Parking Concerns at Both Ends of Town

By Bill Vincent

At the May 12 Town Council meeting two discussions dominated the agenda. The first involved an expanded parking area for the Irish Inn. The second involved the continuing concerns about development on Vassar Circle and, among other issues, parking and safety issues that could emerge due to new houses being built in the Circle. The latter discussion was instigated by introduction of an ordinance to significantly widen Vassar Circle to provide a 50’ right of way. The current road is between 18’ and 25’ wide and in some places has no sidewalk. Additional housing in the Circle would add to what residents see as unsafe conditions.

The entire Council was in attendance along with the Town Clerk–Treasurer and the Town Attorney, Benjamin Arem.

Irish Inn Parking Lot License

The Irish Inn has requested the Town include an additional 50’ by 50’ parking area for occasional use in the annual parking lot license that the Inn currently buys. The Irish Inn currently pays $300/month for an annual license to use a 60’ by 78’ parcel of Town property for valet parking. During certain large events, the existing Irish Inn parking is not large enough to park all of their customers’ cars. The Inn’s,

CONTINUED on page 3
Letters to the Editor are welcome. They must be signed. Articles for publication are also solicited. Please send comments about *The Echo* to the Editor, the Mayor, or any Council member. Volunteer reporters are always needed.
owner Christy Hughes, requested the additional parcel to use on a limited number of occasions each year. To increase certainty of the parking solution, the Inn is also requesting that the license be extended from a one-year period to a three-year period. This possibility came up at an earlier Council meeting and the Mayor stated that she was not opposed to the concept of a longer term. A draft of a new license was discussed, which would accommodate the Inn’s request and increase the monthly cost to $500/month to compensate for the changes.

The Irish Inn is located in a part of Glen Echo that is zoned for mixed commercial and residential use. Most of the buildings around the Irish Inn are used primarily for business, but there are a couple of residential apartment spaces in the buildings. Richard Leggin of Richard Leggin Architects on Oberlin Avenue expressed concerns and wrote a letter to the Council and Residents of Glen Echo objecting to the Inn’s request. In his letter he referenced a Master Plan developed in 1990 by the Maryland-National Park and Planning Commission. He believed the Master Plan shows why the use of land as a parking lot is not a compatible use. Additionally, he expressed concerns that the existing parking lot is an eyesore with no landscape screening and that the new lot will further exacerbate the issue. Two additional objections to the plan were provided in writing by Jeffery Sklaver of Art Matters, a business located on Oberlin Avenue, and Robin Slonager, a resident tenant in the Leggin property. The Mayor stated that she had difficulty empathizing with Mr. Leggin regarding use of the properties since he was the applicant who appealed for a change from residential to mixed-use zoning for his property only a few years ago.

In response to the concerns, the Irish Inn has offered to install landscape screening and pointed out that previous license agreements had specifically prohibited this screening. Council members then requested additional changes to the license agreement, including a reduced period for notice of termination from 3 years to 1 year and specific identification of most or all of the 15 days allocated for overflow parking. The Mayor requested that Mr. Arem prepare another draft of the license agreement with the requested changes and she indicated it would be revisited at the next Town Council meeting.

**Proposed Road Ordinance and Vassar Circle Development**

Mayor Beers introduced the topic of the proposed road ordinance saying it was designed to provide safe parking and traffic conditions in the event of subdivision of the property at 2 Vassar Circle. Copies of the ordinance had been distributed to residents prior to the Council meeting in keeping with the notification requirements dictated by the Town Charter. Referencing the kind of development that has taken place in the Bannockburn neighborhood, the Mayor stated that the ordinance was not specific to a single development. Town lawyer, Ben Arem, reinforced the introduction by stating the ordinance was applicable to future circumstances and supports safety, egress, and parking. Additionally, since the Town currently doesn’t have restrictions on subdivisions, this ordinance is being considered to help protect Glen Echo residents in situations that County Planning Board might not.

