

**TOWN OF GLEN ECHO
COUNCIL MEETING**

December 13, 2008

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

VISITORS: Patrick Hooper, Resident
 Eleanor Balaban, Resident
 Raya Bodnarchuk, Resident
 Maria Capozzi, Acting Site Manager, Glen Echo Park (GEP)
 Andrew Wenchel, NPS
 Sharon Cleary, NPS, C & O Canal

Mayor Beers opened the meeting at 8:00 p.m., noting that Councilmember Arber is not able to attend the meeting.

Patrick Hooper told Council that he has lived on Harvard Avenue, across from the Town Hall and U.S. Post Office, for the past five years. He has seen an increase in the mail truck deliveries, especially during non-USPS hours. There have been deliveries at 5:20 a.m. Monday-Fridays; most recently he noted a truck coming at 3 a.m. (see attached letter for details). Mr. Hooper said that the trucks' loading and unloading has been loud enough to wake his family and neighbors. Mayor Beers questioned why the USPS trucks are coming during off-hours, and why bins are being moved in and out of the Town Hall parking area. C/T Polak will speak with Yvonne Harrison, the Glen Echo Postmaster. If necessary, Mayor Beers will follow up with a formal complaint letter.

GLEN ECHO PARK REPORT

Maria Capozzi reported that the Town may be able to install post containing bags for dog waste purposes near the Clara Barton parking area. She asked Councilmember Kogelnik to provide photographs of samples for the NPS compliance process.

Cold weather has slowed re-opening of the playground. NPS is undecided on the type of groundcover, which will not be installed until spring. Some of the equipment the NPS was planning to replace may be reinstalled. The NPS is researching if the initial footings were installed correctly. The NPS is still trying to determine if equipment can be reused. Mayor Beers asked why the Park would choose older equipment over safer, new equipment. Ms. Capozzi said equipment is not very old and, if properly installed, could be used. Mayor Beers explained that she did not want the NPS to get the impression that the town only wants new equipment; safety is the most important issue. Councilmember Long asked that the Town be notified before any of the equipment is replaced.

Councilmember Long asked about retaining wall near Caretakers Cottage. Ms. Capozzi said that the work will be completed later in Phase V.

Councilmember Long then inquired about future plans for the area behind the Crystal Pool façade. Ms. Capozzi said she is not aware of any plans for the area; Discovery Creek has abandoned the idea of an additional learning space in the area. Discovery Creek is now operating as Living Classrooms.

CLARA BARTON NHS/ABOVE GROUND FUEL TANKS

Mayor Beers questioned why the Town and surrounding neighbors were not informed of the fuel system upgrade project at its beginning. Ms. Capozzi said the outcome would not have been any different.

C/T Polak showed Council recent photographs of the view from the Polak's house, clarifying the area under discussion. (The Polak's property shares a boundary with the Clara Barton NHS). The photographs show:

- The white furnace shed, placed as temporary without notification to Council or neighbors, 24 years ago.
- The yellow shed placed temporarily on Clara Barton grounds in October 2008.
- The area the NPS plans to place the above ground propane tanks (on the river side of the fuel shed).

Willem Polak provided a summary of the discussion to date with the NPS (attached).

Councilmember Matney asked where the project is today. The Town and residents have not received an acceptable answer as to why the propane tanks must be placed above ground and can not be placed in an alternative, less visible, location.

Additional comments and discussion:

- Mayor Beers noted that natural gas could be an alternative energy solution. Several years ago, the Town was told the gas company would run pipes to Glen Echo if there were enough homes and businesses to justify the project. NPS said the intentions are not to have the house heated by oil or gas, but looking toward a long term geo-thermal system.
- Mayor Beers questioned how the NPS plans to fund a geo-thermal project within five years when funding is so difficult now.
- Ms. Capozzi said the current project has nothing to do with the long term geo-thermal project. The CBNHS is without heat or water until a solution for providing heat is reconciled.
- Ms. Capozzi said there is a 2,000 gallon oil tank in ground now, believed to be empty. The NPS allowed the oil tank to run so low sludge was pumped into the oil burner causing it to be unusable. Removing the underground tank is the final part of the project.
- Andy Wenchel said the NPS has done nothing illegal. The NPS will not put the propane tanks in the hole left by removing the oil tank because it does not want to dig up the garden a second time to remove the propane tanks. Mr. Wenchel said

