Advisory Committee on Land Acquisition

Alexis Feringa, chair for the Mayor’s Advisory Committee on Land Acquisition, presented a summary of the final report that the committee provided to the Mayor and Council. A copy of the full 56-page report is expected to be posted on the Town website for all residents to review. In response to a proposal from Aaron Hirsch to swap his Vassar Circle property with Town-owned property between Tulane and Oberlin Avenues, Mayor Polak created this committee to “provide objective business, financial, and legal analysis and advice to the Mayor and Town Council to help them better understand the current and potential value of the Town’s existing real estate assets.” The role of this committee was strictly advisory and, as stated in their final report, “it had no authority to make decisions on behalf of the Town.”

The seven-person committee spent four months working pro-bono to generate its report and recommendations. They met with key groups related to the land swap proposal including business owners on Oberlin and Tulane, the Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture (GEPPAC), former Mayor Beers, and Mr. Hirsch. Additionally, they received input from various Town residents who had attended committee meetings.

The committee generated ten options, with a wide range of permutations, and then analyzed and discussed the various options. Options ranged from doing nothing to selling multiple Town-owned properties and building a new Town Hall on Vassar Circle. A matrix of options was generated and scored against ten criteria.

In addition to the assessment of the land swap proposal itself, the committee recommended improving Town finances by maximizing the value of Town-owned land between Tulane and Oberlin Avenues. To improve the value of this land, the committee recommended three options. Option 1 is to maximize revenue from the parking agreement with the Irish Inn and address parking along Tulane and Oberlin. Option 2 recommends rezoning the lots for commercial development and possibly selling one of the lots. Options 1 and 2 could be performed independently or together. Option 3 recommends rezoning and selling both lots. All three of these options are designed to improve the financial position of the Town for any purpose, whether it was to maintain a rainy day fund or to execute a portion of the land swap proposal for Vassar Circle. It was noted that rezoning takes up to a year to complete.

Specific to the Vassar Circle proposal, the committee report provides several observations. First, none of the Vassar Circle options they evaluated clearly improved the financial position of the Town. Second, it is likely that only one of the four lots on Vassar Circle could be pur-
The Echo

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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.

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Next Town Council Meeting: December 11, 2017, 8 PM

Chased even if the Town sold both Tulane/Oberlin properties. Third, before taking any action the committee recommended that the Mayor and Council seek further input from Town residents, perhaps via referendum, to determine the best use of Town funds. Mr. Hirsch reported that development of Vassar Circle continues. The preliminary plan for subdivision has been approved and he expects to be able to record the lots in a few months. Demolition of the church should begin within the next month or two and will be followed by road improvements. At that point, he expects to begin building homes, likely one at a time, with the first one completed in about a year.

While focused on land use questions, the committee also learned many details about Town finances and planning. As part of their report, they made some broader recommendations regarding Town management including: establishing a routine capital budget, developing a strategic vision for the Town, working proactively with GEPPAC on their Master Plan, and reconsidering the use of the Tulane/Oberlin properties and parking in that area.

After Ms. Feringa’s presentation, the Mayor and Council expressed their appreciation to the committee for all of the effort that went into producing the report. There was no specific indication of how or when the Council might act on the recommendations from the committee.

Glen Echo Park Update

In September, the Council discussed who should be appointed Town representative to GEPPAC. This discussion lead to a realization that while the current Town Charter allows the Mayor to appoint department heads in the Town government, it is silent on appointments to outside organizations such as GEPPAC, the police board, and the fire board. In response to this, the Mayor submitted Policy Resolution 1710.1, which allows the Mayor to make these appointments after consultation with the Council. This is an operating policy and not an amendment to the Town Code, so it can be revoked by the Council if it need be in the future.

Town Business

Kelly Cole presented plans and paid for a permit to add a screened-in porch to her home at 7311 University Ave. The Council approved awarding a contract to
repair the Town Hall roof. They also approved awarding a contract to perform some street repairs, including sealing cracks and possibly moving the speed bump on Oxford Road.

