

COLLEGE GARDENS CIVIC ASSOCIATION
SPRING MEETING MINUTES
MAY 12, 2021

Call to order: 7:04 p.m.

Treasurer's report (Jennifer Weiland): Bob Mills, former CGCA Treasurer, resigned because he had served two consecutive terms as the CGCA Treasurer. Jennifer Weiland (JW) was nominated to serve as Treasurer and elected by unanimous vote. The current account balance is \$4305.81.

President's report (John Mosely Hayes): John Mosely Hayes (JMH) gave the proposed agenda:

- Treasurer's report
- Police report
- Proposed bylaw changes
- College Gardens neighborhood Bulletin Board request
- CGCA's Rockville 2040 Comprehensive Master Plan improvement recommendations
- City Updates - accessory dwellings; deer management; comprehensive plan; other
- I-270 Expansion Plan Updates
- Other issues -- National Night Out on August 3rd announced and volunteers wanted

Police Report (Brian Paul): Not able to attend.

Proposed Upper Watts Branch Park-CGCA Bulletin Board (JMH): To support improved non-internet-based CGCA communication, JMH reached out to the City of Rockville to inquire if the city would research, install and maintain a proposed Upper Watts Branch Park-CGCA Bulletin Board. A favorable response from the College Gardens' Rockville City Liaison Jharman Cordero was received. The City was supportive and the Recreation and Parks Dept. recommended installing the envisioned park trail type bulletin board on the City land where the Watts Branch Preserve monument is located on the left, when on Princeton Place headed towards Fordham St. just before Columbia Ct. The City requested that the CGCA confirm/email with the residents in homes connected or across the street from the land where the bulletin board would be installed (three homes) to make sure they were OK with the proposal. [Post-meeting note: After the May 12 meeting, the CGCA sent e-mails to residents of the three homes adjacent to the land explaining the bulletin board proposal, and obtained verbal approvals from residents of two of the homes. However, after further CGCA officer communications, it was decided that due to concerns about potential unintended consequences to not pursue at this time (i.e. potential generation of trash if board was not maintained; potential non-posting of information by a future potentially non-attentive CGCA)].

Proposed Changes to By-Laws (JMH): JMH led the discussion about the proposed CGCA bylaws changes shown in the bullets 1-4 below that have been distributed to the CGCA members in several emails prior to the meeting. JMH explained that as stated in the current bylaws, 10 CGCA member petitions to make the proposed changes had been received.

1. Executive Committee can define how to give "written" announcements and information prior to Spring, Fall or Ad Hoc meetings.
2. Executive Committee is no longer expected to create and sell a paper directory but instead focus on maintaining a communications infrastructure (e.g. mixture of CGCA membership email distribution lists, Google Groups, and 'hard copy' communications when needed like block captain distributed flyers, etc...).
3. Low Biannual Association dues amount is to be set by the Executive Committee (e.g. \$10 in 2021).
4. Association expenditure approval requirement raised from \$500 to \$1000. [Historically the biggest CGCA expense has been the annual National Night Out pot-luck gathering, where the CGCA has rented equipment (i.e. grill; delivery cleaning), provided food, water and desert, for an expense of more than \$800.]

The main topic of discussion was the second proposed bylaws change, "Executive Committee is no longer expected to create and sell a paper directory but instead focus on maintaining a communications infrastructure (e.g. mixture of CGCA membership email distribution lists, Google Groups, and 'hard copy' communications when needed like block captain distributed flyers, etc...)."

- Several meeting participants wanted the CGCA to continue to create/maintain some type of CGCA Membership Directory (whether paper, electronic or otherwise), including former multi-term and many years of service CGCA President Bill Hickman. Bill stated (and had sent an email to the CGCA) that he thought it best to keep in the proposed updated bylaws that the CGCA would maintain a CGCA membership directory, but that it was OK if it was no longer explicit in the bylaws that it be a paper directory.

- JMH shared that he had already started experimenting with creating a digital directory within the CGCA Google Drive on a Google Sheet. JMH further explained that he personally was not supportive or comfortable given technological advances and the labor involved for the CGCA's continuing to be held responsible for continuing to create/sell a hardcopy CGCA membership directory for \$5 every two years. JMH also pointed out that the current CGCA officers, the previous Treasurer Bob Mills, and most recent previous CGCA President Tom Miner (who served multiple terms and provided many years of service and steadfast CGCA leadership and is continuing to serve as the current CGCA Ex-official Officer), had reviewed and approved the proposed bylaw changes. However, JMH said that he and the other CGCA officers were supportive and willing to work with the CGCA block-captains and other neighborhood volunteers to collect information for updating the CGCA membership directory, including asking each CGCA household to give \$10 every two years to support CGCA functions like the maintaining a membership directory, the annual NNO Community Party, the CGCA webpage, meeting/NNO announcement signs, and other unexpected expenses like Zoom meeting subscription costs brought on by the pandemic.

