Town Council Notes

The Council did not convene in August, so July 9 was the date of the last official meeting. The Mayor and three of the Council Members were present, with Council Member Spealman absent. Resident Julia Wilson was there taking the minutes, along with consultant to the Mayor Jean Sperling and four residents. The summer meetings are usually quiet, though this one still went on for two hours.

Town Business

The meeting was a meandering affair that touched on many topics. Council Member Costello wanted to tie up some loose ends from the June meeting. Was the Council going to take the next steps on rezoning the Town’s Tulane and Oberlin properties—that is, contacting a civil engineer and a land use attorney? Answer unclear.

The new first draft of the Animal Control Ordinance was never put on the Town’s website despite an agreement in June to do so. Following that Council meeting, the Town lawyer convinced the Mayor that this was not the best course of action, so Ms. Costello asked that the minutes reflect that.

Speaking of the Town lawyer, Ron Bolt, Council Member Stiglitz said that the Town was over budget for legal expenses and queried the Mayor about what the extent of his work has been. The Mayor used an example of a call from a resident about setbacks for an addition, which prompted a call to the lawyer. Mr. Stiglitz pushed back and said this was precisely why the Town defers to the County on such matters. That resident should have been referred to the County rather than the Town paying for a lawyer to weigh in. Ms. Costello commented that when Mr. Bolt attends Council meetings, any business he is needed for should be covered first thing to minimize his billable time.

Mr. Stiglitz and several concerned residents noted that construction without permitting has been visible at 7315 University Avenue since renters Erin Duffy and Jim Corbett moved out. Within 36 hours, the screened-in porch had been walled, windowed, and painted. There was speculation that the kitchen would be opened up into that space—all work which requires electrical and plumbing permitting and inspections. Mr. Stiglitz drafted and sent a letter, including photographs of the before and after and contractors, alerting the County that an inspection needs to occur.

Town Hall Maintenance

It was agreed that the new Town Hall Committee would meet later in July.
This group will discuss the rental rates and amenities of comparable spaces in the area and determine next steps for raising the revenue the Town Hall brings in. The Mayor and Ms. Sperling said the first order was to replace the mildewed mats in the entry of Town Hall. Council Member Long gave a bit of history on the space. Originally, today’s Post Office space and the Town Hall office were one large room, which was excellent for kid parties. The upstairs was used for more formal parties. The Post Office was across Harvard Avenue along with a saloon called Canada’s Tavern, later a restaurant called Echo One. The Town Hall was created for two purposes, said Ms. Long: For social gatherings and for housing the Town’s archives.

Resident Martha Shannon, who is helping the Town come up with a plan for preservation of those archives, asked for $5,000 to proceed with the individual from the County historical society who could craft an action plan. The Council put off making the decision until the next meeting.

A work session to discuss the “chicken ordinance” and the Town-Clerk position was set for August 1. The Town was suffering not having this position filled. Ms. Sperling felt strongly that the office space currently available at Town Hall is a fire hazard and an air quality hazard and suggested better conditions would increase employee retention. (Ed. note: The August 1 meeting was cancelled in late July and a new hire was made, see page 10).

Other Business

Mr. Stiglitz said he wanted to create a No Solicitation List that residents could add their names to. It would make it easier to rebuff door-to-door solicitors, as people are supposed to get permission at Town Hall before approaching residents, and if they had, in fact, registered then they would have the No Solicitation List. Mr. Stiglitz also said that the Council should explore options to monetize parking on Tulane and Oberlin (another suggestion of the Land Use Advisory Committee). Parking meters and making Oberlin one-way with diagonal parking are possibilities. The Mayor added that he went to a meeting about the anticipated traffic light at the Oberlin/MacArthur/Parkway intersection. It’s still pending, in part, because it’s not really expected to solve the problem or any of the other traffic issues in the area, which are only getting worse.

And on that note … the Council voted to reconvene in September with only Ms. Long dissenting in favor of an August meeting. —EMILY PARSONS
Kavita and Chirag Patel were no strangers to Glen Echo when they purchased 23 Wellesley Circle this spring. The couple, who had long resided at Whitley Park townhomes in North Bethesda, had been looking along the MacArthur corridor for years. Like many of us, they recognized the convenience of being so close to D.C., while the river and parkland offered a sense of escape from the frantic pace of city living.

Their search lapsed amidst busy careers and a fast-moving real estate market, but they visited the former Zeidenberg house on a whim this spring and put in an offer. One thing led to another, and by May they were unpacking boxes in their new home.

Glen Echo has delivered on its reputation for hospitality. Neighbors welcomed the couple with an open house as well as cookies, pies, and invitations to ladies’ night. Their former neighborhood was friendly; Glen Echo led Chirag to ask jokingly, “Is this Mayberry?”

