

TOWN OF GLEN ECHO
Town Council Meeting
March 12, 2012

ATTENDANCE: Deborah Beers, Mayor
Nancy Long, Councilmember
Eve Arber, Councilmember
Steve Matney, Councilmember
Mark McCaffrey, Councilmember (absent)
Nicole Fraser, Clerk/Treasurer (absent)
Sophie Keefer, acting Clerk

VISITORS: Debbie Lange, Resident
Peter Somerville, Resident
Jim McGunnigle, Echo reporter
Michael Bobbitt, Resident
Polly Angelakis, NPS¹ Site Manager of GEP
Matt Stiglitz, Resident
Dia Costello, Resident
Phyllis Fordham, Resident

Mayor Beers called the meeting to order at approximately 8:01 p.m.

GLEN ECHO PARK REPORT

Ms. Angelakis advised the Council that she shared the information reported in last month's Echo regarding the Oxford Road and University Avenue traffic camera with GEP staff and with GEPPAC. Mayor Beers reported that she approached the State of Maryland's traffic department regarding installation of a stop sign camera at the intersection of Oxford Road and University Avenue. The State advised her that it is too late in the year to introduce the necessary legislation; for passage this session, legislation must have been introduced by September 2011. Moreover, the State would not be inclined to approve legislation because it is under pressure to get rid of stop light cameras at other intersections. Mayor Beers reported that she then asked State if, at a minimum, the Town would be able to collect fines from stop sign violations to offset the costs of the off duty police officer the Town hires to stop violators. The State was non-committal.

Ms. Angelakis reported that the geothermal test wells on the field in front of the parking lot were removed several weeks ago. She said that the engineers soon will let the GEP know if the proposed geothermal system is feasible. She said that the GEP let the contractor know that it is critical that the field is still available for parking. She noted that the geothermal wells might be placed to create lines for parking.

¹ Abbreviations used in this document include AT (Adventure Theatre), EECBG (Energy Efficiency and Conservation and Block Grant), GEP (Glen Echo Park), GEPPAC (Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture), GSI (Guest Services, Inc.), NHP (National Historical Park), NHS (National Historic Site) and NPS (National Park Service).

Ms. Angelakis also reported that she met with the Montgomery County engineers regarding drainage concerns at Oberlin and University Avenues. Councilmember Long asked if a larger drainage pipe would be installed. Ms. Angelakis responded that the Park would need to show why a larger pipe is needed. If drainage problems cause trouble with the embankment, a larger pipe might be warranted.

Ms. Angelakis reported that there are plans for a visitor center at the Candy Corner. Also, she advised the Council of several events to commemorate the death of Clara Barton, including actors impersonating Clara Barton and her chief engineer, the planting of a tree, and an open house. She also reported that a new caterer, the Brown Bag, has been chosen for the snack bar (*N.B.* – This action required an amendment to the Co-operative Agreement signed between the NPS and Montgomery County, Maryland; catering services had been provided Guest Services, Inc., under a long-standing contract between NPS and GSI. The significance here is that an added responsibility has been handed over by NPS to GEPPAC).

Ms. Angelakis noted that she emailed the C&O Canals NHP Superintendent with questions about the canal drainage in November and was informed that it was for the evaluation of construction features. The C&O Canal response advised Ms. Angelakis that when the evaluation is done, the Park will close the waste weir, allow water to collect in the prism, and then allow water to flow. Mayor Beers noted that below the Ballroom, the canal is all mud.

Ms. Angelakis reported that GEP is looking into whether a Town Resident may have planted shrubs on NPS land near Oberlin Avenue.

ADVENTURE THEATRE (AT)

Mr. Bobbitt, AT Producing Artistic Director, advised the Council that the theatre would be celebrating its 60th anniversary season, with 41 years at GEP. AT is planning to honor past presidents at a gala to be held on April 16 at the Silver Spring Civic Center; Mr. Bobbitt said he hoped the Town would support the gala with a donation of \$1,500. He reported that the theatre received 13 Helen Hayes nominations this year and is the 4th most nominated theater in the D.C. area. He said that he could dispel rumors about the theater moving out of the park and merging with another company. Regarding merging with another theater, he reported that AT has merged with a musical theater center that focuses on musical training for children ages 6-18. AT's target audience is aged 2-8, so now children can remain part of Adventure Theater from age 2 until they go to college. He noted that 289 performances at AT sold at 96% capacity, but the theater needs a more diverse revenue stream so that shows aren't the only thing carrying the theater. The average ticket price is \$14. He noted that the theater has no long-term debt and only \$15,000 in liabilities.

Mayor Beers asked how much the Town had given in the past. Mr. Somerville noted that the Town previously gave \$1,500.

Mr. Stiglitz inquired about the rumors concerning a potential move by AT. Mr. Bobbitt responded that the move is an emotional issue. Often, the theater has to turn children away because there are an insufficient number of seats to meet the demand and the shows are often sold out. Also, he said that this is turning patrons and therefore, revenue. He reported that the theater has explored every option, including co-productions. This could result in more seats, but the performances would be off-site. Ultimately, the theater loses money because of rental and other costs. He said that the theater looked at different venues but could not make any of them work financially. Also, the theater has had discussions with developers and the County, but nothing came to fruition. He said they are currently looking at gutting some space currently used for classrooms and office space.

Mr. Stiglitz asked what is the current capacity and what capacity would be ideal. Mr. Bobbitt responded that current capacity is 165, and 200-250 seats would be ideal. Mr. Bobbitt said that the focus will be on the merger, and the theater is not going anywhere.