Reaction to the proposed ordinance fell into three primary categories. Some residents opposed the ordinance saying that it appeared that the infrastructure to support 50’ wide roads would be incompatible with Glen Echo and would destroy the character of the Town. Some believed that the ordinance
was directed at just one location in order to subvert development and that would bring up the possibility of defending legal challenges, something tax dollars should not fund. A larger group of residents, demonstrated by a show of hands, supported the ordinance. Most of those who support the ordinance live on or near Vassar Circle and testimony suggested that safety concerns about Vassar Circle dictated their support. Noting that the one-way circle is as narrow as 18’ in some sections, residents worry about emergency vehicles being able to get around the circle. They believe that the additional density associated with four new homes planned for 2 Vassar Circle will exacerbate the safety issue. Finally, Aaron Hirsch, Town resident and owner of 2 Vassar Circle, expressed concerns that the ordinance would reduce his buildable lot size to the point that only three homes could be built. Mr. Hirsch’s attorney also indicated concerns about the legality of the ordinance.

Development on Vassar Circle has been a topic of significant discussion at Council meetings over the last several months. Many of the current residents on Vassar Circle have consistently opposed the development. They cite concerns over the size of the homes, the lack of architectural diversity, and the impact to parking around the circle. Currently, Glen Echo and applicable county ordinances contain minimal remedies to address these concerns. The topic of road safety however, is an item that the Town has the ability to regulate. According to Mayor Beers, the County Planning Board looks to Town laws first and she said, “If we don’t have one then it’s very iffy as to whether they will apply the county laws.” The proposed ordinance is being considered as a way to address the Vassar Circle safety issue.

The proposed standard is taken from Montgomery County standards written for a two-way street and it appears directly applicable to streets that are straight. Vassar Circle, as a one-way, tightly curved street falls well outside of these conditions. Curt Schreffler, a civil engineer from CAS Engineering, who was attending with Mr. Hirsch, made this point and stated that the 50’ guidance in the ordinance would not apply to a one-way street. Montgomery County does not have a road width standard for one-way streets like Vassar Circle. Councilman Stiglitz asked Mr. Schreffler, if he were designing a street from scratch, what a proper width for Vassar Circle would be to account for parked cars and safe passage of emergency vehicles. Mr. Schreffler indicated he thought 20–22’ of pavement would be comfortable. He also indicated that in some spots, where the road is narrowest, the pavement width may actually be wider than the reported 18’ but is currently covered by encroaching grass and dirt.

One resident pointed out that if there is an existing safety issue with Vassar Circle the Town should address it immediately and that this situation presents us with an opportunity to craft a one-way street standard for the entire Town. Mayor Beers agreed with the safety concern and responded by saying, “It’s a question of who pays.” She noted that widening the street is a significant expense and that the ordinance would hold the developer responsible for that expense. She also agreed that the discussion of road width presents an area of negotiation.

In response to the concern about safety associated with the width of Vassar Circle, Mr. Hirsch’s attorney, Erin Girard of Linowes and Blocker, LLP, stated, “Aaron has never said I’m not going to widen the road” and “the question really is how wide should the road be?” From her perspective, the question is whether a 38’ road with a 50’ right of way as indicated by the proposed ordinance is the right answer. She indicated that Mr. Hirsch’s team has started to run the models to determine a road width that would meet fire safety concerns and preserve the ability to build four homes on the site. To alleviate the parking concerns, she noted that parking spots had been increased from two spots to three for each home.

Mayor Beers summed up the evening’s discussions by stating, “The street is going to be widened one way or another, it’s a question of how much.” A motion to table the road ordinance topic was then passed and the meeting quickly adjourned.

**Glen Echo Park Report**

Aaron LaRocca, representing Glen Echo Park and the Clara Barton House, reported on recent developments.
Family Day on May 3 was well attended and very successful thanks to a highly visible visitor contact tent set up outside the Ranger Station. A new Junior Ranger book for children ages 3–5 debuted at this event. A Montgomery County contractor will begin staging equipment in the Park for the shared use path construction that will bypass the circle at MacArthur Blvd. and Goldsboro Road. The topic of compensation from Montgomery County to the Park Service for the loss of 58 trees must be resolved before construction can start. Rehabilitation of the Clara Barton House to include roof replacement and a fire suppression system has been funded for fiscal year 2014. Construction will start after the collection is moved to a storage facility and public comment, as required by the National Environmental Protection Act is completed. Finally, despite a recent reorganization, Mr. LaRocca plans to continue attending the Town Council meetings.