On a practical level, they’ve been pleasantly surprised to discover the traffic benefits from their short move. Both are enjoying shorter trips to work since moving away from the bottleneck of central Bethesda.

In the morning and evenings, you may see Chirag or Kavita walking with their Dalmatian, Duke. Duke is a bit shy, but he’s getting accustomed to Glen Echo’s cast of canine characters and their humans. He’s also enjoying having a yard in which to catch his ball again and again and again and again. All of them enjoy the nearby recreation opportunities of the river, canal, and many parks.

Professionally, Kavita is a software engineer and Chirag is an immigration attorney. Between work and the ongoing project of unpacking and settling in, their free time is limited, but both look forward to spending more time in nature and getting to know their new neighborhood. — Angela Hirsch
Episcopal Church of the Redeemer

September Highlights:

Violinist Tatiana Chulochnikova
Musicatredeemer.org September 8 at 5:00 pm
Tickets available now!

Backpack Blessing September 16

“Bristol” Evensong September 16 at 5:00 pm
For more, see our website
www.redeemerbethesda.org

Sunday Services
Holy Eucharist at 8:00 and 10:30 a.m.
Wednesday Services
Morning Prayer at 9:00 am; Holy Eucharist at Noon

6201 Dunrobbin Drive @ Macarthur Blvd.
301-229-3770; office@redeemerbethesda.org

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“Let’s talk about real estate along MacArthur Blvd.”
September is the best time to work on the lawn. In fact, fall is a better time than spring. As the days get shorter and the temperatures cool, conditions are perfect for aerating and overseeding lawns with tall fescue. Doing this work now will make your lawn stronger and, therefore, better able to compete with other unwanted plants. Aerating the lawn provides oxygen to the roots, which is essential for healthy growth. The little holes create good places for the settling of new seed and improve germination. You rake a thin layer of compost over the lawn with a metal rake. The compost will act as a fertilizer and will also enhance the seed germination. Try to stay off the grass while it is germinating for three to four weeks (depending on weather).

Tall fescues are recommended for this area because they tolerate both hot and cold spells and will stay green most of the year. Tall fescue has deep roots that help it to survive foot traffic and drought. Excellent blends of seed that are specific for our area are available at local garden centers. Two of the newer recommended varieties are Rebel IV and Tarheel II.

To reduce weeds, keep the grass healthy and as dense as possible. Do this by using a mower height of three to four inches. Allow the trimmings to fall in the lawn and decompose, thereby adding nitrogen to the soil which is needed by the grass. Never cut more than 1/3 of the grass blade at each cutting (cutting the grass too low is a bad idea). Once established, tall fescue lawns do not need to be watered, because they go dormant in the heat of summer and green up when it gets cooler and rainfall increases. A new lawn, or one being renovated, needs watering to get established. To encourage deep root development, water for a longer period of time but less frequently.

An Alternative: Do you have too much lawn to mow? Or are weeds taking the lead in what grows in your lawn? The answer may be to reduce the size of your lawn. Why? Lawns waste an enormous amount of water as a result of their irrigation requirements. Turf grass is the largest crop in Maryland and is usually fertilized with synthetic fertilizers and various pesticides that end up causing pollution as a result of rain and snow runoff. High levels of nitrogen and phosphorus can seep into our groundwater, nearby water bodies, and, eventually, reach the Chesapeake Bay.

Consider this alternative. Grow what grows well in your lawn and create a green carpet that can be mowed. On the web site for organic land care they use the term “freedom lawns,” which are lawns that are free to grow whatever survives the lawn mower. —HOLLY SHIMIZU

Do birds select specific seeds? We’ve all suspected that birds seem to prefer certain types of seeds over others. Chickadees, for example, love black-oil sunflower seeds but don’t care much for millet. Tests have shown that they do choose one particular sunflower seed over others. When a chickadee picks up a seed, it judges the weight and size of that particular seed. They tend to select small, heavy, plump seeds and to reject (toss away) lighter, slender seeds. Apparently, they select those seeds that yield the greatest food value in return for the energy expended in flying away to open the seed. Amazing!

We once counted the actual number of black-oil sunflower seeds in a 50-lb bag. How many seeds do you think there were? 650,000! Now that’s a lot of “chickadee visits” to your feeder! —THE WILD BIRD CENTERS

**HOLLY IN THE IVY**

This chickadee holds a sunflower seed in its beak.
Celebrating our 22nd year in Glen Echo!

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The month right-fully kicks off with a long weekend. Commemorate Labor Day with the Kensington Parade starting 10 AM on Monday, September 3. Boasting bands and dancers from across the area, all interested are welcome to join in on the march.

