

College Gardens Civic Association
Spring Meeting, Wednesday, May 20, 2020

Zoom Meeting – 34 participants

Tom Miner, president

Treasurer's Report:

The association earned \$1.34 in interest between May 2019 and April 2020. Current balance is \$4,334.39.

National Night Out: First Tuesday of August. A decision will be made July 1 whether the event can go forward as usual or canceled due to the coronavirus. Update: The National Night Out organization is recommending communities to celebrate on Oct 6th. See <https://natw.org>

Fall Civic Association Elections: Our civic association board is elected every two years. This fall is an election year for the board. Vice president, treasurer, and secretary are staying on, but a new president will need to be elected. Reach out to Tom or any board member if interested.

Lt. Brian Paul, Rockville City Police

King Farm has seen an increase in auto thefts, and car break-ins. KEEP CAR DOORS LOCKED! Observe people in the neighborhood. Please reach out to the Rockville police if you have even the slightest suspicion of illegal activity. The last arrest in our neighborhood was directly related to a call of a suspicious person.

One lieutenant is home, some officers have been pulled off the road in an effort to keep some officers in reserve in case of COVID-19 affecting the department.

Janet Gallant, coordinator for Don't Widen I-270:

None of the bills for the toll roads passed this session. Maryland is continuing with the public-private partnership (P3) process behind closed doors. P3 is costing approximately \$60-90 million.

The loss of revenue due to the pandemic means staff will be cut, and Gov. Hogan says there will be no funding of large construction. This adds uncertainty to the process. Toll revenues across the globe have gone down 70% during the pandemic. It is likely that the contractors will be asking to be made whole due to the loss of revenue. Any such restitution is likely to come at taxpayers' expense.

A pause of the construction project is ongoing, as no one knows how much higher tolls will have to be to make sure the contractor makes a profit. Public hearings will

be held to determine what tolls need to be set at. Given these risks and uncertainties it makes sense to put a pause to this project.

Maryland Department of Transportation will release its Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

WSSC has said it will cost \$2 billion to move its large main to accommodate the toll road project. Rates could increase as much as 277% over the next several decades. Montgomery County and Prince George's county councils have pushed back on this on behalf of its citizens.

Don'twiden270.org stated goals are:

- In favor of reversible lanes, not high-priced tolls
- Expanded transit options
- Fix the upper-270 bottleneck before moving onto widening I-270.

Go to Dontwiden270.org for mailing list and newsletter.

Speaker 3: **Mark Pierzchala, city council member**

Council has had 6 online meetings since the pandemic started. The most recent meeting passed an austere budget considering circumstances. Rockville was in excellent financial shape coming into this year. Council typically budgets conservatively, and has 23% in reserve. The April and May City budget has gotten drastically revised. Essentially the City has issued a hiring freeze. City employees will a 1% cost of living adjustment but not council members. Fiscal years 2022-2026 will be difficult to budget due to the ongoing uncertainty with the pandemic.

- Pickle ball and tennis courts are open, but not basketball courts. Summer camp determination will be made soon. MCPS distributed 60,000 Chromebooks, and added meal distribution locations since schools closed in mid-March.
- RedGate Golf Course: It will remain a park and recreation space (144 acres) as opposed to hosting a retirement home.
- Deer: pilot culling program was to take place at Redgate, but will no longer due to its heavy use as a nature park. An alternate park is under consideration as a test site.
- Vote by mail turnout went from 15% to 31% turnout. Woodley Gardens, College Gardens had 42% turnout, and West End at 36% turnout. (Plymouth Woods in a different district). City is ready for vote-by-mail ballots. Prince George and Montgomery County hit very hard by pandemic, and this encourages more people to participate without endangering voters or volunteers.

- Charter Review Commission: The Mayor and Council voted unanimously Feb. 24 to establish a commission to review the city's charter. The charter is a legal document similar to a constitution. It establishes the city's corporate limits and outlines how the city is organized and conducts business, such as holding elections, levying taxes, adopting ordinances, and providing services.

The commission will be comprised of up to 11 city residents. Each member of the Mayor and Council may choose one member. In addition, the mayor will nominate a commission chair, to be approved by the council. The Mayor and Council together will select and approve five additional members. The chair of the city's Board of Supervisors of Elections will serve as a nonvoting ex officio representative to the commission. If you are interested in being a part of the commission please submit an application via the link below.

<https://www.rockvillemd.gov/102/Charter-Review-Commission>

- Fire suppression has been installed for the King Farm Farmstead.
- Hometown Holidays has been canceled as an in-person activity. Fourth of July fireworks at King Farm also canceled.
- Vision Zero: Initiative to get pedestrian and bicycle accidents down to 0.
- The County, Not City, will determine library opening.
- Developments: On Choke Cherry Road in King Farm approximately 60 or so townhomes are going up. A new development by Clyde's on Preserve Parkway is going up with six or seven streets. Was originally to be office or business structures but became high-end residential property.
- The Garden Club's Plant sale will happen in the fall.

Video archive for this virtual Zoom meeting can be found [here](#).