

TOWN OF GLEN ECHO
Town Council Meeting
October 8, 2012

ATTENDANCE: Deborah Beers, Mayor
Nancy Long, Councilmember
Eve Arber, Councilmember
Steve Matney, Councilmember
Mark McCaffrey, Councilmember
Nicole Fraser, Clerk-Treasurer

VISITORS: Michael Burack, President, Board of Directors, GEPPAC¹
Robert Glidewell, Area Manager, WG
Ann Kern, Specialist Account Management, WG
Jack Higgins, Project Manger, WG
Donna Cuttone, NPS Site Manager of GEP
Aaron LaRocca, NPS, GEP
Catherine and Stephen Hathaway, The Echo reporters
Matt Stiglitz, Resident
Martha & Joe Shannon, Residents
Diana Hudson-Taylor, Resident
Edie & Rene Springuel, Residents
Susan Grigsby, Resident
James Bohi, Resident
Nick Lambert, Resident

Mayor Beers called the meeting to order at 8:03 p.m.

GEPPAC BYLAWS CHANGE REQUEST

Michael Burack, president of the Board of Directors of GEPPAC, outlined proposed changes to the bylaws of GEPPAC, specifically relating to the role of the two community board members. He proposed that because the two community board members (BCA and the Town of Glen Echo) are not term limited, they should be made *ex officio* members of the board free to participate in discussion, and to vote in committees, but may not be an officer or vote in board meetings). Mayor Beers pointed out that the votes of the whole board have never been close in her time as the Town representative to GEPPAC. Mr. Burack said that the proposed change would rationalize the internal governing structure of the board to reflect the board's operations (*i.e.* the bylaws are written in a way that does not reflect how the board currently operates).

¹ Abbreviations used in this document include BCA (Bannockburn Civic Association), EA (Environmental Assessment), GEP (Glen Echo Park), GEPPAC (Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts & Culture), George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP), MCDOT (Montgomery County Department of Transportation), MML (Maryland Municipal League), NHS (National Historic Site), NHP (National Historical Park), NP (National Park) and NPS (National Park Service), Washington Gas (WG).

Councilmember Long asked why this change is proposed after the more than ten years that the GEPPAC bylaws have been in place. Mr. Burack said that it had not occurred to anyone until one community representative to the board decided to run for an officer position about 1 ½ years ago. This specific issue was with the BCA representative and caused the executive committee to take a closer look at their operations, brought to their attention the question of how term limits apply.

Councilmember Long pointed out that the Town of Glen Echo is a government and that GEP lies within the Town's established boundaries, she said that what happens at GEP can potentially have a beneficial or adverse effect on the Town. While she is not opposed to the proposed changes to the board, Councilmember Long says that removal of the board-meeting vote creates a lessening in the perception of the important role of the Town. Mr. Burack said that he understood her view that the Town of Glen Echo has a greater interest in the park than the BCA. Councilmember Long noted that the Town of Glen Echo makes a contribution every year to GEPPAC from the municipal tax money collected from every household, signifying that every household has made a donation to GEPPAC.

Mayor Beers said that when she first joined the GEPPAC board, everyone had a conflict of interest and she helped to write the disclosure of conflict of interest forms. Mr. Burack said that there is no one on the GEPPAC board that represents specific interests today except the community representatives. Councilmember Matney said that the County members on the board might have a conflict of interest as they might promote the County's interest. Mr. Burack said that the individuals representing the County's interests are term-limited, and their applications are reviewed first by the GEPPAC board before they are appointed by the County.

Mr. Burack said that the Town representative would be able to participate in closed sessions. Councilmember Matney asked why not offer the two community representatives term limits instead of taking away voting rights. Mr. Burack said that had not been considered.

Motion 2012-18 to oppose the proposed changes to GEPPAC bylaws. Motion passed unanimously.

GLEN ECHO PARK REPORT

NPS Ranger Aaron LaRocca, temporary Site Manager of GEP, announced that the new Acting Site Manager of GEP and Clara Barton NHS, Donna Cuttone, would serve through the end of 2012 on a detail. The GWMP superintendent will make an announcement about how the vacancy will be filled after Ms. Cuttone finishes her detail.

Mr. LaRocca announced that the project to reorient the vehicle entrance to the GEP parking lot from its existing location at the western end of Oxford to the upper roadway used only as current exit from the parking lot to Oxford Road was entered into the PMIS (project management information system, the tool that NPS uses to request project

money) incorrectly as a non-facility project. Mr. LaRocca said that the project has been located in the system and will be reentered into PMIS before the December deadline.

Mr. LaRocca said that the shared use path (project name: MacArthur Boulevard Bikeway Improvements) meeting scheduled for October 4th was cancelled and that MCDOT will present the EA to NPS by October 15. Public meeting and comment period to follow by late 2012 to early 2013. An exhibit for the Shooting Gallery remnant is being developed for this remnant of the amusement park era. The Then and Wow event on September 30th, was not as well attended as expected. Councilmember Long noted that the size of the event was manageable without long lines for refreshment or activities; she called it a “comfortable crowd.”

Mayor Beers asked if GEP had any influence to hasten repair of the bridge over the canal near the Sycamore Store and Sycamore Island. Mr. LaRocca offered to contact the C&O Canal site supervisor. Councilmember Arber asked if there were any plans to bring back further interpretation of the trolley days of GEP. Mr. LaRocca said that there will be interpretive signage around the trolley stop area.