Looking to squeeze out every ounce of summer? Take the family to the Drive-In at Union Market for a starry night showing of The Lion King on September 7. The market amenities stay open late for movie goers, with plenty of picnic tables and fake lawn for those who want to enjoy watching in the early fall weather.

The National Zoo’s fundraiser Zoo Uncorked is being held September 13 from 6 to 9 PM, benefiting animal conservation. This event, formerly named Grapes with Apes, promises a medley of food and wine pairings. With VIP tickets providing the added bonus of “special animal encounters.”

While most DC area residents find themselves bemused by museums with ticket prices, Smithsonian Magazine sponsors Museum Day on September 22. Free entrance will be granted to all us cheapskates at the following four museums: National Museum of Women in the Arts, National Building Museum, Marian Koshland Science Museum, and Dumbarton House.

— Mona Kishore
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Serving the Community since 1975

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Introducing Fine Wines & Microbrews Organic Local Kosher, too!
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On July 20, the National Park Service and Montgomery County signed a new ten-year agreement for management of Glen Echo Park. This new agreement was signed by County Executive Ike Leggett and NPS Acting National Capital Regional Director Lisa Mendelson-Ielmini. This agreement extends the public-private partnership that was established in 2002 and renews the County’s commitment to be invested in Glen Echo Park.

The original partnership was launched after an extensive study of various options conducted by the National Park Service. Then-County Executive Doug Duncan, a strong arts advocate, was eager to support the development of Glen Echo Park programs, and that vision has continued to be a major focus under the Leggett administration. Congressional representatives also have been strong supporters of the partnership. Senator Chris Van Hollen was instrumental in moving the agreement to a final version after many delays and was present at the signing ceremony.

Here are a few facts about the Park. Since 1971 the property has been owned by the federal government and oversight assigned to the NPS. In fact, the Town of Glen Echo played an instrumental role in saving the Park from development. Town resident and long-term Council Member Nancy Long led an effort to assure that the property would be saved under federal jurisdiction and especially can take credit for raising funds to save the Dentzel Carousel, a true national treasure.

The current operating agreement between the County and the Park Service ensures that the Park will continue to be used as a facility for arts and culture programs and requires adherence to historic preservation requirements including protection of the natural environment and views of the Potomac. Montgomery County will continue to operate the Park and its programs (with the Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture as its on-site manager) and will take over more responsibilities for grounds and facilities maintenance from the Park Service. The Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture (“the Partnership”) was established in 2002 by Montgomery County. The Partnership will continue as the administrative body managing the site on behalf of the County and providing program leadership by selecting and managing resident and non-resident arts partners to operate programs, overseeing all of the arts programs, classes, the Aquarium, the Dentzel Carousel, music and theater programs, and special events. The Partnership is responsible for fundraising and marketing, managing rentals, and coordinating with the County to maintain all facilities. Collaboration between the County, the Partnership, and NPS will occur in regard to facilities upgrades, security, and short and long-term planning and reporting.

Over the past 18 months, the Partnership board has conducted both a strategic and master planning effort with a goal of creating additional program space and physical upgrades to better serve the public and cooperating artists and resident programs. Major facility repairs and improvements will continue and are needed to preserve the historic structures and update aging facilities. Fortunately, the NPS, the County, and the State of Maryland have committed funding to replace the roof of the Carousel and install a new fire suppression system. Operating funds come from program income, membership, county and state grants, and individual donations.

In the case of a federal government shutdown, the Park and its programs will remain open. Excluded from the agreement is the Clara Barton House, a National Historic Site. The Park Service will continue to manage that property as they do today and share responsibility with the County for maintenance of the large parking lot.

Anyone with questions can contact Martha Morris Shannon, board member, or Mayor Willem Polak, who represents the Town on the Partnership board.

—Martha Shannon
The Town of Glen Echo has hired a new Town Manager for the position formerly known as Town Clerk. Nicole Ventura, who started in this position on July 1, will be keeping office hours at Town Hall 10 AM–4 PM, Monday thru Friday.

She is married to Stefan, a retired DC firefighter, and they have two boys, Christopher (33) and Jonathan (31). She has prior experience with town management having worked for the town of Somerset for nine years. Nicole says she “looks forward to working with the Mayor and Council Members, and to meeting and helping the residents of Glen Echo.” She can be reached at 301-320-4041 or at townhall@glenecho.org.

Welcome, Nicole!

This summer, four Glen Echo families banded together to break out of the regular (and pricey) day camp routine and spent three weeks as Camp Glen Echo. With seven kids—all friends, and all elementary school-aged—the crew fit in a lot of summertime fun, with one or two adults managing the chaos every day.