Council Member Stiglitz reported that a pedestrian activated crosswalk light will be installed on MacArthur Boulevard at Princeton Avenue. For safety reasons, the Council also wanted to remind students who wait for school busses on MacArthur, to wait on the Glen Echo side of the road and only cross after the bus has arrived and traffic has stopped.

**Town Expenses**

In October, the Town paid $3,400 to Lee’s Tree Service, $3,369 to Dennis Alexander (audit), and $3,100 to Elegant Recycling & Refuse Service. —**BILL VINCENT**

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**GLEN ECHO NEEDS YOU**

The response to our call for citizen participation has been great. Here’s where the committees stand. We’re still in need of volunteers interested in improving **Constituent Outreach** and upgrading the **Town Hall**. If anyone has interest in participating in those activities, or any of the other groups, please don’t hesitate to send an email to councilmember@spealman.net.

The **Streets and Sidewalks** committee has been quite active—meeting several times and walking around the Town with potential vendors to identify needed repairs. Members/attendees of the group have included Tim Bragan and Renny Springuel (who lead the group), as well as Edie Springuel, Vanessa Sax, and Henry Barrow.

The **Liveable Town** group has met twice now and has had vibrant discussions around potential ways to improve the Town. Given the overlap with the **Social Events** committee, the two groups have decided to join forces to look at both infrastructure and social enhancements together. Participants have included Aaron Hirsch, Pete Epanchin, Martha Shannon, Dan Spealman, Blair Anderson, Tim Bragan, Julia Wilson, Angela Hirsch, and Emily Parsons. The first event? A Kids Movie Night in early January.

**Environmental Management**: Dia Costello, Holly Shimizu, and Tim Bragan are leading the charge.

The **External Funding and Coordination** group (Dia Costello, Dan Spealman, and Blair Anderson) stands ready to support the efforts of others by seeking additional funds for improvements and activities approved by the Council, and they have begun to reach out to other municipalities to share information. We also have a new liaison to the **Conduit Road Fire Board**, Gloria Levin. —**DAN SPEALMAN**
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What is an epiphyte? The definition of epiphyte is one non-parasitic plant living on another plant. The Spanish moss hanging from oak trees in the Southern U.S. is an epiphytic bromeliad. Spanish moss does not harm the oak tree. In fact, there are actual benefits that epiphytes provide their hosts. The trees provide an anchor or substrate upon which the epiphyte can attach itself and grow happily while the tree gains nutritional benefits from the epiphyte as it accumulates decomposed organic material. Recent research of life in the tree canopy has produced many fascinating biological studies about the complexities of these relationships.

Since these unique plants do not grow in soil, they are known by many as air plants. This group of epiphytes is known as Tillandsia. Epiphytes depend on things on the leaves called tricomes which take in nutrients from air and water. I grow epiphytes during the warm season. They can be hung from trees or nestled in shrubs and vines. Since most epiphytes are tropical or sub-tropical, they are not hardy in our zone. I bring them in for the winter and take them back outside for the warmer months. Indoors they need humid air and, therefore, should not be placed near a heating outlet. They need to be spritzed with water occasionally. Place your epiphytes in bright light but not direct sunlight. I suggest that you dunk them in water every couple of weeks. Some epiphytes have cups in the center, a structure formed by the tightly overlapping leaf bases. These cups collect water and debris. As the debris decomposes, it provides nutrients and creates small watery ecosystems that provide an excellent habitat for frogs and other creatures.

A great way to display and grow epiphytes is to attach them to driftwood or non-treated wood such as cedar or juniper. They look wonderful in terrariums but if you place them on soil, be sure it is well drained and not too wet as this could cause them to rot. Try setting them in the crevices of houseplants. Epiphytes are great fun for children to grow and to learn about. Most garden centers have interesting selections to choose from. —Holly Shimizu

---

**HOLLY IN THE IVY**

Epiphytes grow on other plants without harming them.

