

TOWN OF GLEN ECHO
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
April 12, 2010

ATTENDANCE: Debbie Beers, Mayor
Nancy Long, Councilmember
Eve Arber, Councilmember
Dan Macy, Councilmember
Steve Matney, Councilmember
Cathie Polak, Clerk-Treasurer

VISITORS: Polly Angelakis, Site Manager, Glen Echo Park (GEP)
Officer Steven Wood, U.S. Park Police
Rex Rhein, Echo Reporter
Michael Bobbit, Adventure Theater
John Barrett, Resident

Mayor Beers opened the meeting at 8 p.m.

GLENN ECHO PARK REPORT

Bike Path

In an effort to provide a safer crossing for bicyclists through the upper parking lot of GEP, the NPS investigated redirecting the new bike path to return from GEP to MacArthur Boulevard near the trolley under the GEP Gateway instead of crossing at the entrance to the upper parking lot. Ms. Angelakis said they then researched bicyclists returning to MacArthur Boulevard at the far end of the parking lot, near Tulane Avenue. Ms. Angelakis reported that the cost to change the path of the Montgomery County Bikeway would be over \$450K; the Park had to accept the original bike path, crossing the entrance to the upper parking lot. Councilmember Matney noted that the crossing will be over an automobile entrance to the parking area, crossing cars at several spots; he thinks no bikers will use the bike path through the Park. Councilmember Long asked whether an Environmental Assessment will be done. The reply was that Montgomery County is currently conducting and funding the Assessment. Mayor Beers asked about repaving the upper parking lot. According to Ms. Angelakis, the lot will be paved as soon as funds are allotted. Councilmember Long questioned why the bike path plans include going over the old trolley trestle bridge that spans the Minnehaha Creek: for the “historic experience” was the response. Ms. Angelakis agreed that the final alignment for the bike path is not ideal; “the goal is to make it as safe as possible.”

Playground

The playground is closed for minor repairs and should re-open by April 15, weather permitting. All the new playground equipment has been installed.

Clara Barton National Historic Site (CBNHS)

The CBNHS had a successful blood drive with another planned for the future.

There will be an open house at the CBNHS on May 1, Family Day in the Park. May 1 is also Jr. Ranger Day. Councilmember Long inquired about the Clara Barton Crew; according to Ms. Angelakis, they are still in the planning stages. Vanessa Smiley has been hired to fill Sam Swersky's position.

A Civil Rights plaque will be installed in the Park for the 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights demonstration at the Park. Volunteers from First Bloom have been planting in the Park.

Ms. Angelakis reported that the NPS, with the District of Columbia Department of Transportation, is in the early stages of planning to restore the trolley car currently parked under the large Glen Echo Park sign. The benefit of having a trolley that is not authentic to the D.C. Transit System and thus to GEP (it is from a Pennsylvania trolley line) is that the NPS is not required to follow historic preservation guidelines in the restoration and intended use of the trolley car.

Officer Steven Wood, of the U.S. Park Police said he is visiting the Council as part of community outreach. His contact information is:

- Email: steven_wood@nps.gov
- Station phone 703-285-1000
- Station Fax 703-285-1010
- Emergency phone 202-610-7500 or 911
- Non-emergency phone 202-610-7505

Officer Wood asked Council for feedback to "take back to his commanding officer." Comments and concerns were:

- Mayor Beers asked about the condition of the C & O Canal, stating that it is a mess, especially since the winter. She said that "no one seems to be doing anything about it." Councilmember Macy suggested Council invite Superintendent Kevin Brandt to walk the Canal with Council. There was discussion about inviting other representatives to walk the towpath near Glen Echo.
- Councilmember Long noted that the Canal stimulus funds "went upstream where people need jobs," part of the criteria for allotting stimulus funds.
- C/T Polak asked about cleaning up the brush along the side of the Cabin John and Clara Barton Parkways. Ms. Angelakis said this is the responsibility of the NPS; she will contact the appropriate office.
- Councilmember Arber asked about the skate boarding problems in the Park; are there fewer offenders today. She noted that the skateboarders appear to have moved into Town. Ms. Angelakis said there seem to be fewer violators in the Park.
- Mayor Beers asked if the Park Police are working with Montgomery County Police. Officer Woods said they have concurrent jurisdiction with the County; Montgomery County does not handle traffic on the U.S. parkways.

- Councilmember Macy asked about improving the ramps where the Clara Barton and Cabin John Parkways connect, noting the high number of accidents, at that location, especially in the rain. Councilmember Matney asked about traffic calming devices to help prevent accidents. Councilmember Arber noted that the traffic calming measures were more apparent in the past.
- Councilmember Long inquired about putting a satellite office back in GEP. Officer Woods said he would take the request back to his commanding officer. (Note: this was a commitment made by previous GEP Site Manager, Kym Elder.)
- C/T Polak requested radar or other traffic calming efforts for high-speed motorcycles, going northwest from the Glen Echo turnaround. She said the noise from these vehicles wake residents at all hours of the night.

Mayor Beers thanked Officer Woods for coming to the Council meeting. He said that his attendance should be on-going.

Councilmember Long said annual report from the Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture (GEPPAC) is available. Mayor Beers said she will not be able to attend the GEPPAC meeting this month and asked Councilmember Long to go and report back.