They swam in the creeks and at the pool, foraged for nettles (and baked them into a quiche for lunch), made t-shirts, completed a Town-wide scavenger hunt, designed obstacle courses for bugs, and even went on an overnight camping trip. The cooperative experiment was a raging success for kids and parents alike. Look for the campers to make a return appearance on the streets of Town in summer of 2019! If you’d like help starting a cooperative camp venture of your own, contact Angela Hirsch.

August saw a 100-plus-year-old willow oak come down at 31 Wellesley Circle (soon to have a Cornell Avenue address). The property formerly belonging to resident Nancy Long was bought and is being developed by Alex Boyar. Both Alex and Nancy had arborists examine the tree and declare it unwell and hazardous. Nancy, who will soon be celebrating her 90th birthday, has many fond memories of swinging from those tree branches as a girl.

Renzo Johnson of Princeton Avenue has had two photographs selected for the
The neighborhood turned out for Glen Echo’s second annual 4th of July parade. Maire Hewitt, Jane Stevenson, and Susan Grigsby got into the spirit by donning variations on the theme of red, white, and blue (to which a black and white photo cannot do justice!).

Glen Echo Photoworks Juried Youth Photography Exhibition. It runs from August 16 to September 23 at the Photoworks studio. This is the second year in a row in which Renz has had photographs selected.

Glen Echo Park’s new PAGE program, pitched as an arts-enriched preschool, hit a roadblock in June when its permitting didn’t come through. But the program continues to offer slots for the 2018/19 school year with one caveat: a parent or caregiver must attend with each child.

Real Estate Report
Active in the market are 6001 Yale Avenue, listed at $1,095,000, and the four prospective homes at 2 Vassar Circle, listed at $1,399,000 each.

They Say it’s Your BIRTHDAY!
Aug. 3, Colin Koonce, 14
Aug. 25, Sandra Gillberg, 2
Sept. 1, Mads Anderson, 5
Sept. 12, Corrina Spealman, 10
Sept. 18, Alya Kishore, 1
Sept. 18, Hayes Polak, 5
Sept. 23, Alexander Vincent, 12
Sept. 21, Liam Dobson, 8
Sept. 26, Stella Gillberg, 4
Sept. 28, PG Parsons Amdur, 5
Sept. 28, Declan Spealman, 8

Glen Echo Town Hall Events
FSGW English Country Dance, Wednesdays, Sept. 5, 12, 19, 26 8–10:30 PM, free to Town residents

Local Events
Sept. 7 7 PM, Glen Echo Fire Department hosts its annual bingo night in the Spanish Ballroom
Sept. 15 2–6 PM, Cabin John Chicken & Crab Feast, Clara Barton Community Center, $16 per person
Sept. 22 9AM–Noon, Grateful Shred event, Clara Barton Community Center

Glen Echo Park Events
Sept. 1 Noon–4 PM, Open House for fall classes and activities
Sept. 1–3 Noon–6 PM, Labor Day Art Show in the Spanish Ballroom
Sept. 2 2:45 PM–6 PM, Free waltz lesson and dance in the Spanish Ballroom
Sept. 2 3–5 PM, FSGW Family Dance in the Spanish Ballroom’s back room, free!
Sept. 7, 14, 21, 28 11:30 AM, Animal story time at the aquarium, for ages 2–5, standard entry fees apply
Sept. 7 6–8 PM, Art Walk in the Park on the first Friday of each month through September
Sept. 29 10 AM–1 PM, Family-friendly swing dance in the Ballroom’s back room, $8 (under 13, free)
Sept. 30 11 AM–4 PM, Then and Wow!

The Puppet Co. www.thepuppetco.org; 301-634-5380
Peter and the Wolf, through September 30
Tiny Tots select Weds, Sats, and Sundays at 10AM

Adventure Theater MTC www.adventure-theater-mtc.org:
301-634-2270
Blueberries for Sal, September 21–October 21

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LADIES NIGHT
TUESDAY, SEPT. 25, AT 7:30 PM

HOLLY SHELDON
HOSTING
6105 YALE AVENUE
301-229-2268

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Four distinct custom homes are now available for pre-purchase on Vassar Circle in Glen Echo.

Get in early to reserve a lot and customize as much as you’d like. We have fully developed drawings ready for permit with options. The base model is $1,399,000 for 4 bedrooms, 3.5 bathrooms, and 3,100 square feet of living space. We also offer options for a den and a third story with a 5th bedroom, bath, and bonus loft. We can work with buyers to develop a completely custom design. For those interested in going their own way, lots may be purchased for $599,000.

Reserve your slice of Glen Echo today. This offering will not last! Contact: Aaron Hirsch 202-255-8313 aaron@aaronhirsch.com

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