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**INDOOR PLANT TIPS**

- The most common way that houseplants are killed is by overwatering. For most indoor plants you should let them get dry between waterings. Ideally, the soil should be moist but not wet. Use water that is room temperature.
- Do not be afraid to cut back indoor plants when they have become too big or are getting leggy.
- If your house plants have aphids, the best way to get rid of them is to cut off the part of the plant with the worst infestation. Another option is to spray them with a blend of dish washing soap and water or use a Safer's Soap product.
Let’s talk about real estate along MacArthur Blvd.”

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As the holiday season gets into full swing, this month brings with it a slew of santa- and menorah-laden events. Start with Bethesda’s Winter Wonderland, which features not only a sighting of ole Saint Nick, but also ice sculpting and free live entertainment in Veteran’s Park (1–4 PM, Saturday, December 2).

Get your four-legged friends in the mix with pet photos with santa on December 9 from noon to 4 PM on Bethesda Lane to benefit Lucky Dog Animal Rescue.

For handmade gift shoppers, there is the Holiday Craft Market December 1 (10 AM–4 PM) in the Bauer Community Recreation Center in Rockville or the Winterwilds Market December 9–10 in Park Potomac for its inaugural craft market of 50 vendors, hand selected for their uniqueness. Hit up The Writer’s Center the afternoon of December 13 for a Holiday Book Fair where you can shop for the bibliophile in your life.

After your shopping is done, get in the spirit of the holidays with these performance events. While the legendary jazz hall bohemian Caverns has officially closed, come out to hear their epic 17-piece band play at the Strathmore on December 10 at 3 PM. Also at the Strathmore, check out The Hip Hop Nutcracker on December 12 for something traditional with a twist.

If you’re looking for a dark place to hide out until the new year, head to Landmark Bethesda Row for their Best of International Shorts Film Festival on December 14. Or come out to the Dark Side Bar Pop-Up running now until January 14 at 816 H Street for a galaxy-inspired menu featuring all things Star Wars commemorating the release of The Last Jedi.

— Mona Kishore

OUT AND ABOUT

T he Wild Bird Center invites all Glen Echo residents to view our beautiful and plentiful wild birds by a video camera mounted on the second-story deck of our building. As an added bonus, you can check on non-bird traffic at the corner of Bryn Mawr Avenue and MacArthur Boulevard at the same time! You can access the feeding station by a camera link on www.youtube.com. Search for “wildbirdcenters,” and then click on Live Stream.

Feeders in use usually include a hopper feeder, fly-through feeder, suet feeder, Nyjer seed feeder, tube feeder, and seed cylinder feeder. Off camera, we also attract birds with a popular birdbath on the deck. Foods most often presented are black-oil sunflower, hulled sunflower, Nyjer seed, private label seed blends, suet cakes, and seed cylinders. Wild bird species seen recently include cardinals, tufted titmouse, chickadee, American goldfinch, house finch, mourning dove, downy woodpecker, hairy woodpecker, blue jay, white-breasted nuthatch, red-bellied woodpecker, house sparrow, starling, and a fearless, second-story squirrel. Not observed yet—but keep your eyes peeled—piliated woodpecker, junco, house wren, and Carolina wren.

—THE WILD BIRD CENTERS

CULTURE BEAT

H ave you heard of Frosty the Snowman? Do you know he’s visiting Glen Echo? He’s the star of the show now playing at Adventure Theater. Here’s a glimpse of the show: Let’s start with the setting. It was very realistic. There is a little town (specifically Glen Echo), there is a stop light, and a police phone. The characters include two boys, two girls, Officer Bump, Ms. Armbruster, and, of course, Frosty. The actors are very talented. Dallas Tolentino (Frosty), for example, can do many gymnastic moves. Was the play enjoyable and funny? Yes! Plus, it was a unique telling of the classic story: Ms. Armbruster hates winter and Frosty tries to help. Want more? I’d suggest you visit Frosty—now playing at Adventure Theater!

—CORRINA SPEALMAN, Glen Echo third grader
Once again, the Town of Glen Echo has been asked to join Cabin John and Brookmont to **provide gifts for families** in homeless and transitional housing through S.O.M.E. (So Others May Eat). Last year, we had a tremendous response and your generosity was greatly appreciated. We will be assigned approximately 20 families this year and soon will be given the names and ages as well as an optional “Wish List” for each child or a gift idea for the home. Patty Sieber is organizing this drive and will let everyone know how to sign up to shop for one of the families. For more information, email her at sieber.patty@gmail.com or call 240-743-7194.

