

**Parkwood Residents Association
Member Meeting
March 31, 2009**

MINUTES

Attending:

Officers: Bailey Condrey, President
Julie Tierney, Vice President
Maryann Dillon, Secretary
Gerald Sharp, Treasurer

Directors: Kitty Stone, Chair, Membership
Gail Condrey, Chair, Beautification
Kira Lueders, Chair, Block Captains
Peter Mansbach, webmaster

Members: Approximately 25 other PRA Members

Guests: Lt. Denise Gill, 2nd District Police Dept; liaison to Kensington and surrounding communities, including all of Parkwood

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by President Bailey Condrey at 7:33 PM.

2. **Safety Overview:**

Lieutenant Denise Gill, community liaison to Kensington for the 2nd District Police Station, made a presentation on trends in crime in Parkwood and surrounding communities. Lt. Gill emphasized that the best remedy to deterring crime is for neighbors to pay attention to their surroundings. She noted that neighborhood listserves are a huge tool but expressed the caveat that they sometimes can raise fear levels beyond what is warranted. Lt. Gill gave the following statistics on the Parkwood neighborhood:

- **Thefts from autos:** Parkwood had 59 break-ins from 3/08 through 3/09. While there were 28 break-ins in 2008, there already have been 29 break-ins year-to-date (ytd) in 2009, so clearly this is a crime that is rising dramatically. Presence of electronic gadgets, especially GPS devices, has made break-ins much more appealing. Car thefts are crime of opportunity; therefore remove opportunity by removing anything of value from your car. Of 28 thefts in 2008, 20 were from unlocked cars and 16 had property stolen. In 2009 ytd, 20 of 29 cars broken into had property stolen, and 19 of the cars, or 66%, were unlocked. Police locked up 3 persons in February for car thefts in Parkwood; one person from Germantown, one from Gaithersburg and one from Wheaton. Lt. Gill encouraged neighbors to not leave anything in their cars.
- **Residential break-ins:** Parkwood had nine break-ins from 3/08 through 3/09; three were attempts; three were forced entry; one was a storage shed, one a garage, and one a vacant home. Of the homes entered, two were ransacked. One home was unsecured. Two juveniles from Washington DC have been ID'ed for break-ins and had been posing as magazine sellers. Lt. Gill warned to beware of magazine sellers, who are recruited from all over to canvass neighborhoods with possible criminal intent.

Lt. Gill stated that despite these crime statistics, Parkwood is considered pretty safe. She suggested knowing your neighbors' habits, picking up newspapers and mail for neighbors who are out of town, and paying attention to your gut reactions, as it is human nature to ignore negative thoughts. Re: GPS devices, Lt. Gill suggests entering your home address as a saved location so that police can return retrieved equipment to you. Record the make, model and serial number so that police can identify devices that are recovered. Lt. Gill also suggested contacting her directly with any community concerns at (301) 657-0962. A member asked about illegal parking by parents when dropping off and picking up children at KPES. Lt. Gill stated this is a problem at every school and is difficult for police to monitor. A member asked if Rock Creek Park was safe. Lt. Gill suggested that residents exercise caution, but that it was "not that bad". She suggested not confronting suspicious persons, but

contacting police instead. There was another question about speed cameras, and some discussion that a temporary one might be needed to deter speeding at key locations.

3. **Meeting Minutes:** *Julie Tierney moved (and was seconded) to approve the minutes from the February 3, 2009 meeting. Motion carried.*

4. **Pedestrian Safety at Kensington Parkwood Elementary School:** A representative from KPES PTA stated that the school's principal wrote a letter to all parents designating the crosswalk at Franklin and Saul as the only safe crosswalk and the only one the school would staff with student volunteers. While there are four crosswalks, speeding cars have made the other crosswalks unsafe for students and crossing guard volunteers. The representative asked PRA to work with the PTA to send a letter to County Council and MCPS and to conduct an independent traffic study at the crosswalk by Saul and Oldfield. Liz Brennan reported that the PTA should take the lead in pursuing this issue, and that the school principal should be able to do a lot if there is a safety issue involved. The PTA representative stated that the PTA has a parent volunteer who is a traffic specialist and willing to conduct a survey. Bailey Condrey asked if members supported working with the PTA to conduct the survey. ***Gerald Sharp moved (and was seconded) to work with KP PTA to conduct the survey. Motion carried.***

Members continued to discuss, and agreed that the "PTA should speak with the loudest voice" and that the PRA can support their efforts. Bailey Condrey stated that, when PRA communicates with the County, there's strength in numbers, and that it is in our best interest to support PTA. He also stated that if two witnesses write down the license plate numbers of speeders, that the Police will mail a warning notice.

