

The Echo

The Town of GLEN ECHO, MARYLAND Chartered 1904



October 2013

Town Council Meeting In September

By Jerry Bodlander

There were no actions taken by the Council at the September meeting, but items discussed included the reconstruction of MacArthur Boulevard and the possible permit fee for connecting individual homes to the anticipated natural gas pipelines.

MacArthur Boulevard

Councilmember Nancy Long brought up the reconstruction of MacArthur Boulevard, expressing concern about the project's impact on Glen Echo, noting there may be a need for traffic control. For instance, she said, there will be five lanes of traffic instead of three and pedestrians must negotiate all five lanes. Motorists making a right turn will have to cross two lanes, one of which is the "racing biker" lane, she said. If making a left turn, motorists will have to cross three lanes one of which is the "racing biker"

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lane. She pointed out that bikes will also be in the two vehicular lanes, and "racing bikers do not like to stop, and therefore they don't." While the Council discussed the potential problems, there was no action taken. Construction is expected to be complete in spring 2014. (*Ed. Note.* There is an excellent article by Peter Vogt in the *Village News* on construction of the Bike Path. See www.cabinjohn.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/2013_09.pdf.)

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THE ECHO

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Next Deadline: October 20, 2013

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
October 14, 2013, at 8 pm

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Gas Connection Permit Fee

The Mayor is still proposing a permit fee that would be levied on households that connect to natural gas. She said the fee is being considered so the Town can maintain a surplus of at least \$200,000. The Town paid Washington Gas \$209,000 to lay the pipelines needed to supply gas to individual houses. Nicole Fraser noted that the Town accountant recommended that the surplus level be kept at \$200,000.

An ordinance was introduced several months ago enabling the Town to levy a fee on any household that chooses to hook up to gas once the pipelines are installed. This fee would go to the Town and would be in addition to any fees charged by the gas company, which could be nothing. Gas company hookup fees will depend on the timing of the connection and the appliance or system the homeowner chooses to install. If a furnace, for instance, there will be no charge to connect to gas company lines other than the retrofit charges from the heating or plumbing contractor used for the installation.

The ordinance, as introduced, specifies a fee of \$300 but the amount could change. A vote and further discussion was postponed until October because Steve Matney was absent and the Mayor wanted everybody to be in attendance when that discussion and vote take place.

Glen Echo Park Report

The staffing levels and the services available at Glen Echo Park could be changing. Aaron LaRocca of the Park Service told the Council that two management summits will be held by the management staff of the George Washington Memorial Parkway in September and October and they will discuss a re-organization. These meetings “will go a long way in determining the structure of the organization, the levels of staffing and visitor services,” said LaRocca.

He said he didn’t know how the services at Glen Echo and the Clara Barton House might be affected, but anticipated there will be an impact. He expects that the Park’s interpretive services like the carousel program, the park history program, outreach efforts,

and community engagement will be considered for change.

The Park Service has received the money to restore Dr. Julian Hubbell’s bedroom and an adjoining original bathroom at the Clara Barton House. Other than Clara Barton, Hubbell was the only other permanent resident of the site. A meeting will be held next month to discuss the operations of the house during the project. The renovation will deal with asbestos and other hazardous materials.

The regional director and superintendent signed The Finding of No Significant Impact and the construction permit for the Montgomery County shared used path. The next step will be a pre-construction walk-through with County and contractor staff.

A meeting is set for October 24th to discuss fire suppression, climate control, and a roof replacement project at the Park. The meeting will be held in the Bumper Car Pavilion.

Crime in the Area

Crime is sharply lower in major categories in Glen Echo and the surrounding area compared to a year ago, measured from August through August. Town Council member Matt Stiglitz attended the bi-monthly meeting of the Montgomery County Community Police Board meeting and reported the following to the Council:

While some of the numbers for the police beat area that includes Glen Echo are very small; robberies are down 75 percent. Residential burglaries are

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down about 40 percent while commercial and school burglaries are down about 30 percent, Stiglitz said. Theft from cars and vehicle thefts are also lower.

