

Town of Glen Echo
Council Meeting Minutes
November 10, 2008

ATTENDEES: Debbie Beers, Mayor
Nancy Long, Councilmember
Eve Arber, Councilmember
Robin Kogelnik, Councilmember
Steve Matney, Councilmember
Cathie Polak, Clerk-Treasurer

VISITORS: Sharon Cleary, NPS, C & O Canal
Maria Capozzi, NPS, GEP Acting Site Manager
David Fyock, Glen Echo Baptist Church
Kellie Bohi, Resident
Willem Polak, Resident

Mayor Beers opened the meeting at 8 p.m. She then invited Acting Site Manager, Maria Capozzi, to report on Glen Echo Park.

GLEN ECHO PARK REPORT

Montgomery County Department of Public Works (DPWT) Oxford Road storm drain improvement project was completed ahead of schedule. According to Ms. Capozzi, the project seemed to go smoothly. Mayor Beers said she was impressed with the speed with which the project was completed; she plans to send a letter complimenting Mr. Michael Mitchell, DPWT Engineer for the project.

Phase V Construction:

Ms. Capozzi reported that construction is “moving right along;” the reconstructed Crystal Pool façade is up, the Caretakers Cottage work is ahead of schedule. The glass blowers should be back in their studio in the Cottage by January. The retaining wall at the side of the Cottage is nearly complete.

When asked, Ms. Capozzi said the playground should reopen by November 29, with a new seated viewing area for adults. Park representatives met with Town resident Debbie Lange to review plans for replacing the existing playground equipment and gather Ms. Lange’s historical data on the playground, a project on which she worked as a volunteer. Ms. Capozzi said the Park is hopeful about reusing all but one piece of playground equipment. Councilmember Kogelnik inquired about the materials the Park plans to use on the playground surface. (Debbie Lange was able to provide documentation on the toxicity of the materials the NPS originally planned to use under the playground equipment.) Ms. Capozzi said the NPS is still looking at what material will be used under the playground equipment and added that the materials will not be installed until spring.

Mayor Beers thanked Maria Capozzi for coming to the Council meeting.

Councilmember Kogelnik brought up the possibility of a dog waste bag receptacle station in the green space of the parking lot, which had been discussed with the previous site manager, Kym Elder. Council explained that there was discussion about putting a pet waste station near the Clara Barton NHS parking area and that the Town is willing to help pay for bags. Ms. Capozzi said she would investigate the possibility of this suggestion.

Willem Polak asked about the Town's response to the Oxford Road ownership letter from the NPS. Mayor Beers explained that she still plans to respond to the letter; she would like a better response from the NPS. Mayor Beers explained that she wants to discuss a response with town attorney, Norman Knopf, and plans to respond once the projected NPS staff changes are official. Willem Polak pressed the issue, saying that the town has been trying to get a response for several years; he says it is his opinion that the NPS is stonewalling because they do not want to make any decision that could give up rights to Oxford Road. Mayor Beers stated that the Town has written only one letter and that she would like to try again with another negotiation before any other action. The Mayor mentioned an Action to Quiet Title as a possibility to solve the dispute of Oxford Road if there is no acceptable response from the NPS. The Town will continue as if they own road. Mr. Polak asked what action would be taken if no acceptable response is provided from NPS; Mayor Beers did not respond.

Mr. Polak said he appreciates that the situation is very different, with GEPPAC and the amount of patrons and traffic they bring to the Park. He said reconfiguring a safer road should not be a condition of ownership.

Councilmember Kogelnik noted that there seems to be a lack of communication from the NPS; she asked that the town be kept in the loop as the Park makes any changes or improvements.

National Children's Resource Center (NCRC) will move out of their temporary space in the park next week which should help with traffic volume during the day.

Mayor Beers noted that it is the NPS trees on the Park side of Oxford Road that are overhanging and obscuring view of the stop sign at University Avenue. She asked Ms. Capozzi to have the trees trimmed to provide better viewing of the stop sign. Councilmember Long said she supports painting "Stop Ahead" in the pavement further up Oxford Road on the incoming lane; at present, the word "stop" appears in the pavement at the stop sign.