Carol Barton will be working on her paintings during an artist’s residency at the Virginia Center for Creative Arts this month. She was awarded the three-week residency through a competitive jury selection process and plans to continue work on her watercolor landscapes and begin work in oils. Although many know Carol as a book artist and pop-up designer through her “Pocket Paper Engineer” workbooks, Carol’s degree from Washington University School of Fine Arts in St. Louis was in painting. Normally she works in her studio in Bannockburn, but the residency offers uninterrupted time in a new setting amongst a whole community of creative personalities: visual artists, writers, and composers. The Virginia Center for Creative Arts is located in Amhurst, Virginia, near Sweet Briar College, on the historic Mount San Angelo estate. The beautiful location and creative spirit at VCCA should provide Carol with many inspirational ideas to feed her creative endeavors, and she’ll be back for the holidays in Glen Echo.

Georgetown Heritage and the National Park Service presented early-stage **design concepts for the first mile of the C&O Canal** at a public meeting November 2. The design concepts are open for public comment until January 5 via the NPS website. The C&O Canal Association plans to submit an official comment. James Corner Field Operations, the designer of New York’s High Line and other urban parks, has been hired for design work.

**Adventure Theater** will honor Kurt Newman, MD, President of Children’s National Health System, at its Annual Gala on March 15, 2018. Additionally, the theater will honor Diane Hamilton, Artistic Director Emerita and former MTC director, with its inaugural Inspirational Teacher Award. This award honors teachers who have dedicated their lives and their time to children prospering in the arts throughout the DC area.

Have You Heard?

Design concept by James Corner Field Operations

Paintings by Carol Barton

On November 13, 31 Wellesley Circle was demolished. The property was the longtime home of Nancy Long, who moved into the house, then called 200 Wellesley Avenue, when she was just six months old. Her grandparents had bought it in the late 1920s when it was...
just a small brick structure. They made the additions over the years. Nancy, who now lives across the street at 32 Wellesley Circle, sold the property to a developer named Alex Boyar.

A nearby alcohol sales mini-saga continued this fall with the sudden disappearance of beer and wine from the Glen Echo 7-Eleven shelves. Owner Girma Hailu described back-and-forth volleys of an alcohol application denial, approval on appeal, and then denial on further appeal. Talbert’s Ice & Beverage on River Road filed the complaint against Mr. Hailu’s 7-Eleven franchise using the County’s beer and wine regulations, which are protective of independent businesses. Mr. Hailu’s business is a franchise, so he claims that he, too, is an independent business eligible to sell beer and wine in the County. Mr. Hailu plans to appeal the latest ruling. He’d also like to thank neighbors for their ongoing support.

Discussion with the Brookmont Civic League led to the revival of Glen Echo’s participation in the Joint Traffic Committee of nearby communities that engage with the management of the new Intelligence Community Campus on Sangamore. Of interest to Glen Echoans: According to reports from that group, the traffic light planned for the Clara Barton Parkway access at MacArthur Boulevard (by the Irish Inn) has been delayed until spring, at the earliest. The project is awaiting the proper utility reconfiguration by PEPCO. The access to the Irish Inn at Oberlin Avenue will continue to exist under the new configuration, though that may not be the ideal outcome for bikers and walkers, as it considerably lengthens the crosswalk.

Real Estate Report
While there are no updates to the For Sale’s in Town, 47 Wellesley is available for rent for $2,500 per month.
**Sunday Morning Schedule**

Holy Eucharist 8:00 a.m.
Nursery Care Adult Forum 9:15 a.m.
Choral Eucharist & Sunday School 10:30 a.m.
Wednesdays: Morning Prayer at 9:00 a.m.; Eucharist at Noon
On morning service at 10:30 am on 12/24 and 12/31
Christmas Eve: 5:00 pm and 10:30 pm
Christmas Day: 10:00 am

**Music at Redeemer Series**

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