5. **PRA Board Communication with County Representatives:** Bailey Condrey stated that he has received feedback from several residents who believe that all communication to County representatives should be cleared by the PRA membership in advance. Bailey asked for an affirmation from members that the PRA president can communicate with the County without prior clearance from members. As an example, he stated that he had sent a letter to County officials asking what they could do to improve the safety of the Saul Road/Oldfield Road crosswalk and gave some examples, such as installing bollards. ***A member moved (and was seconded) that the president can communicate with County officials without prior authorization from members. Motion carried.*** The motion was opposed by Peter Mansbach who stated that he didn't believe there had been sufficient discussion or explanation of the issue.

6. **Treasurer's Report:** Gerald Sharp reported that PRA's current cash position is as follows:

Wachovia checking:	\$1,800
ING savings:	\$7,055
Cash:	\$ 135
TOTAL:	\$8,990

7. **Beautification:**

Gail Condrey reported on accomplishments in 2008:

- Upgraded Saul Road entrance
- Installed garden at Wildwood and Saul, using County grant, PRA funds and volunteer labor
- Gerald Sharp installed daffodils and doggie bag station at Edgefield easement to Parkwood Drive

Gail acknowledged Clare Murphy and Kira Lueders for their ongoing Beautification work.

In 2009: the Committee's goals are as follows:

- Seek approval from developers scheduled to demolish houses to dig up and transplant landscaping plants that would otherwise be destroyed.
- Identify another public space for beautification. Likely locations include Parkwood and Roxbury; Parkwood Drive and Parkwood Terrace; Parkwood Drive and Wildwood; and the Oldfield/Crestwood easement.

- Install a bench at Wildwood garden.

Gail noted that a Rock Creek Park clean-up was scheduled for April 4 and urged members to volunteer. She also requested that members let the Beautification Committee know if a house is scheduled for demolition. She reminded members that they can donate a few hours of their time by responding to requests posted on the PRA listserv. She also needs volunteers to water landscaping at Wildwood and is looking for a landscape designer.

8. New Business:

Bailey Condrey stated that the first public workshop for BRAC intersection improvements near the Bethesda Naval Hospital is scheduled at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School on April 2. The Coalition of Medical Center Neighbors, of which PRA is a member, has reported that \$30 million of funds have been allocated for improvements but \$230 million is needed to get it done. Bailey stated that the improvements as proposed are inadequate, as all four intersections targeted for improvements currently fail traffic mobility standards and that only two will be slightly better after the \$30 million of improvements. Liz Brennan requested that PRA send a letter to Rep. Chris Van Hollen to make sure Parkwood's section of Cedar Lane does not get opened up to four traffic lanes. While this is not currently proposed, Liz emphasized that we should continue to remind officials. Bailey reported that the Coalition is advocating multi-modal transportation including bike and pedestrian paths and mass transit. Van Hollen, County Executive Ike Leggett, and Lt. Governor Brown are requesting a Metro pedestrian tunnel under Wisconsin at a cost of \$40 million in the 2010 budget.

Liz Brennan reported that the Coalition of Kensington Communities (CKC) met with officials from the State Highway Administration in January to discuss traffic congestion at Connecticut and Plyers Mill and were told there are no "shovel ready" projects in Kensington at this time. The County Federal Committee has been considering delaying completion of the Kensington Sector Plan; Mayor Fosselman wants CKC to pressure the County to complete the study. CKC members also met with Council Member Marc Elrich regarding traffic and potential budget cuts that could impact Kensington. Elrich noted that Police, Fire Safety and Public Works were likely areas for budget cuts, but that there were no cuts planned for the public schools.

Julie Tierney suggested that PRA post some sample letters re: BRAC on the PRA website that could be models for individual letters to public officials. Peter Mansbach stated that there are some letters already posted there.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Maryann Dillon
Secretary

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