- Tom Miner reiterated that to create a hardcopy CGCA membership directory was a very labor-intensive undertaking and required the generously given help of CGCA members Karen Carp and previous CGCA President Jerry Callistein and current CGCA webmaster (who both have given many, many hours of hard work and applied their publishing expertise to create the previous hardcopy CGCA membership directories upon receiving the information that the

previous CGCA officers and CGCA block-captains collected from each household in the neighborhood), and that he was no longer supportive of requiring the CGCA and its helpers to produce and sell a hardcopy directory.

- One meeting participant (name unknown) stated that he didn't like that the CGCA was collecting any money from the CGCA members. In response, Bill Hickman responded by pointing out that since the 1970s the CGCA membership had been supporting the CGCA functions and wellness of the community by collecting \$5 from the College Garden's households through the sale of the directory, and that if one just thought about the low amount that has been collected and the inflation that has occurred since the 1970s it was quite reasonable to increase the amount (from \$5 to \$10) that households are asked to give to support the CGCA operations.

- In response to the discussion and remaining desire of some CGCA members to have a hardcopy directory, CGCA members Karen Carp, Scott Butterworth, Kathy Oehl, Wendy Bauman, and others graciously volunteered to make another paper directory... possibly the last paper directory.

In addition, the discussion about the proposed bylaws changes included a discussion that possibly the current CGCA bylaw Article III - Boundaries and Article IV - should be changed to better reflect the boundaries of the area including the households served by the CGCA.

- JMH pointed out that historically the CGCA has tended to serve the residents of the detached homes because their residents have expressed the greatest interest in joining the association.

- Bill Hickman and JMH agreed to try and obtain a copy of the State of Maryland CGCA Articles of Incorporation. Mark Pierzchela (another former CGCA President and who has given years of CGCA and now City Council service) said that likely a copy of the CGCA Articles of Incorporation was stored in the box of CGCA materials that Tom Miner had passed on to JMH. (Post-meeting Note: Bill contacted the state and obtained and passed on to the CGCA an electronic copy of the CGCA Articles of Incorporation. He further explained that he was not proposing that the area boundaries be changed, but that it was important that the CGCA not overlook what the Articles of Incorporation specified. The current CGCA officers agree and will not pursue trying to amend the CGCA Articles of Incorporation nor the CGCA area boundaries.)

- Mark moved that CGCA form a work group/committee to address the directory issue and another work group/committee to address updating the bylaws. This was seconded.

- Then current CGCA Treasurer Jennifer Weiland (JW) agreed to lead creating the electronic CGCA directory, and once completed to give the electronic directory to Karen Carp who would lead creating the hard copy directory with help from Scott Butterworth, Kathy Oehl, Wendy Bauman, and others, as desired by some of the May 12 CGCA meeting participants. JMH agreed to assist JW with creating the electronic directory, including working with her to mobilize the block-captains to help with this work and to collect the proposed \$10 dues that will now be collected to support the CGCA operations, and no longer tied to receiving a hardcopy directory (assuming the to be revised bylaws are approved at the Fall CGCA meeting; note that the dues would now be given by CGCA members to have access to the to be created electronic directory that could then be printed out if desired as well as to support other CGCA functions like NNO, signage for meeting/NNO announcements, and other CGCA expenses).

- JMH also agreed to modify the proposed bylaws changes to state that the CGCA would maintain a membership directory, but otherwise to keep the proposed bylaw changes basically the same as had been circulated prior to the May 12th meeting. JMH pointed out that the CGCA Executive Committee had already provided a suggested revised version of the bylaws with the intent that the membership would vote to accept the bylaw changes at the Fall 2021 meeting. It was left that additional tweaking of the bylaws would be done, circulated and then voted on at the Fall 2021 meeting.

Changes to the Rockville 2040 Comprehensive Master Plan (Ken Hoffman): Background -- The City of Rockville solicited improvement suggestions from the CGCA about its DRAFT 2040 Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP). In response, the CGCA asked CGCA member Ken Hoffman, who has given countless hours and in depth input to the City's CMP planning process over the past few years, to assist the CGCA with developing CGCA membership CMP improvement suggestions pertinent to the College Gardens community. Ken helped by developing draft input that the CGCA Executive Committee then refined and distributed to the CGCA membership for review, discussion and approval voting at the May 12th CGCA meeting. The full CGCA input letter for Mayor and Council was shared with the CGCA membership prior to the May 12th meeting, the summary of which is provided in the minutes below. All of the input was acceptable to the CGCA meeting participants except for the originally suggested wording for item 6 below about a path going through the Upper Watts Branch Park nature area to link the College Gardens neighborhood with the Woodley Gardens neighborhood. A lively discussion ensued and edits were made to this item, resulting in the wording shown below. Ken gave a report on what he thought should be changed in the 2040 Rockville comprehensive master plan as he compared the 2002 plan to today. The plan before 2002 was issued around 1960. He showed a variety of maps of Rockville and expressed the idea of an open area being an office-residential mixture to be positive. He mentioned that the developer of Woodley Gardens had the good idea of a clubhouse, and the Senior Center was originally an elementary school before the city converted it to a senior center. The traffic on #355, near Montgomery College, is too heavy. Planning Area 5 consists of Woodley Gardens and College Gardens. Planning Area 7 consists of Scarborough Square and Yale Village. While showing the slides of all areas, he expressed his idea for it to be returned to Area 5. Then a vote was taken and it was unanimously approved (once the editing of item 6 was completed during the meeting) for the CGCA to submit to the Rockville Mayor and Council the CMP improvement recommendations as the CGCA membership's recommendations and to allow the CGCA President at upcoming CMP meetings with the City of Rockville to reiterate these recommendations. Here are the improvement suggestions summaries that were approved to be submitted:

- 1) Change CMP's proposed Area Planning Area 5 and 7 boundaries details in a manner that supports the creation of Planning Area 7 with a western boundary along Rutgers Ave (not Yale Place) and the property line between Scarborough Square, retaining Yale Village and Scarborough Square within Planning Area 5.
- 2) Change CMP's proposed Area Planning Area 7, and 16 more boundaries,, in a manner that creates a zoned designation of OCRM (Office Commercial Residential Mix) on both sides of the

intersection of West Gude Drive and Route #355. This would facilitate a potential environmentally and community-friendly state-of-the-art business/residential/transit corridor that would alleviate the traffic congestion across the four intersections from Mannakee Street through Gude Drive, and enhance the quality of life for City residents and both College employees and students.

3) CGCA strongly supports fully reopening the existing public pedestrian-bike walkway between Princeton Place and Montgomery College.

4) CGCA appreciates there has been no mention of any plan to connect Gude Drive to Yale Place, and would strongly oppose any future plan for this connection. This would greatly increase the traffic hazards and noise in the College Gardens neighborhood and in front of the elementary school.

5) To NOT connect Gude Drive to #270, as this would greatly increase the traffic and noise on Gude and not be welcomed by any of the neighborhoods (King Farm, College Gardens, Woodley Gardens) that back to Gude Drive.

6) Any proposed changes to the current path structure of the Watts Branch Nature Preserve will be designed in consultation between College Gardens and Woodley Gardens neighborhoods.

7) To install a sound-wall that will decrease 270 traffic noise in the West End of the Woodley Gardens neighborhood.

(Post meeting note: The approved CMP improvement suggestions were submitted to the City as requested by the City. JMH and Ken were requested by the City to attend and did attend additional Mayor and Council meetings about potential changes to the draft CMP, including the CGCA's submission).

City Updates - accessory dwellings; deer management; comprehensive plan; other (Mark Pierzchala): Mark graciously chose to let Janet Gallant give her report about the potential I-270 expansion as discussion about the proposed CGCA Bylaws changes and CMP improvement suggestion editing of suggestion item 6 had used up most of the meeting's time.

I-270 Expansion Plan Updates (Janet Gallant): Janet briefly shared that the MD Dept of Transportation's current plan is to have four toll lanes, 2 lanes each way, across the American Legion Bridge, up to Old Georgetown Road to the east, and north on I-270 as far as I-370. She emphasized that we all have to keep fighting, and complimented Mark Pierzchala for all the coordination and work he has done as a Rockville Council Representative to stop the negative impacts the I-270 expansion will have on our community. She urged everyone to stay informed by signing up for the newsletter at DontWiden270.org.

Other issues -- National Night Out (NNO) on August 3rd announced and volunteers wanted (Chaula Butterworth): CGCA Vice President Chaula Butterworth announced that the CGCA had

learned that the City had decided that the NNO on August 3rd would be held, so the CGCA would hold a NNO Community Pot-luck gathering as it has done in the past. Chaula asked that CGCA members please contact her to volunteer to help with implementing the CGCA NNO. [Post meeting note: The CGCA NNO potluck event was held August 3, 2021, Tuesday, 6:30pm to dark, and had approximately 35-50 attendees who came and went. The CGCA organized and implemented the successful gathering, including providing Carmen's Italian Ice, water from the Water Store (thanks for discount!), and eating utensils and tableware. The CGCA spent \$267 on the NNO this year. Special thanks and recognition for: Music by the Rockville German Band; Rockville Wizard.Exe club's fascinating robotics display; Attendees that brought and shared a variety of delicious dishes; Appearances by the Rockville Police and Fire Departments, Rockville City Council and other city officials; Rockville City Liaison Jharman Cordero's pre-event coordination with other city departments to reserve the pavilion; Jen Halper and girl scouts Lila, Brenna and Madeline's serving Italian Ice; and the Butterworth's girls for collecting and delivering the Manna food drive donations.]

The meeting was adjourned at 9 p.m.

Footnote: This CGCA meeting was held as a web meeting. During the 3 three weeks prior to the CGCA web meeting, the CGCA membership was informed about the meeting and agenda via a CGCA Block Captain distributed door to door flyer, and multiple emails from the CGCA President to the CGCA Private Email list (currently 483 email addresses with many households listing more than one email) and the CGCA Google Group (currently 141 email addresses). The CGCA membership was provided digital copies of the proposed CGCA bylaw revisions and proposed CGCA membership Rockville 2040 Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP) improvement suggestions as email attachments on CGCA President Private Email list and Google Group emails. The CGCA President pre-meeting emails also included the web meeting link and phone number. There were 40 web meeting connections, and some connections had more than one person on a connection.