**Burglaries and Suspicious Activity**

Councilman Stieglitz highlighted recent burglaries in Chevy Chase that have occurred when a resident has left a house for just a short period, for example to walk a dog. Clearly the burglars were watching the homes and realized they were left unlocked. Mr. Stiglitz reminds residents to keep your doors locked when you are not at home. If you see suspicious activity, call police but also get as much identifying information as possible regarding your suspicions. Descriptions of people, vehicles, and license plates are among the best clues to provide police.
GLEN ECHO TOWN HALL EVENTS

These events are free to Town residents.

**FSGW English Country Dance**
- Every Wednesday, 8–10:30 pm

**American Red Cross Blood Drive**
- Sunday, June 8, 10 am–3 pm

### LOCAL EVENTS

**C&O Canal Activities**

**Nature Walk**
- Saturday, June 14, 10 am
- Carderock Recreation area

**Weed Scavenger Hunt**
- Wednesday, July 2, at 9 am
- Great Falls Tavern
- Registration required. Contact mark_frey@nps.org or call 202-339-8317.

**Wind and Solar Energy Options—Bannockburn Community Meeting**
- Wednesday, June 11, 7 pm
- Bannockburn Clubhouse
- Register at 301-986-8568.

### Archivists Wanted

We would like to create a complete archive of past *Echo* newspapers. The goal is provide a more complete compilation of *The Echo* that is kept in both the Town Hall and in the Municipal Section of the Montgomery County Library System. This is a job for one or more people who are willing to track down the whereabouts and catalog past issues that go back at least 30 years. While overall direction will be provided by the editor, the archivists will operate independently. Those with inquisitive personalities, persistence and organizational skills are encouraged to apply. Diligent high school students may use the position for whatever school credit they can obtain and *The Echo* will cooperate with the schools in question to provide a performance report regarding the project. The project will include interviewing past editors, librarians, and others who have saved copies of the paper over the years, then compiling the hard copies and making determinations as to how to best preserve soft or computerized versions. Contact Phyllis Fordham at 301-263-0552 if you are interested.

**Red Cross Blood Drive**
- Town Hall June 8 from 10 am–3 pm

You can make an appointment on the Red Cross website. Go to [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org) and search for zip code 20812 to find the Cabin John Assoc at Glen Echo Town Hall event. Click the Make an Appointment link. Appointments are appreciated but are not required.
**Town Seeks Clerk–Treasurer Applicants**

The Town of Glen Echo, Maryland is seeking applicants for the position of Town Clerk–Treasurer. The position is part-time and paid. The appointment is made by the Mayor in consultation with the Town Council and is expected to begin this summer.

Duties of the Clerk–Treasurer include financial record keeping and reporting, interface with auditors, preparation of monthly budget, and payroll functions. The Town Clerk–Treasurer attends monthly meetings of the Mayor and Council and keeps all public records and official minutes of meetings.

The Clerk–Treasurer is responsible for procurement and execution of Town Contracts for service by independent contractors. The Clerk–Treasurer will also oversee property management functions for Town real estate including Town Hall.

The Clerk–Treasurer will respond to citizen complaints and suggestions and inform the Council of corrective actions, if any, as well as produce and manage holiday parties and the Town Picnic, including recruitment and management of volunteers for these and other group events conducted on behalf of the Town and park maintenance.

Regular office hours will be held at Town Hall at least two mornings or afternoons a week.

**Interested parties may obtain a full job description from Nicole Fraser at Town Hall and, if interested, should telephone Mayor Debbie Beers at home (301-229-7308) office (202-452-7919) or cell (301-509-0618) or send a resume to the Mayor at Town Hall, Glen Echo, MD 20812.**

---

**LADIES OF GLEN ECHO**

**Ladies Night**

**on Wednesday,**

**June 11, at 8 pm**

**at the home of**

Eleanor Balaban

6003 Bryn Mawr Ave.

**RSVP: 301-229-7990**

---

**Steve’s Pet Care**

202-320-2559  
Adawehis@aol.com

In-home Care and Daily Walks  
Reasonable Rates  
Excellent References  
Glen Echo Resident  
Lab School Graduate 2004

---

**Summer Concert Series**

**Thursdays, June 18–August 28 7:30 pm**  
Bumper Car Pavilion  
See [www.glenechopark.org](http://www.glenechopark.org) or call 301-634-2222
CLASSIFIED ADS

Sparkle and Buzz Honey for sale, $8 for a pound jar. We have a limited production of delicious wildflower honey from the hives at our farm in Sykesville, Maryland, which we're selling exclusively to Glen Echo residents. Contact Henry Barrow at 240-383-0171 or Carol Barton at cbarton@mindspring.com.