- he “was o.k.” with putting the tanks next to a Town resident’ home; he sees the location as having the least negative impact to the CBNHS.
- Councilmember Matney questioned why the connecting pipes could not be placed above ground if the propane tanks were placed in the bamboo. Ms. Capozzi said she thought a fence would have to be constructed along such pipes.
 - Councilmember Long asked Mr. Wenchel why he hesitated at the suggestion to place the tanks in the bamboo; Acting Superintendent James has commented that the project is set and going as is.
 - Councilmember Long asked if this project was determined not to require an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement; the NPS response was “yes.”
 - Councilmember Kogelnik asked if building a screen of trees would be acceptable. C/T Polak said that would not be acceptable; a tree line would further obstruct the view shed.
 - Mayor Beers suggested Council write a letter to the new Superintendent, Dottie Marshall, requesting an explanation as to why there was no public meeting on the fuel tank changes, assurance that this will not happen again, and ask the NPS to define “temporary” for this project.
 - Ms. Capozzi said she could provide the National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 documents that show the project as temporary but is not a guarantee that it will temporary.
 - Councilmember Long pointed out that the Park Service has had a long-standing openness of providing documents that are requested; Council members can not ask for information or documents that they are unaware of. It is desirable that the Site Manager inform the Town of proposed site changes.
 - Mayor Beers asked about a public hearing for a geo-thermal project; would it require an environmental impact statement. How far ahead would the process begin? According to NPS, the environmental impact study phase would begin in 2-3 years.
 - The Town must have a chance to comment on any further improvements.
 - Council asked for more content on important, “hot” issues.

Councilmember Matney asked what can be done to make sure a similar conflict does not happen again; Council needs assurance that such a situation does not happen again. Ms. Capozzi did not respond. One suggestion was a welcome package for future Site Managers to assure that there is clear communication between the Town and GEP/NPS. New Site Managers need to know that the Town is interested in all aspects of change in the Park. Councilmember Matney added that the Town should receive a copy of all Section 106 documents that impact the town as well as all RFP’s. Councilmember Kogelnik suggested a monthly report that would include all potential RFP/106 documents; all possible projects will be on record.

Mayor Beers reminded Ms. Capozzi that the NPS agreed to repair Bowdin, Tulane and Oberlin Avenues once Park construction is complete. Note: The Town has permitted these streets to be the construction entrance during Park renovation.

Mayor Beers also noted that if there is not an upcoming response from the NPS on the NPS position of Oxford Road ownership, the Town may begin an Action to Quiet Title on Oxford Road.

C/T Polak said placing the propane tanks next to the existing “temporary” fuel shed is unacceptable to adjoining property owners; it appears that no alternative location suggested will be considered by the NPS. C/T Polak asked for Council’s support by writing a letter to NPS objecting to placing the propane tanks above ground, next to the existing burner shed. Council supports writing the letter.

STREET REPAIR REPORT

Councilmember Kogelnik reported on traffic calming methods for Oxford Road. A. Morton Thomas (AMT) discourages a speed hump and recommends installing two temporary six foot long speed bumps, one at the stop sign in both directions on Oxford Road. The speed bumps are drilled and bolted into the street. They can be removed and reinstalled at a different location. Installation takes one to two days, delivery time is seven to ten days. The cost for the speed bumps and installation is \$1,113.60.

Motion 2008-31 to approve \$1,113.60 for the purchase and installation of two speed bumps for Oxford Road. Motion unanimously approved.

TOWN HALL MAINTENANCE

C/T Polak reported that the roofing job is complete. Council agreed that the ceiling should now be repaired. C/T Polak will also investigate soundproofing options and installing the projector in the ceiling with the handyman service.

TOWNHALL USE

Councilmember Long explained that the Global Nomads, a group that used the Town Hall for several years, would like to have an event in memory of a former Town resident, Norma McCraig, who was a member of Global Nomads. Councilmember Long suggested only the \$150 security deposit as the cost to the group with no additional fee. Council agreed.

Smithsonian Women’s Committee asked about using the town hall on a weekday from 9-3. Councilmember Long noted that they were actually interested in Glen Echo Park; she gave the caller contact information for GEPPAC.

C/T Polak explained the plans for catering the holiday breakfast (caterer to provide made-to-order omelets and pancakes) this year due to lack of volunteers. Councilmember Long reminded Council about the Glen Echo Baptist Church’s gift wrapping service after the breakfast on December 13.

C&O CANAL

Sharon Cleary reported that the park is gearing up for the economic stimulus packages. Mayor Beers agreed that the projects ready to go will be good candidates for funds. The C & O Canal Park is hoping for \$15 million for the Big Slack Water project, to repair damage from hurricane Agnes in 1996 in Washington County. The breach which occurred on September 5 near Old Angler's Inn may be repaired under emergency funds. The project is estimated to cost \$2-3 million.

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

Dan and Constance Macy notified Council of their plan to remove several trees from their yard.