The only area where crime has risen is aggravated assault, with two more incidents this year compared to a year ago, he said. In the larger area that includes Glen Echo, Police District 2, the only increase was in commercial burglaries, which were up 88 percent.

Robberies and stolen vehicles were both down by 34 percent. Residential burglaries are down 12 percent and thefts from autos are down 25 percent, he said.

Glen Echo Traffic Enforcement

Police officers spent 12 hours monitoring traffic on Oxford Road and parking violations on Oberlin Avenue. They issued 40 warnings and 12 citations. The parking violations on Oberlin appear to be resolved. The Town paid for these services as it does each month depending on total hours of police officer involvement. The cost is usually \$480 per month.

Upcoming Events

The Town-wide yard sale will be October 19. Residents who sign up can sell from their homes or from the front of the Town Hall. The rain location will be inside the Town Hall.

The Town Halloween Party will be October 31. Clerk-Treasurer Nicole Fraser noted that Montgomery County schools will be closed the next day for a teacher work day.

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Real Estate Report

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44 Wellesley Circle	1,500,000	For Sale

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 Melanie@dorsetwest.com
 www.cabinjohnorganizing.com

Animal Control Laws

Dan Macy posted a brochure titled *Summary of Animal Control Laws and Services Provided* on the Town's listserv. The brochure is given out by Montgomery County.

The phone number for the Montgomery County Police, Animal Services Division is 301-279-8000. Obviously if you feel threatened by an animal you should call 911.

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LADIES OF GLEN ECHO

Ladies Night

on Tuesday,

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At the home of

Debi Sacks

52 Wellesley Circle

RSVP: 301-320-2544

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O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness; let the whole earth stand in awe of him.

■ SUNDAY MORNING SCHEDULE

Holy Eucharist	8:00 a.m.
Adult Forum & Bible Study	9:15 a.m.
Nursery Care	10:15 a.m.
Choral Eucharist	10:30 a.m.
Church School for All Ages	10:30 a.m.

■ UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

Sunday, October 6, at 5:00 p.m.
Inscape Chamber Orchestra in Concert: "Songs of the Earth"

Monday, October 7, at 7:30 p.m.
Contemplative Service in the Style of Taizé

Sunday, November 3, at 5:00 p.m.
Choral Evensong for the Sunday after All Saints' Day

6201 Dunrobbin Drive at MacArthur Boulevard
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www.redeemberbethesda.org

LOCAL EVENTS

Music at Redeemer Series

**Inscape Chamber Orchestra in Concert:
“Songs of the Earth”**

Redeemer Church

Sunday, October 6, at 5 pm

Redeemer’s acclaimed Ensemble-in-residence opens the 2013–2014 season of the Music at Redeemer Series with an exploration of the use of folk-song and poetry in classical music. The program features Dan Visconti’s Low Country Haze, Luciano Berio’s Folk Songs, and Gustav Mahler’s Der Abschied from Das Lied von der Erde (arr. Arnold Schoenberg), with baritone Andrew McLaughlin. Free-will offering. Reception to follow. For more information, visit www.redeemberbethesda.org/music or www.inscape.org.

Potomac Conservancy Event

Potomac River Jam

Lockhouse 8 River Center

Sunday, October 20, 12 pm to 4 pm

This free event includes games, pumpkin painting, raffles, and more. Songs of the river will be sung. Canoe trips will be offered near Minnie’s Island. See www.potomac.org.

Bannockburn Craft Show

Bannockburn Community Center

6314 Bannockburn Drive

Saturday, November 2, 11 am to 4 pm

More Information, 301-229-4045.

Annual show featuring a range of crafts, including jewelry, glass, clothing, honey, pet gifts, household goods, ceramics, mustards and condiments, baked goods and other items. Show benefits the historic Bannockburn Community Club.



GLEN ECHO TOWN HALL EVENTS

These Events Are Free to Town Residents.

FSGW English Country Dance
every Wednesday, 8–10:30 pm

Town Yard Sale
Saturday, October 19, 9 am–2 pm

Town Halloween Party
Thursday, October 31, 5:30 pm



CLASSIFIED ADS

Babysitting. Responsible Whitman student available for babysitting. Passed Safe Sitter course at Suburban Hospital. Call Annie at 301-922-7840 or email at annieb1999@gmail.com.