Classified ads are free to Glen Echo residents and $1.50 per line for non-residents. Display ads are $5 per vertical inch. Send your classified ad to TheEchoEditor@gmail.com. Send your display ad to EchoAdRep@gmail.com. Deadline for ads is the 15th of each month.

ADHD Coaching For LIFE™

- Support for Children and Adults
- Specializing in Professional and Academic Transitions
- Focus on Moving Forward in all Areas of Life and Work
- Daily Check-Ins
- Flexible Schedule

Candace Sahm, MA Ed/HD
contact: coach@candacesahm.com
Positive Learning Experiences, LLC
- A Coaching Approach to Tutoring
- ADHD Specialists / SAT-ACT Prep

Call 301.229.9515
www.candacesahm.com • www.pletutoring.com

Real Estate Report

6001 Bryn Mawr Ave $1,249,000 For Sale
7311 University Ave $987,000 Sold
44 Wellesley Circle $1,475,000 Sold
New Residents in Town

By Carlotta Anderson

Two attractions lured our new residents at 7311 University Avenue from Georgetown to Glen Echo: Glen Echo Park and the neighborhood’s charming streets. They found that when they were looking for amusement for their two young children, they frequently found themselves in Glen Echo, so they jumped at the first chance to move here.

Kelly Cole and Will Dobson, their children, Kate, 5, and Liam, 3 1/2, and Bess, a 10-year-old border-collie mix, rented their University Ave. home for one month while they were preparing their former home for sale and made the final purchase in April.

Kelly and Will met while attending Middlebury College in Vermont. He was studying Chinese history and she was an English major. Will, a journalist and writer, is the political & foreign editor of Slate magazine, and the recent author of the book The Dictator’s Learning Curve: Inside the Global Battle for Democracy. Will was previously the managing editor of Foreign Policy magazine and the Asia editor at Newsweek International. Kelly is an adjunct professor of media studies at Georgetown University, where she teaches courses on film and television history.

The children are in pre-school at the Washington Hebrew Congregation, but Kate will be entering Bannockburn Elementary School this fall.

They spend part of every summer in the Adirondacks in upstate New York, mostly hiking and canoeing, and are looking forward to exploring the trails and nature walks of Glen Echo.
Glen Echo Park Activities

The Puppet Co.
*The Wizard of Oz*
   June 13–July 2
*Tiny Tots*
   Select Weds, Sats, and Suns at 10 am
   See [www.thepuppetco.org](http://www.thepuppetco.org)
   or call 301-634-5380

Adventure Theatre MTC
*Pinkalicious*
   June 20–August 31
   See [www.adventuretheatre-mtc.org](http://www.adventuretheatre-mtc.org)
   or call 301-634-2270

**Summer Concert Series**
   Thursdays, June 18–August 28, 7:30 pm
   Bumper Car Pavilion
   See [www.glenechopark.org](http://www.glenechopark.org)
   or call 301-634-2222

---

Celebrate Summer

**Town Picnic**

Sunday, July 13

5 pm–7 pm

at the Town Hall

Flyers will be distributed prior to the event.

Volunteers are always welcome.

---

Gas Update

Gas line construction hit a snag in May due to a storm drain pipe failure during construction. The result was a street cave-in at University and Bryn Mawr Avenues. Replacement of this concrete pipe has been referred to Montgomery County Department of Highway Services, who stated that they could not provide a contractor’s response before May 27. Washington Gas moved its construction activity to Oxford Road after the cave-in occurred.

Several residents in Town have complained about the unsightly appearance of the construction and lack of notification prior to the day that the gas company begins work on or near private properties. Nicole Fraser reported that she had 62 permit requests from residents as of May 23, 2014.