

PARKWOOD RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION
JUNE 2008 MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:37 p.m. on Monday, June 9, 2008, at Kensington Parkwood Elementary in the Multipurpose Room. Roughly 22 people attended as some latecomers missed the attendance sheet. Discussions related to the agenda follow:

OLD BUSINESS

- Newsletter costs were reviewed for the March edition. Printing costs were \$339 and mailing costs were \$292. Total costs for the newsletters were \$906 in 2007, including \$257 for mailing one of the issues. Annual costs averaged about \$1,100 in the previous five years (2002-2007).
- While the minutes from the March meeting were not approved, that activity will be the first order of OLD BUSINESS at the September PRA meeting.

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION SOLUTIONS DISCUSSION

- An overview of the PRA Newsletter production and distribution process was provided and revealed the following:
 - The final newsletter is printed and given to the Executive Block Captain for distribution to roughly 940 homes in the neighborhood. The EBC notifies the 30-40 volunteer distribution block captains that the newsletter can be delivered. They then take it to all homes in Parkwood. This process usually occurs two weeks before the quarterly meeting to provide residents and members ample time to review the issues. Three members attending the June meeting had not received the newsletter and the PRA VP obtained their addresses to ensure that a copy could be mailed.
 - With the recent resignation of the Executive Block Captain, Kira Lueders volunteered to take on these responsibilities until another volunteer could be identified. Paula Flicker and Bailey Condrey have volunteered to assist her.
 - Those in attendance discussed a number of ways to enhance and improve the newsletter that included:
 - Distribution digitally to those homes that have requested it, but this, however, requires maintenance of a database.
 - Printing two of four issues and digitally delivering two issues. The December issue would be printed in order to continue with Operation Envelope. This 50/50 option also would require maintenance of a database as 59 PRA members do not have computer access.
 - About 76 percent (186) of current PRA members provided e-mail addresses when they paid dues and are assumed to be using the listserv. The listserv includes 304 subscribers who are not PRA members. Finally, about 391 Parkwood residents are neither members nor listserv subscribers.
 - It has been suggested that PRA use recycled paper to print the newsletter to be more environmental. Costs for using recycled paper will be obtained and PRA will determine the increased cost to use it.
 - Many people pointed out that the newsletter can be obtained in its entirety on the PRA web site at <http://www.parkwoodresidents.org>. Not everyone in the community has computers.
 - Several attendees voiced concern that the overriding goal of the newsletter should remain to communicate quarterly with all families living in Parkwood and that the current system is the only way to ensure that everyone receives regular information from PRA.
 - Others felt that with PRA having 288 members and 490 users of the PRA Listserv, the newsletter should focus on reaching and serving those actively seeking PRA information.
 - Finally, another attendee suggested that the newsletter could be reduced from four pages to two pages.
 - It was agreed by all that PRA members and those living in the community could provide feedback on these issues on the PRA Listserv.

- The PRA Executive Committee will continue to review the newsletter production and distribution process to ensure that the community receives timely information on issues of importance to the neighborhood and the area, keeping in mind the efficiency and economy of these activities. Reports will be made to the community when appropriate.

BETHESDA NAVAL MEDICAL CENTER & JOINING THE COALITION OF NAVY MEDICAL NEIGHBORS

- After a brief discussion it was moved, seconded and unanimously agreed that the PRA president should attend meetings of this coalition and report back to the community on the listserv. The Coalition was formed to ensure that the renovations and expansions to Bethesda Naval meet the needs of both the veterans and the local communities, Discussions from that meeting can be viewed on the PRA web site, along with sample letters for use in writing local, state and federal officials.