ADVENTURE THEATER

Michael Bobbit came to Council to ask for a donation; he last requested a donation for Adventure Theater (AT) in 2007. Since that time, AT has grown to 50,000 patrons. Mr. Bobbit reported that AT is in good financial shape, but they are “still in the red.” In 2007, AT offered Town residents four tickets per household; they are prepared to give the same offer this year.

The AT annual budget is \$1.4, up from \$675k three years ago. Shows are showing at about 95% capacity rate. AT is also partnering with other organizations. Councilmember Long asked where other funds come from. Mr. Bobbit said monies come from Board members, corporate and foundation support.

Councilmember Long asked what work needs to be done:

- windows will be covered with blackout curtains;
- lack of storage;
- no security system (greatest concern);
- HVAC noise is a problem for a theater;
- Summer camp director left AT and took his long-time summer camp program with him.

Motion 2010-4 to approve a \$1000 donation to Adventure Theater.

Further discussion was held about how the AT programs benefit residents, with a second motion by Councilmember Macy to donate \$1500 to Adventure Theater.

Second motion passed unanimously.

Glen Echo residents are eligible for four tickets per household. The code to purchase tickets on line is “glenecho.”

SKATEBOARDING IN GLEN ECHO

Resident John Barrett told Council that he objects to skateboarders on the streets in Town. According to Mr. Barrett, they are destructive; the roadway is not a playground for kids. Councilmember Macy suggested getting names and notifying parents. Council suggested calling the Montgomery County police, noting that the town has had a problem getting the County police to respond and enforce certain laws.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion 2010-5 to approve as amended the March 8, 2010 Town Council meeting minutes:

- Add to page 1, paragraph 4: Councilmember Long asked if the position at GEP would be a permanent posting.
- Delete from page 1, paragraph 5, line 7: ~~Councilmember Matney suggested that there might be a need to show cause for a firearm permit.~~ Mayor Beers summed up the discussion as “Guns okay, skateboards out.”
- Delete from page 3, paragraph 2, line 3: ~~Ms. Levin said that in the past she has always felt so comforted by the arrival of his crew. However for this storm, she felt his services was not perfect and she was surprised that some things were not done.~~
- Add to page 3, paragraph 3, line 7: Mayor Beers said that if tree limbs were hanging over the street as a result of the snow, the town would pay to have the limbs cut down.
- Add to page 5, paragraph 1, line 6 and change line 9: Councilmember Matney said that the Town council showed in its submission for the record that there would be no public transit west of Wisconsin Avenue on weekends if the bus service were to be cut. Councilmember Long wrote an addendum to her personal statement showing how to save money (e.g. functioning fare boxes). Councilmember Matney rides ~~once a week and~~ daily, noting that the fare boxes are frequently inoperable.

Motion passed as amended.

BUDGET REVIEW

Budget hearing is set for Monday, May 24, 8 p.m. Mayor Beers will prepare and circulate the proposed FY2010-2011 Budget by May 10.

TOWN HALL USE

Councilmember Long reported that there are several upcoming Folklore Society of Greater Washington (FSGW) programs.

A request for a Scottish Caleigh was denied because it is inappropriate for the town hall due to concern for the wear on the floor.

Census asked to use the Town Hall at end of April for training. After discussion with Mayor Beers, Councilmember Long, and Census, they mutually agreed that the hall was not a good location because the elevator is outdated and could cause problems for handicapped Census trainees.

STREET REPAIR PROPOSAL

Mayor Beers reviewed the proposal from Ross Contracting to:

- Remove and replace the speed bump at Oxford Road and University Avenue;
- Put a new speed bump on lower Oxford Road, adjacent to 5808 Oxford Road;
- Regrade upper Cornell Avenue at Wellesley Circle so that runoff will drain toward the right of way.

Expenses for the 2009-2010 street repair project are under budget and will remain under budget should council accept this last proposal.

Councilmember Arber asked for clarification on the height of the proposed speed table; she understood that the cost should have been included in the original bid from Ross.

Council was concerned that the written narrative on the proposal did not say that the work included removing and regarding the pavement at Cornell Avenue and Wellesley Circle.

Motion 2010-6 to accept the Ross Contracting proposal 08-25 for \$20,268.00, with a clarification of the scope of work to be completed.

Motion passed unanimously.

OCCUPANCY PERMITTING

Resident and business owner Richard Leggin was told by the Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) that the Town was responsible for issuing an occupancy permit for an apartment located above his business on Oberlin Avenue. Town attorney Norman Knopf contacted DHCA and acquired a letter dated March 24, 2010, stating that the DHCA “enforces the provision of the Montgomery County Code, Landlord-Tenant Relations, within the Town of Glen Echo.” The original letter is filed at the office of Knopf & Brown; a copy is attached to these minutes.

Motion 2010-7 to adjourn the regular Town Council meeting and go into Executive Session. The purpose of the Executive Session is to discuss the Town’s response to the National Park Service letter of October 6, 2009, pertaining to ownership of Oxford Road. Motion passed unanimously at 9:40.

The Executive Session was opened by Mayor Beers at 9:41.

The Executive Session was adjourned at 10:15.