

**Parkwood Residents Association**  
**June 7, 2006**  
**Minutes**

President: Kira Lueders  
Vice President: Maryann Dillon  
Secretary: Jim & Brenda Marshall

Today we have a presentation by Joe Davies of CABA (Citizens Against Beltway Expansion). We had invited someone from the Maryland Department of Transportation to come and give their point of view, but had been informed that they would not be ready to discuss the Beltway issue until the Spring of 2007.

First Joe explained what CABA is:

A group of individual citizens and citizen associations located along the beltway was formerly called the Rock Creek coalition. The organization was started twice with similar plans to super size the beltway - by organizing and expressing our position - the coalition really came together when two extra lanes were added on the Beltway. Our reasons for forming currently are mainly against the toll lane - because: - high cost of tolls about \$2.00 per mile - Maryland finally admitted that our taxes will have to subsidize the construction and tolls. main point to explain why bad - high cost of tolls - the organizers of the toll lane are counting on the congestion so people will use the toll lanes and have the toll lanes expensive - several levels we think the Governor's plan can be fought - we think the simplest solution is to get a new governor who will oppose beltway widening - if that does not work, you can use the legislative processes to set stumbling blocks in the way of the Governor and the State Highway Administration.

Second plan is to oppose it legally in court. It is questionable if the Governor has all the authority to do this public/private deal as he claims on his own.

And the last, of course, is simply to engage in personal litigation. The value of your house is taken by the noise and pollution if you are closer to the traffic.

The last two options are very painful because they involve getting involved with lawyers and litigating. So our view is to focus on the political solution - particularly in the election year.

We have two goals: (1) educate and inform the public and public officials about why we think this is not a good idea and (2) to expedite the political process by getting the support of legislators and electing a governor who will support it.

This is what we've done so far: In the spring we distributed about 20,000 information flyers - I believe they were distributed in your neighborhood. The flyer explained what the Governor's plan is and why we think its not a very good one - we also suggested on alternatives - which is to build the purple Metro line. This would be a light rail system which would connect Silver Spring with Bethesda.

We have established a website that has a lot of information about this project on it: [www.nobelwayexpansion.org](http://www.nobelwayexpansion.org) - it has information about the potential tolls. We are trying to get more information added. We've discussed this with county council - the county council has supported us - thus making it harder for the Governor to enact his plan.

So - it's very important to keep the support of the county council and to elect officials that the county council refers to. We've contacted State legislators and explained our position and almost all of them are supporters. And finally, we recently supported the building of a south entrance to the Bethesda Metro Station. A lot of you got an email - I know we sent info about that around on the listserv. The idea is that county council by authorizing the south entrance indicates its support for the present rout of the purple line and getting the purple line built and having the state governments money over there undercuts the plan to build the beltway.

Finally we are working to influence the gubernatorial election to the extent that we can by pressuring the candidates to tell us their positions. We know that Mr. Ehlrich's position is in favor of Beltway widening. I think we have Mr. Duncan's position because he supports us on his website. I can't get a clear statement out of O'Malley.

I think in conclusion we all need to speak out - we need to let the political parties and political verbal persons that are influencing our lives know we are here and that we will vote against them if they support this. There are powerful forces behind this plan but the key I think is going and voting and I think the politicians will listen.

The reason I think they are powerful forces behind this plan is the company that will build this is the Fluor Corporation -- at least that is the company building it in Virginia. It started out in Texas and spent its money very prudently by influencing political people. I have here an article from Huston Chronicle which was written in 2002. [Joe read a few paragraphs of the article - describing how the corporation was backing political interests].

Next we heard from Eleanor Rice who headed the Rock Creek Coalition:

"I want to emphasize what a public/private partnership is: we - in simple terms - we already own this land - we own the lane of the beltway they propose to take - state money would be used to condemn and buy the land that would go for the lane so to speak - now if these cons get their way - we will have the dubious honor of helping to pay for private corporations to build one lane and refurbish the existing lane and then charging \$2 a mile for us poor souls to use it - got that?

Joe Davies indicated that at the May 30th CABA meeting they decided that they will distribute flyers in the fall 2006 just before the primary election.

Open discussion followed - it was discussed that at the last PRA meeting a vote was taken in regard to support or not support the expansion:

support CABA = 5

against support = 1

[webmaster note: the vote on record in the Mar 21 minutes was

opposed beltway expansion: 29

in favor: 5]

After the vote and meeting it was left to the executive committee to decide whether PRA should join CABA - which they did.

Next we heard from Liz Brennan who addressed the meeting regarding the up coming election. It has always been her goal to ensure that our precinct which is **1338** had the highest voter turnout - I don't care how you vote - although I can give you my opinion -- I just want people to come out and vote.

This is what elected officials do the day after they are elected. They go and they find out which precincts had the highest voter turnout - they make sure they know so when we come knocking on the door for a community center or to have something fixed or widened or shrunken or whatever it is we need - we get paid attention to because we crank out the votes. So please make sure you vote on primary day - which is September 12th - we'll be back at the school. Encourage your neighbors to vote as well.

Liz shared a small flyer describing the small and local elections. Please make an informed vote - or don't vote at all.

