

# **Parkwood Residents' Association Meeting Minutes**

Oct 8, 2013

Kensington Parkwood Elementary School

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by Bailey Condrey, President.

## Old Business

After introductions Bailey answered two questions that had previously been raised by members: 1. In response to the question of how much of a traffic lane bikers are entitled to-- Answer: one whole lane. 2. In response to requests to improve the biking/walking trail in nearby Rock Creek Park-- Parks and Planning have not budgeted for any improvements. A front-end loader will occasionally scrape mud and debris from the trail.

## Zoning Code Rewrite Discussion

Association members were pleased to welcome Council Member at Large, Marc Elrich, who presented follow-up information regarding Zoning Text Rewrite developments.

He shared his concerns about the proposed changes. The zoning code rewrite process drew up a new master plan and then a map that proposes new zones for every property in Montgomery County. C- 1 zones (neighborhood retail zones) can have added height as well as residential housing. The change in approved FAR (floor area ratio) could result in developers converting a neighborhood shopping center to high-density housing, causing some neighborhoods to lose their neighborhood shopping centers. In R-60 residential zones, commercial interests will no longer need a special exception for general non-residential buildings. The overall result will be increased density. School crowding as a result of increased density is an additional concern that has not been adequately addressed in the plans.

In Mr. Elrich's opinion, the planners seemed much more interested in giving incentives to developers than in supporting established residential areas Montgomery County.

Mr. Elrich was asked to comment on the five points that were e-mailed to the Parkwood List Serve prior to tonight's PRA meeting: He agreed with and elaborated on each of the points:

1. The District Map Amendment that automatically rezones the entire county is too important to be rushed through. The process needs to be slowed down so that the public can thoroughly review each section. Mr. Elrich concurred and stated his belief that we don't have to do the entire map right now. We could do part of the map now and the rest of it over four years with input from the affected communities
2. Non-residential "general buildings" should not be allowed in residential neighborhoods without public notification and discussion. Mr. Elrich suggested that the idea of "general buildings" without controls should be abandoned.
3. The new high-density commercial/residential/industrial/employment (mixed use) zones within or adjacent to residential neighborhoods will have the effect of "urbanizing" neighborhoods. Mr. Elrich contends that floating zones can be useful, but in the zoning rewrite they are too wide open. Floating zones that do not comport with master plan should also be pushed back. He stated that he does not want to undermine the single-family tax base. He does not believe that the planners are sufficiently concerned about neighborhoods, schools, and infrastructure. Mr. Elrich believes that if we want additional density, it should be around Red Line stops—within easy walking distance to Metro stops.
4. Retain the requirement that new Commercial Residential (CR) zones should be applied only where recommended in a master or sector plan order to keep neighborhoods stable. Mr. Elrich agreed with this

statement. He also stated that now is the time to fight proposals that we do not agree with, before the rewrite is finalized.

5. Citizen input is crucial to ensuring that development proposals support the well-being of the community.

Mr. Elrich strongly urged concerned residents of Montgomery County to let their elected leaders know that the current zoning rewrite process is “not the way to do it.” He pointed out that this is an election year. Now is the time to get involved by writing or e-mailing council members and attending public hearings on the revised Preliminary Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) draft.

The Public Hearings are Nov. 12 & 14, 7:30 p.m. at the Council Office Building, 100 Maryland Ave. Rockville.

More information can be found at <http://montgomeryplanning.org/development/zoning> and on the PRA list serve.

Gail Condrey suggested that residents take the points that were e-mailed and write their own e-mails to council members. The PRA leadership will provide a template and links for information on the Parkwood list serve. Council e-mail addresses were included in the Fall newsletter. Gail also suggested that after sending an e-mail to council members, the writer could post it on the list serve.

There was a suggestion for a letter-writing party; interested individuals may want to organize this.

Mr. Elrich stressed that individual e-mails and letters are most effective.

#### Beautification Update—Tree Planting

Gail gave the report for the tree committee. Trees will be planted in January and February. A florescent dot on your curb indicates that a tree will be planted in front of your lot. In response to a question regarding the type of tree to expect, Gail said that the Parkwood Residents web site has a list delineating what type of tree will be planted by location. If a resident is unhappy with the type of tree proposed, they can call the number given.

The gardens beautifying Parkwood, such as the one at Wildwood and Saul are lovely and a real enhancement for our community. Fall work consists mainly of adding mulch where needed. There is some discussion of working with the county for a rain garden at Wildwood and Parkwood near the drains.

A question was raised about getting rid of tree stumps left by Pepco. Bailey said that he had learned that Pepco is not required to take care of stumps. After some discussion, Bob Waters made a motion that the Parkwood Residents Association request the county council that stumps be ground within a year of tree removal by the county. The motion was seconded and passed.

On October 27, The Cedar Land Unitarian Universalist Church will sponsor a Rock Creek Clean-up Day. All are invited to participate.

#### Discussion of Whether Parkwood Should Formally Request that Montgomery County Divest from Holdings in Fossil Fuel Companies

The rationale for this petition was prepared by the Divest Montgomery County chapter of the Fossil Free Campaign (a nationwide fossil fuels divestment campaign) and printed in the PRA newsletter for members to read prior to the meeting. PRA member Craig Milhauser opened the discussion by stating his opinion that the petition was poorly written, not factually correct, would not achieve the desired effect, and could have the consequence of raising taxes. A lively discussion followed. Some members stated that it is a quality of life issue, and although the petition to the council may not be effective, it would at least have value in raising the issue. Some members stated that the divestment petition was too narrow an approach; other green issues such as solar roofs, pollution-lowering lawn mowers, etc. should be considered. We also need a fuller understanding of what the county is already committed to do. The formation of a Parkwood environmental committee was also suggested. The discussion was cut short due to the fact that the clock was approaching the time when the

meeting was scheduled to close. Jeff Griffith moved that the discussion be tabled until we have more information. The motion was seconded and passed.

### New Business

Roger Berliner, Montgomery County Councilmember, District 1, will be at Garrett Park Elementary School, Media Center, Thursday, Nov. 7, 7:30 – 9:00 p.m., to meet Montgomery County residents for an event called “Conversations with Councilmember Berliner.” This is an excellent opportunity to engage our council member in discussions of questions and concerns.

On November 10, Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church will host a symposium on energy choices for our area. Details will be posted on the list serve.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Judith Dighe, secretary

[\[Parkwood Home\]](#)

[\[Printable Page\]](#)

[\[Print\]](#)

Page address: <https://parkwoodresidents.org/docs/minutes1310.html>