Motion 2012-05 to donate \$1,500 to Adventure Theatre was introduced. Motion passed unanimously.

Councilmember Long reiterated that it is important to the town that AT stay in the Park. Mr. Bobbitt said he wanted to make that happen.

STOP SIGN CAMERA

Mr. Stiglitz noted that the Town Clerk-Treasurer has 15 copies of the DVD, prepared by Willem Polak, of drivers running the stop sign on Oxford Road at University Avenue. Mayor Beers said that the Town would send a copy to State Senator Brian Frosh.

Ms. Fordham noted that her house backs onto Oxford Road and, in her view, the only way to improve the situation is to get park traffic off of Oxford Road. Until the Town is willing to get behind a lobbying effort to do that, we are wasting our time, she said. She said she thinks traffic will increase and that traffic should be brought directly from MacArthur Boulevard into GEP.

Mayor Beers responded that the State advised the Town to consult with County traffic engineers to see if they can come up with a design to re-route traffic. Councilmember Matney reminded Council that there was an option to have traffic enter at the other entrance to GEP. Councilmember Long noted that there was a NPS study that produced an option to have traffic enter from MacArthur Boulevard and proceed via a bridge over the creek. This option was not pursued due to cost and damage to the creek environment.

Ms. Fordham noted that noise from the Park gets later every year, sometimes beyond midnight. She also raised another, unrelated issue about the yellow lines marking driveways and no parking areas that are disappearing in many places in the Town, including her driveway, and that a no parking sign is needed.

Councilmember Matney noted that this was raised with Case Design, the company that painted the curb, but the yellow lines could not be repainted during the winter weather. He noted that Case also will paint yellow curbs on one side of the circles for no parking. Councilmember Long noted that paint on newly-paved sidewalks has been flaking off, and that a paint that can stick to all pavements should be used.

TOWN HALL USE

Ms. Costello requested permission to use the Town Hall for a class on Sunday, May 6, to hold a class about energy healing. There are 12 people potentially enrolled. There would be a charge of \$215.00 for the class (four hours), but she would consider giving Town residents a discount. She noted that this would be one of her free uses as a Town resident for the year. Mayor Beers responded that there were no objections from the Town, and Councilmember Long confirmed the Hall would be available.

The Council considered a request from Town Resident Colleen Perlman to use the Town Hall on Sundays from noon to 4:00 pm on a continuing basis for a Glen Echo scrapbooking club. Councilmember Long reading from Ms. Perlman's proposal, said that the club would allow Town residents and friends to work on transforming photos into archival albums. Ms. Perlman would provide instruction to participants along with snacks and beverages. Mayor Beers responded that this would be too much time to take on Sundays, and that in the past residents who propose continuing use have been told to use their three free personal uses for classes and to require that Town-resident participants donate their personal uses. It was suggested that weeknight evenings would be a better choice for this activity. Councilmember Long said that she would suggest a different time-frame to Ms. Perlman

The Town St. Patrick's Day party will be March 17. Residents planning to attend should RSVP.

FEBRUARY MINUTES

Motion 2012-06 to approve the minutes with changes of the February Council Meeting.

Changes were:

- 1) Insertion of "-B" in the footnotes on the first page after ICC and on page 4 first and fourth sentences of the fourth paragraph.
- 2) Insertion of "-Bethesda" in the footnotes on the first page after "Intelligence Campus Community."
- 3) Insertion of "C&O Canal NHP" and removal of park in the fourth sentence of the fourth paragraph of page 4.

Motion passed unanimously.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY POLICE CITATION REPORT

Councilmember Matney requested that the Town ask the police officer to provide a breakdown between citations and warnings. Mr. Stiglitz noted that the explanation for

why this could not be done was weak, and that the police officer likely writes very few tickets. Councilmember Matney asked if the officer would issue a ticket if a person already has a warning. Mr. Stiglitz responded that the warnings are probably not part of the system so the officer would not be aware if the person had previously received a warning. The Town will ask the Clerk Treasurer to find out whether the warnings are verbal or written, whether a warning will show in traffic records, and why tickets and warnings cannot be broken down on the report.

Mayor Beers said that she would ask county traffic engineers to look at the speed bump to see if its location could be improved. Also, the location of the crosswalk does not make sense, it leads nowhere. Mayor Beers also suggested a stop sign at the intersection, flashing red on Oxford and yellow on University. Councilmember Long opposed this because it would lend an urban element not appropriate in the Town

ENERGY EFFICIENT AND CONSERVATION BLOCK GRANT

Councilmember Long reported the Town acquired a more energy efficient new computer and fax machine through the EECEBG grant.

ORDINANCES

Mayor Beers received a set of Town ordinances from the Town's attorney. She said that Council would need to go through them line by line to ensure that all changes have been made and none are missing. Councilmember Matney suggested breaking this review up over several meetings.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO THE AGENDA

Councilmember Long reported on the GEPPAC annual fundraising gala, to be held May 19 at the Park. The gala will honor Jim Sandborn, one of the original artists when the NPS began administration of programs at GEP in the 1970's.

She also reported that there is an exhibit in the GEPPAC area on the second floor of the work of Tom Kenyon, a graphic artist and husband of former NPS park ranger Ronnie Spewak. The exhibit opens March 31.

Mayor Beers reported that she and Cabin John Citizens Association President were interviewed by Fox Channel 5 for a 30 second promotion spot focusing on local communities.

Meeting adjourned at 9:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Sophie Keefer

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Deborah M. Beers, Mayor

Date

Attachments : Town Hall Use Report
Police Citation Report