Most of these races will be decided on primary day - because in some of them republicans don't even run - most of these races are going to be decided by a small number of votes. the incumbent at the last election only won by 88 votes - don't think your vote doesn't count -- it does! Right now there are twelve people running for four seats at large for our county council - that is an incredible amount of people - the more people the more the votes are divided up - we're going to have a new representative in district 5 - Tom Perez has moved on - right now there are three people running and one has not announced yet. We have the State races - one state senator - Sharon Grosfeld has moved on. Sharon was very helpful in writing letters to getting Pepco to be more accountable for

us and to get the county to be more accountable to us regarding our tree issues. At this point there is only one person running for that seat - Rich Madaleno. There are three delegate seats that are up - two I guess are going to be incumbents - but I think there are six or seven running -- these are important - these people got us money for a community status - planning and design money for a community center - which needs to be matched by county - just like Joe said you have to leverage everything - during election time.

So that's my commercial for going out and voting - figuring out who you want to vote for - there are some web sites that give good info and the Gazette has a lot of good information as well.

There are quite a few people running who live in Kensington and I invited one of them here to give three minutes: Al Carr - he is on the Town Council of Kensington - he is running for state delegate for 18:

After a few minutes of talk the subject of Safeway came up: Safeway is scheduled to close on the 17th of June and what they've told us is that they are going to be closed for a year to tear down the old store and build a new store - "folks I speak to who are knowledgeable about building something like that say its going to be much longer - probably a year and half."

Question to Al: - how did you vote for safeway?

Al: I voted against the Safeway because I felt that the town could have done a better job in demanding a better traffic pattern and a better store design

Question: How would you design a better traffic pattern?

Al: . . . Safeway had the opportunity to buy the shell station up on Conn Ave - but they did not  
general talking and discussion followed - and it was declared a moot point

### **Kira started the old business:**

**Treasury report** was briefly discussed. Please pay your annual dues of \$10 if you have not done so.

Motion to approve minutes from last meeting came next.

Liz Spoke - the letter I sent is finally on the website.

[webmaster note: I post things within 48 hours of receiving them]

KP Elementary School is having a dedication this Saturday. All elected officials have been invited. We are continuing to agitate on the landscaping issue because of more and more trees are dying. I lost count. I went and counted how many dead trees there were - what I'm having to get them to do is just bag it (the green tree bags) - don't just replace - once they replace everything that's our last shot - only replace once and the school doesn't have staff to maintain it and the PTA doesn't have the bandwidth and obviously Parkwood doesn't - I mean shoot - we can't even take care of our own little islands and what not - so we are pressing very hard to get them to bag everything and actually the town of Kensington is partnering with us at least to borrow tree bags from the town - how are they going to say no to that? - here are the bags - just use them on the trees - so hopefully this moves that issue forward.

With the issues on Edgefield Road - have been addressed by the Principal

- noise from a/c - has improved

- screaming with trees

- mowers - cannot mow because grade is too deep

- trees too close - so mowers cannot mow between

- snow and melted - the field was discovered to have a drainage issue

- access to back - would like to see a gate with lock

- lights on the building in the back

- people using the school are parking in front of private homes - discussion followed

- important to press the principle with emails and copy Liz Brennan
- trying to press on transfer students - limit it
- want to launch a new science program - need volunteers to join the committee - more info will follow at our next meeting

#### Coalition Kensington Committee

Sector Plan - revitalization of Kensington proper

traffic issues

all kinds of wonderful things could happen

we've been pushed back behind two Bethesda projects

have written a letter to county council demanding to keep our spot

Also meeting at Park and Planning re next development projects - since there is no more land in Montgomery County the focus has become in-fill. We have a representative from the Coalition Kensington Committee who attends these meetings asking pointed questions - hopefully the result will be a thoughtful and realistic plan for Montgomery County

Please Note: July 12th at the Armory - there will be a candidates forum. Please come and bring your neighbor

Also studying the most recent highway mobility report - there was info in the *Gazette* last week - we are going to write a letter and respond to the report with our opinion on what they should be doing or not doing.

#### **Committee Reports**

Kitty on membership - membership is low

Beautification - we have a committee of one person! Clare Murphy herself and some neighbors have worked on the island mainly at Saul Road - but also use the money from the budget and donations specifically given to hire people to do the work - there just isn't enough volunteers to do the work - we tried last year for volunteers - with little success - all money that comes in is used to do basic maintenance on the island at Saul Road

The county does mow the islands - as you know - they are not always great about it - but they have gotten better. Its fairly expensive - I know it does not look like much - but it is expensive. So if any one has any ideas or would like to volunteer - my info is on the website.

Welcome Committee is chaired by Kathy Byars - who was unable to attend but brought by some of the welcome packets that she passes out to people who have moved to our neighborhood - so if you know any new neighbors - please take one

#### **New Business**

Laura Akinbami has offered to head a committee regarding traffic calming approaches to our neighborhood. A few months ago on the listserv there was discussion about what traffic calming should be and if necessary. I live on the corner of Parkwood and Saul so my view point is necessary issues raised on the listserv.

1- traffic volume

2- traffic signals

discussion on the different options with traffic calming ensued.

It was explained that DOPW does a study of the area (street) we choose and time. They will monitor for a 2 hour time frame, using the middle hour as its data period, do an analysis and then come back with its recommendation of action - they mostly concentrate on high traffic roads - 4,000 plus cars. We will not have the ability to change their recommendation. Once the study is done, they present, we would need to discuss and vote on the action. Then, if we approve, the houses directly affected - 80% would need to approve on the action and then 50% of houses affected that lead into the affected area will also have to approve. So it is not a quick process.

After this explanation general discussion followed and it was decided to get more feed back on the streets - if any - that should be put on a list for this possible action.

Kira (closing remarks): We were able to cover everything on our agenda - Kira gave the opportunity for anyone to ask a question - make a comment.

Thank you all for coming - hope to see you in September

[\[Parkwood Home\]](#)

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