New Book Club Members Wanted: My book club is looking for new members to replace some recent departures. Club meets once a month, usually on Sunday nights, at the members’ homes. The host for the month gets to pick the book. Discussions are interesting but not intense. Contact Debbie Beers, 301-229-7308, for more information.

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.

Opinion

Should the Town Charge Residents \$300 for Gas Hookup?

By Debbie Lange

That is a question many people have been asking, so I posed the question at a couple of different Town Council meetings and received different answers. Here are two that to me most explain the reason for the charge:

- Converting to gas is a benefit only to those who convert, so those people should reimburse the Town for some of the money the Town is spending to lay the gas lines.
- Our auditors recommend the Town have a year's worth of operating expenses as surplus funds, or \$200,000, in case the Town has an emergency. The cost of laying the gas lines would cause our surplus to dip a bit below that amount, and the surcharge makes up the difference.

Who benefits from laying the gas lines?

Are the people who get gas the only beneficiaries of the availability of gas to all? Or does everyone benefit from having this option, especially in increased property values, which would eventually translate into increased sales prices for our homes. Talking to real estate agents and property developers, I've heard a lot of numbers tossed around. Some have said that our home values would increase by at least \$10,000 per house, or a benefit of \$900,000 to the entire Town, just by having the option to connect to a gas line. This assumes that the alternative fuel source, such as oil or electricity, is more expensive. For someone with geothermal heating, the gas option would not offer that sort of benefit. However, there is a case to be made that if the value of all your neighbors' properties increases, yours will increase too because properties are judged somewhat by the surrounding properties.

As for the money the Town is investing in this venture, we must ask, whose money is the Town spending? Where did this money come from? Well, from us, of course. It's our tax dollars being spent. So

an extra fee is essentially topping up the money we already pay in taxes. When the Town plans the yearly budget, it holds a budget hearing so that we can have a voice in how our money is spent. I'm pleased to see that as I was writing this, an announcement appeared in my mailbox alerting us to a discussion of the fee at the next Town Council meeting.

Should residents be assessed to keep the surplus funds from dropping below \$200,000?

It's not as if the Town's surplus has never dropped below that amount. I'm under the impression that it does on a fairly regular basis. Here's the information I've garnered: Generally speaking, the Town's yearly income is usually greater than its expenditures by about \$50,000 or so, for a very good reason. That surplus amount keeps accumulating until we have enough to repave our roads. At that point we spend our surplus, and our excess funds drop to a low point. Just how low, I'm not sure, but I believe it's well below the \$200,000 mark. We repave our roads about every eight years, so we have a cycle of funds accumulating and then being spent on the road project.

The gas project is using funds that might otherwise have accumulated for the road project. It seems, however, that the Town has enough surplus funds to be able to manage both projects, but therein lies the question: Does it? Will our \$300 contribution, which would net the Town \$21,900 if all 73 potential gas converters actually followed through, make a crucial difference? And most important, do we have all the facts we need to be able to weigh in intelligently on this issue?

The facts that the Town distributes every year are our budget versus actual figures. What I would find more helpful would be statements of the Town's yearly income, yearly outgo, and accumulated surplus. Figures for the last 10 years, with attention called to major and unusual projects, such as repaving, would be shed considerable light on the Town's financial process.



Glen Echo Park Activities

The Puppet Co.
Peter and the Wolf
Oct. 17–Nov. 22

Tiny Tots
Select Weds, Sats, and Suns at 10 am
See www.thepuppetco.org
or call 301-634-5380

Adventure Theatre MTC

Goodnight Moon
Sept. 20–Oct. 27
See www.adventuretheatre-mtc.org
or call 301-634-2270

Town-Wide Yard Sale

Saturday, October 19, from 9 am to 2 pm

Always a Lively Event! Get Ready NOW!

Organizers will advertise in the Washington Post, on Craigslist, and on local listservs. There will be lawn signs, a banner on George Borsari’s garage, and flyers in public places.

To participate, set up a table at your house or at the Town Hall yard. If it rains, we will use the Town Hall ballroom.



For more information call:
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