Clara Barton Furnace/Fuel Tanks

Cathie and Willem Polak addressed the proposed site for new, temporary above ground propane fuel tanks at the Clara Barton NHS (CBNHS). The planned site is next to a shed that was to be temporary in 1984. The Polaks are concerned by the NPS lack of notification of the proposed action, as placement of above ground propane tanks negatively impacts the homeowners near the CBNHS. Ms. Capozzi indicated that this is a "done deal," and the work should be completed within few weeks. Ms. Capozzi indicated

that the NPS was not required to notify residents because this is a maintenance project. Mr. Polak said that is unacceptable, that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires notification in this kind of situation. Mr. Polak asked Ms. Capozzi to arrange an on-site meeting with NPS officials before beginning this project. Ms. Capozzi said she would arrange a meeting.

Councilmember Long asked Mr. Polak why he sees this issue as so important. Mr. Polak responded that the Department of Interior and the NPS must have accountability and a responsibility to its neighbors. Councilmember Long noted that this and all development projects in the Park should receive public notification and comment; she noted further that she has long been a proponent of such action on any government-owned property.

Mayor Beers emphasized that the bottom line is that the Town needs to be notified in time to respond to changes at the GEP and CBNHS.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion 2008-29 to approve as presented the October 13, 2008, Town Council meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

Councilmember Matney asked about the Town being reimbursed for the U.S. Post Office sign. C/T Polak said she plans to send a copy of the invoice to USPS.

TOWN HALL USE

Resident Kellie Bohi said she is looking for a meeting location for a Daisy Girl Scout troop of about 14-20 kindergartens (four are Town residents). Ms. Bohi said she would like to use the Town Hall from 3:45 to 5:15, one Tuesday a month. Mayor Beers noted that the USPS objects to events during post office hours. David Fyock, Glen Echo Baptist Church (GEBC) Deacon, offered to bring a request to use a church meeting room for their meeting. Mr. Fyock said he could have an answer for Ms. Bohi by next week; she indicated that she will pursue the church location and come back to the Town if it does not work. Councilmember Long noted that her concern for a GS troop meeting at the Town Hall is traffic and safety of the girls; she supports the GEBC as a better location.

A gift wrapping program, coordinated with Mrs. Anne Curtis, will be held on December 13 from 1-4:30. Councilmember Kogelnik suggested that the proposed flyer recognize that the Baptist Church is doing the service.

Councilmember Matney said the movie had poor showing, which could be because the flyer was delivered late.

GEPPAC is requesting Town Hall use for two Sunday a month for their Blues dancing program. This is the third year they have made this request as they are awaiting the installation of flooring in the new wing of the ballroom delayed due to use of the space by the NCRC. Mayor Beers suggested approving the use, with understanding that this is the last year.

STREET REPAIR PROJECT

Councilmember Kogelnik reported that A. Morton Thomas (AMT) is still preparing the proposal documents and said she wants to include a bid to the Montgomery County contractors responsible for the Oxford Road storm drain improvement project.

Councilmember Kogelnik reviewed for Maria Capozzi the reason for temporary speed bumps. She then reviewed the speed bump composition. Mayor Beers was supportive of installing the speed bumps noting that the town needs to make an attempt to improve the traffic problems at Oxford Road. Issues for Councilmember Kogelnik to clarify were:

- Can the speed bump be moved and reused?
- What about snow plow damage and how to avoid it?
- Councilmember Matney asked about the exact installation location. He is concerned about potential damage to vehicles if the speed bumps are placed on upper Oxford.

Councilmember Kogelnik will review the questions with AMT.

TOWN HALL MAINTENANCE

C/T Polak reported that Katchmark Construction will do the roof replacement work on two subsequent Sundays so as not to disrupt business at the Post Office.

Councilmember Kogelnik inquired again as to when the soundproofing project for the main town hall room will be done. Councilmember Matney had no further information on the project.

MARYLAND MUNICIPAL LEAGUE (MML)

Councilmember Arber reported that she inquired about speed cameras at the October MML meeting and was told that municipalities without a police force (other than Montgomery County) are not eligible for speed cameras. Maryland law states that cameras must be run by a law enforcement employee of the town. There was discussion about smaller towns grouping together to hire a police force to manage speed cameras.

The annual MML Legislative Dinner will be held on December 3.

WALKING TOUR BOOKS

Mayor Beers reported that 200 additional "Walking Tour of Glen Echo" booklets have been ordered.

GEPPAC DONATION

Motion 2008-30 to approve a \$1500 contribution to Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture. Motion passed unanimously.

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C&O CANAL

Sharon Cleary reported that a temporary berm has been installed to protect the section of the Canal above Old Angler's Inn that was breached during the fall storms. The break is between two areas that were damaged during previous storms.

The Council meeting was adjourned at 9:20.