space for new development, so future growth will require redevelopment and re-imagining of currently built-out areas. Most of this envisioned growth will take place near the three Rockville Metro stations (Twinbrook, Town Center, and Shady Grove) with mixed-use development including mid-to high-rise housing. It is estimated that Rockville's population will increase from its current 62,000 to approximately 80,000 in 2040.

For more information, visit the Master Plan update page at <http://www.rockvillemd.gov/index.aspx?nid=203>

ROCKVILLE SOLAR CO-OP

Pieter Mumm, a member of the Sustainable Energy Committee, presented. He explained that a solar co-op is able to obtain a substantial discount on solar panels and installation, i.e. 25%. In the next few months, Rockville's solar co-op will have enough homes to move forward and evaluate bids from local installers. All projects will be completed with the single installer that was selected and lock in the discount for all homes in the co-op. Afterwards, each home can pick options for an individualized proposal. An estimation of energy savings can be found at pwatts.nrel.gov to determine whether switching to solar makes sense for your home. For more information about Rockville's solar co-op, visit <http://mdsun.org/solar-bulk-purchases/rockville/>

GARDEN CLUB OF COLLEGE GARDENS

Kathy Oehl, the incoming president of the Garden Club of College Gardens, presented. She talked about the Club's activities, such as making corsages for the residents of Collingswood Nursing & Rehabilitation Center. Speakers on a variety of gardening, floral, and environmental topic present at meetings on the second Thursday of every month. In addition, the Club maintains the vegetation on the 'hill' at College Pkwy and Nelson St. Janey Nadler mentioned that the Garden Club is selling bulbs. Go to the Garden Club's page on our website for more information (www.collegegardens.org/?p=420).

BANKSHOT BASKETBALL

Neighbor Mark Pierzchala proposed that CGCA make a donation (suggested amount of \$1000) along with other local entities for the purchase and installation of Bankshot Basketball at College Gardens Elementary School. Total cost is \$45,000. According to bankshot.com website, "Players of all ages and abilities, including disabled participants, proceed through a course of angled, curved and non-conventionally configured brightly colored backboards, banking shots off the Bankboards™ and through the rims. Bankshot™ Sports are non-aggressive and entirely inclusionary. Participants play alongside, not against, each other." It was decided that this topic will be discussed further at the November CGCA meeting.

UPDATE CGCA BY-LAWS

Karen Carp, vice president of CGCA, notified attendees that the association's by-laws are outdated. (By-laws are located on CG website.) Karen requested and got two volunteers help her update the by-laws. They will report their progress at the winter meeting. If you wish to participate, please contact Karen. You can view our current by-laws on our website at: http://collegegardens.org/?page_id=218

ROCKVILLE CITY COUNCIL PROPOSAL TO ALLOW CHICKENS

Neighbor Betty Spano is concerned about the ordinance to amend the City's animal control laws to allow chickens to be kept at private homes within city limits. Neighbors were concerned about noise and sanitation issues along with the potential impact on property values. Betty strongly encouraged attendees to notify the Mayor and Council of their opinion. Jerry will send a letter stating the CGCA "overwhelmingly" opposes chickens in Rockville. The letter and more information about the vote and its implications can be found on our website at <http://www.collegegardens.org/?p=436>

CGCA AND SOCIAL MEDIA

CGCA has three means of contacting neighbors: The College Gardens Civic Association email list (uses email addresses from our neighborhood directory), Yahoo group (informal, chatty, 100+ members) and NextDoor.com (Facebook type site for a neighborhood, 100+ members). To sign up for any of these, go to the "Contact Us" page on our website: http://www.collegegardens.org/?page_id=16

UPDATE CG DIRECTORY

Block Captains will collect information in fall 2015 and the directory will be published in spring 2016. More information and discussion about the new directory will take place at our next meeting.

OTHER

Naomi announced that a neighborhood street party featuring our local band The Digits will take place at Hard Times/Carmen's parking lot on May 30, 7 – 11 pm. A handout was available.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 8:58pm.

President Jerry Callistein 6 Duke Court Rockville, MD 20850 301-294-3630 president@collegedens.org	Vice President Karen Carp 6 Duke Court Rockville, MD 20850 301-294-4567 vicepresident@collegedens.org	Treasurer Naomi Miner 1601 Auburn Avenue Rockville, MD 20850 301-922-6476 treasurer@collegedens.org	Secretary Susan Donohue 676 College Pkwy Rockville, MD 301-340-7590 secretary@collegedens.org
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