TREASURER'S REPORT

- Gerald Sharp informed those in attendance of the status of the PRA checking account.
 - It currently resides at Wachovia Bank and pays .25 percent interest.
 - The balance is roughly \$6,000 including \$123 in cash.
- We learned that about 40 percent of PRA members earmark funds for the Beautification Committee giving an average donation of \$14. Based upon these figures, it was estimated that nearly \$3,000 in the PRA bank account has been designated for beautification efforts.
- Membership in PRA has increased since the implementation of Operation Envelope that provided residents with an envelope to return their 2008 dues last December. PRA now stands at a record high level for membership.
- At the winter meeting of the PRA, the following amounts were budgeted for 2008:
 - Administration - \$100
 - Newsletter - \$1,200
 - Beautification - \$1,600
 - Rentals - \$100
 - TOTAL BUDGETED FOR 2008 - \$3,000

BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE REPORT

- Gail Condrey reported on a number of projects that have been completed and will be undertaken in the neighborhood:
 - The Saul Road Island has been completed after many hours of work. The large spruce tree there has been given a clean bill of health by both an arborist and an entomologist, and wood chips spread over its drip line to improve soil quality and water retention. Thanks to all that helped.
 - The Wildwood Island at Saul will have a border placed at that intersection and planted with several species of indigenous plants and donated plants from residents to enhance its appearance. This will be paid for, in part, with a grant from Montgomery County totaling roughly \$259. The trees along the island will also have wood chips spread over their bases to improve the soil and water retention. A neighborhood landscaper has been approached for a quote on this work. In the interim, the beautification committee is seeking volunteers to assist with the work.
 - It was pointed out that other areas of the community have communal space that could be improved, along Parkwood Drive and other streets. The sidewalk between Oldfield Drive and Crestwood Road was another example, but the easement rights need to be checked with the County first.
 - It was suggested that the status of the Linden Oak be checked with state or park service personnel to determine whether they have plans for its future preservation and health. This very old, large pin-oak, has been designated a historical marker by Maryland.
 - PRA has appropriated \$3,000 for beautification efforts this year. A letter could be sent to the listserv to make members aware of this and seek ideas for additional projects.
 - It was approved by the membership that projects can be submitted to the Beautification Chair at any time along with plans for their completion and an estimate of the costs. They will then be

considered for approval by the Beautification Committee based upon County guidelines and specifications.

- The Beautification Chair will send a letter to the listserv to make members aware of what is budgeted and seek ideas for additional projects. The goal is to engage more members of the community in beautification efforts by taking on projects throughout the neighborhood.

INCREASING AND MOTIVATING MEMBERSHIP

During the discussion, a number of ideas were offered for increasing the number of dues paying members to PRA and for motivating greater participation from them. These included the following:

- As a subject for the newsletter, the accomplishments of the PRA could be highlighted to give members and non-members a better idea of what PRA has accomplished over the years. For instance, PRA was instrumental in getting a traffic light installed at the intersection of Beach Drive and Cedar Lane.
- Use the newsletter to foster more of a sense of community and what we stand to lose without the activities of PRA.
- Promote a community event, similar to the neighborhood yard sale held at Kensington Parkwood Elementary, and the Thornwood Drive block party. Photographs of these events could be posted to the PRA web site. One idea was to hold a PRA social in December. Another was to hold a gathering at Saul or Wildwood islands to promote beautification accomplishments and a sense of community.
- In order to make people more aware of the PRA web site, a screen shot of the web site could be featured in the next newsletter with tips about the wealth of information available there.
- It was also suggested that perhaps Kensington Parkwood Elementary and their PTA could become partners in promoting PRA activities and news.
- The newsletter could also feature a Tips Section providing a useful tool for residents.
- Lastly, a contest could be held among younger residents of PRA to redesign the web site and newsletter mastheads. One idea was to feature the art of a different person each quarter as the newsletter masthead.

NEW BUSINESS

It was brought to the membership's attention that a recent post-card mailing had been conducted by developers for the purpose of encouraging local residents to vote against an upcoming proposal that would limit the ability of developers to increase the size of an existing home's footprint when major renovations are performed. A public hearing was held June 17. No action was recommended.

The membership discussed the issue of vacant homes in the neighborhood and whether these properties should be reported to the county. The membership agreed and directed the PRA president to write a letter to the appropriate county officials giving the specific address of vacant properties and the issues that have been identified with them.

The next PRA meeting will be held in September 2008.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the June 9, 2008, meeting of the PRA was adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

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