

Minutes of Parkwood Residents Association, June 10, 2014

[webmaster note: these are "draft minutes", until they are formally accepted at the next PRA meeting]

The meeting was called to order by Bailey Condrey, interim president. (He had resigned at the March 2014 PRA meeting, but no officers could be elected due to lack of quorum at that meeting.)

Thirty eight persons were present. Minutes of the March 25, 2014 meeting were approved.

Officer Elections

Kira Lueders was nominated for the position of president. The nomination was approved by unanimous vote. There were no nominations for other executive board positions; the current officers will remain in place.

Beautification Committee Report

Gail Dalferes, chair of the Beautification Committee, reported that the stump grinding is proceeding. The spring clean-up, edging, weeding, replanting, and mulching of Parkwood's garden areas has been completed or is well underway.

Contracting for Landscaping Work

The PRA Beautification Committee maintains 6 gardens, including those at the Parkwood entrance signs and at Wildwood Road. In the past the work was done by volunteers, but Bailey Condrey was the volunteer who did most of the work. Funds collected from beautification donations allowed the Beautification Committee to pay for labor as well as plants, mulch, and other supplies. Following the March PRA meeting, the executive committee, lacking a quorum at the general meeting, with no credible bids and gardening that needed to be done, voted to contract with Bailey Condrey's company to do the gardening for 2014.

Members agreed that for 2015, an RFP for a landscaper for the Parkwood garden areas would be drawn up and placed in the PRA Newsletter and on the PRA List Serve . It was suggested that preference be given to residents of Parkwood. Bids will be reviewed by the Beautification Committee and the Treasurer. Volunteers will still be involved in the lighter gardening tasks.

PRA Civic Liaison Position

The PRA By-Laws include a representative to the Coalition of Kensington Communities (CKC) as an Executive Board position. Since the CKC has been disbanded, it was proposed that we change the wording of the bylaws to reflect this. The new wording of Article VI Section 1g is: "Civic Liaison. The Civic Liaison Committee Chair attends or sends committee members to various other government or citizen committees or organizations."

The Civic Liaison, or volunteer(s) in his/her place, would attend community meetings on topics such as land-use, transportation, and planning that are of interest to the Parkwood community.

Maryann Dillon nominated Bailey Condrey for this position. The nomination was seconded and approved by the membership.

Guest Speaker – Roger Berliner, County Council Representative for District 1

Councilmember Roger Berliner reviewed his environmental and energy initiatives on the council and responded to questions.

Mr. Berliner has worked with other Montgomery County leaders to hold Pepco accountable for their poor reliability. (In terms of reliability, Pepco is in the lowest quartile nationally.) Pepco is regulated by the Maryland Public Service Commission, which is appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state senate. Although

Pepco is not directly reportable to Montgomery Council elected officials, county officials and residents can put pressure on their representatives to see that Pepco improves its reliability.

Tree-trimming was Pepco's major response to an outcry over frequent storm-related power-failures. The trimming was needed but was often not done properly and unsightly trees and stumps were left. Berliner put forth legislation that would regulate how Pepco trims trees that could impact power lines. He suggested residents could e-mail to his office photos of improperly trimmed trees. Mr. Berliner is working with Parkwood to get tree stumps ground after the trees were removed by Pepco. With his colleague Hans Riemer, he has also led the effort to plant 10,000 new "power-line-appropriate" trees to replace removed trees.

Pepco is in the process of being acquired by Exelon Corporation. This will occur only with the approval of the Maryland Public Service Commission if the state decides the sale is in the public interest.

A question was asked about burying power lines. Mr. Berliner responded that undergrounding is needed to bring our electrical system up from the past century. The utility is fighting back as undergrounding is expensive, but it could be done in some areas. Mr. Berliner suggested that with forward thinking we could have micro grids with solar power in some neighborhoods. He also agreed with the comment that all the utilities, Pepco, Washington Gas, and WSSC, need to work together coordinating utility work.

Mr. Berliner highlighted other environment-friendly legislation that he has introduced or supported. These include:

- A rapid transit system to get more people out of their cars and into public transport. He acknowledged that discussion is needed to resolve different points of view.
- A bill that would require 100% of Montgomery County's electricity be provided by renewable sources by 2016, and
- A bill to expedite more EV charging stations to encourage the use of electric cars.

Participants asked questions about plans for moving the biking/walking path along Rock Creek. Mr. Berliner said that he was not knowledgeable about the Park Service's plans, but that he would look into it. Participants also expressed their views regarding snow plows dumping snow on public sidewalks forcing walkers into the street; pedestrian safety issues on the Rockville Pike/Grosvenor sidewalk leading from the METRO station; and the County's policy regarding panhandlers.

Mr. Berliner was thanked and he departed at 9:03 p.m.

Continuation of PRA Business Meeting

Treasurer's Report

Gerald Sharp, treasurer, distributed copies of the treasurer's report showing a positive balance. Two hundred and fifty-two members have paid their annual dues. Approximately ½ of PRA's income comes from membership dues and ½ from donations for Parkwood beautification.

New Business

Members-Only List-Serve

Gerald proposed a second list serve, in addition to the current one, for PRA members only. This list serve would have the capacity to share PRA information, canvass members, and conduct PRA business that does not require voting. There was discussion pro and con. Gerald agreed to table a vote for a future meeting.

There was a good deal of discussion regarding how to increase membership in the PRA. Suggestions included:

- sending the newsletter and membership application with a stamped return address envelope,
- members inviting their neighbors to join,

- a committee of volunteers to canvass the neighborhood, explaining the benefits of the PRA. This was put in the form of a motion by Pat Newman, but it did not pass.
- a Welcoming Committee. This is already underway headed by Randa Mostehy although it reaches only new Parkwood arrivals.

Thank You

Jeff Griffith proposed a “thank you” to Bailey Condrey and all board members for their service. Members clapped to show their agreement.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m. Randa handed out reusable shopping bags with the PRA tagline.

Respectfully Submitted,
Judith Dighe, Secretary

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