

Minutes of Parkwood Residents Association, March 24, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by president, Kira Lueders. Twenty-seven persons were in attendance. Members and guests introduced themselves and Kira introduced the speaker, Diane Cameron.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes from PRA meetings on June 10, 2014 and December 9, 2014 were approved.

Election of new PRA Webmaster

Peter Mansbach, PRA webmaster for many years, had announced to the PRA executive board that he would retire as soon as a new webmaster could be found. Alex Clark volunteered to take over the duties of webmaster for the PRA. He was nominated and approved for the position.

Peter was thanked for many years of service in designing and maintaining an excellent website for Parkwood.

Presentation by Diane Cameron: Restoring Rock Creek: How You and Your Family Can Help

Diane Cameron is the Coordinator of Stormwater Partners Network and Conservation Director of Audubon Naturalist Society. She used slides to illustrate her presentation on the importance of healthy streams and the harm done to them by excessive runoff containing silt, fertilizer, bacteria, etc. The health of Rock Creek and its tributaries is poor and getting worse. The primary water pollution problem in our area is not chemical in nature but physical. When water goes to the streets, it flows into Rock Creek, exacerbating the problem. In what is called the firehose effect, roads become massive funnels that collect rainwater and funnel it into our streams. Diane spoke in favor of a whole watershed approach to stream restoration. The watershed approach means considering a body of water in the context of all the surrounding land and using green infrastructure to capture runoff. Plants and soil are used to soak stormwater into the ground, transpire it through evaporation, and/or harvest it for beneficial release.

Part of the mission of the Audubon Naturalist Society is stewardship and advocacy. Diane stated that every yard can go from being a problem to being part of a solution and she listed a number of steps that individuals and households can do to protect Rock Creek. These include:

1. Construct a raingarden to capture excess water and filter it into the subsoil. Raingardens can be created by digging out a piece of land so that the proposed area (which can be large or small) is lower than the surrounding area. The proposed area is then filled with sand and topsoil.
2. Plant a large tree. Trees are a number one city-friendly environmental practice.
3. Plant native plants like goldenrod and milkweed (which feeds monarch larvae).
4. Install a rain barrel or cistern, a green roof, and/or a permeable driveway or walkway.
5. Compost.
6. Hire a landscaper who will protect the environment and who know how to do rainscaping.

Diane recommends green infrastructure as the default method for implementing restoration of the county's stormwater retrofit program. She is a strong advocate for this approach with the Montgomery County Council and other governing bodies. She urges others to support this advocacy. She passed around a sign-in sheet for attendees who wish to receive suggestions on-line for environmental advocacy messages to the County Council.

Diane's PowerPoint presentation will be shared on the PRA list serve.

Gail Dalferes requested the PRA to co-sign a letter asking the County Council to commit to making a green shift in

how storm water is managed, to step up public participation, and to commit to annual milestones to reduce pollution in streams. PRA members voted to turn down the request at this time, since there was no time to read the letter that they were being asked to sign. The letter will be posted on the PRA website.

Beautification Report

Gail Dalferes, Beautification Committee Chair, reported that three persons had responded to the RFP to do the work of maintaining Parkwood's gardens. The committee, with Gail abstaining, voted to award the contract to the lowest bid which was submitted by Bailey Condrey.

As spring begins, so will work begin on Parkwood's gardens. Volunteers are invited to assist.

Treasurer's Report

Gerald Sharp, PRA Treasurer, handed out and explained the 2014 treasurer's report, including income and expenses since 2000 as well as current assets. The report was accepted.

Report on Discussion of Solar Panels for Kensington-Parkwood Elementary School

Bailey Condrey reported on his discussion with MCPS officials regarding the feasibility of the installation of solar panels on the new addition to KPES. Bailey reported that although MCPS was incorporating solar panels into new construction, it was not planning to do so on additions, believing that it would not be cost effective. Bailey contends that an analysis by an engineer could determine the actual amount of energy savings that would be generated from solar panels on the KP addition.

Montgomery County Operating Budget Overview

Jeff Griffith, one of the PRA representatives to the Montgomery County Civic Federation, distributed a fact sheet of the highlights of the county's proposed FY16 budget. His report also listed "continuing challenges," areas of concern, and dates of public hearings.

Legislative Report, Costco Gas Update

The proposal to require that mega gas stations, such as that requested by Costco, be required to be 1000 feet from schools and public swimming pools was rejected by the County Council. This requirement was heavily supported by Kensington Heights and other civic groups. Council member Mark Elrich proposed a bill requiring 500 feet buffers from schools, swimming pools, and also residences. This bill was approved; however, Costco can reapply in 18 months.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Judith Dighe, Secretary