NATURAL GAS PRESENTATION BY WASHINGTON GAS

Mr. Glidewell discussed options to bring natural gas lines to Glen Echo with assistance from Ms. Kern and Mr. Higgins. Mr. Higgins said that if owners of all 93 residences in Town committed to two major gas-fueled appliances, the Town’s contribution would be \$30,500 to bring a natural gas pipeline across MacArthur Boulevard and to provide a meter to every interested household. If no owners committed to appliances, the cost to the Town would be \$273,500. However, the Town may not sponsor the natural gas line alone; a group of owners would have to approach the gas company with a “load letter” (see attached).

Mr. Springuel asked how disruptive the drilling would be. Mr. Higgins said that WG would use directional drilling (also known as slant drilling, a practice for drilling non-vertical wells) when possible; however, due to the size of the Town’s streets, it might be less disruptive to do an “open cut” and then restore the roads. Councilmember Matney asked if the proposed Town contribution included the cost of road restoration. Mr. Higgins said that road restoration is roughly estimated in the proposed cost. Ms. Kern said that home owners would have six months to install appliances after the gas was brought to their homes in the exterior meter box.

Ms. Kern advised that a furnace costs about \$7,000-8,000 and that WG does no internal piping (*i.e.* the costs of bringing gas from the meter to the appliance within the home would be paid for by the resident; if the furnace is next to the pipe then the cost would be about \$200-300 but more if the appliances are farther away). Mr. Higgins said that the projected costs are based on everyone buying a furnace or another large appliance. The Town would still get a credit but not as high as another credit (*e.g.* a water heater gives about 50% of a credit that a furnace does). Credits are offered for appliances that come on automatically. Ms. Kern suggested approaching several HVAC companies to get

estimates on installation in 93 houses, in order to decrease individual costs. Mr. Glidewell said that at present there are no rebates or incentives in Maryland to help consumers switch to natural gas.

Mr. Higgins said that the timing of the project would be constrained by the initial step (approximately 8-12 months) to get a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers to drill under the aqueduct), the cost to get the main line across MacArthur Boulevard is about \$80,000. To install the gas lines within the town would take several months.

Mr. Stiglitz pointed out that all these numbers depend on the number of customers and their location, the quotes for the Town's contribution are not firm until all interested residents have responded. Catherine and Stephen Hathaway offered to be the point of contacts for WG. Council requested that Mr. Higgins estimate the price of the town contribution if 1/3 or 2/3 of residents opted for natural gas.

PRESENTATION OF BUILDING PLANS

Edie and Rene Springuel of 21 Vassar Circle presented their plans for a deck to be added to their home. The deck will be 12 feet wide by 26 feet long and tie into an existing side door of their house at the driveway side. They have 4 of the 6 initials of neighbors indicating these neighbors have seen the plans for the deck. They estimate the project will take 3 weeks. Mr. Springuel also informed Council of his intent to take down a tulip tree that has been severely damaged by Pepco trimming.

Mayor Beers cautioned all Town residents to review Montgomery County zoning before starting any construction. The Town will be extra vigilant to make sure the County's rules are enforced [*N.B.* – at present the only Town ordinance that is more restrictive than the County's is Section 3.1.1]. Mr. Springuel said there should be better communication of the rules and the Town should publish a guide book.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion 2012-19 to accept the September 2012 Council Meeting minutes with two changes:

- 1) Councilmember Matney suggested that the Town note that MCDOT provided the Town with plans for the shared-use path.
- 2) Mayor Beers asked that the subheading "Shared Use Path" be added after the MCDOT subheading.

Motion passed unanimously.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY ZONING AMENDMENT

Mayor Beers presented a memo prepared by Norman Knopf, the town attorney, detailing the proposed Zoning Text Amendment 12-16, copy attached. The proposed amendment would remove any minimum lot size for residential building. A hearing at the County Council will take place at 1 pm on October 30.

Motion 2012-20 that the Town will send a representative to testify at the hearing in opposition to the proposed zoning amendment (ZTA 12-16) at the County Council. Motion approved unanimously.

MML REPORT

Councilmember Matney reported from the MML meeting held on September 20, 2012.

- 1) Maryland’s Office of Legislative Oversight (similar to the federal GAO) has been brought in to provide independent analysis of the tax duplication issue: the County has only given the MML members a small percentage of revenue back to pay for services;
- 2) MML is pursuing restoration of highway funds;
- 3) a new requirement for advertising changes in ordinances was under discussion (not relevant to Glen Echo as we have our own newspaper where ordinance changes are advertised);
- 4) the Legislative dinner will take place on December 13th and a breakfast with County Councilman Roger Berliner will take place on October 24th;
- 5) MML is looking for members for the county committees: cable and communication, child care commission, solid waste advisory and pedestrian and traffic advisory.

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

Clerk-Treasurer Fraser shared with Council three estimates to purchase rolling recycling totes for Glen Echo. Council directed Clerk-Treasurer Fraser to get quotes for smaller 48 gallon totes.

Mayor Beers noted that the public service commission is likely to approve a utility surcharge for Pepco customers.

Mr. Stiglitz suggested that the Town solicit bids for a new landscaping contract next year. Mayor Beers said that we also need to get it done by February.

Meeting adjourned at 10:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Nicole Fraser, Town Clerk

Deborah M. Beers, Mayor

Date

Attachments: Natural Gas “Load Letter”
Montgomery County proposed zoning amendment