

TOWN OF GLEN ECHO
Town Council Meeting
January 14, 2013

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

VISITORS: Donna Cuttone, Acting Site Supervisor of GEP¹ & Clara Barton NHS
Matt Stiglitz, Resident
Ellen Leary & Bernie Edelman, The Echo reporters
Nick Lambert, Resident
Joe & Martha Shannon, Residents

Councilmember Matney called to order at 8:00 pm

GLEN ECHO PARK REPORT

NPS Ranger Donna Cuttone, temporary Site Manager of GEP, announced that it was a busy and successful holiday season for GEPPAC. She announced that she will be leaving as acting Site Manager and Aaron LaRocca is returning to be the acting Site Manager for GEP from January 28 to May 19, 2013. She advised that there might be a third temporary Site Manager given all the staffing changes at NPS; there still is an acting superintendent for the GWMP, John James.

Ms. Cuttone reported that she observed that the GEP parking lot was very full on a recent Saturday morning despite both theaters being dark. She observed that it was primarily bicycle groups parking their cars at the lot before setting out for a bike ride. The bicyclists also use the back of a shed as a restroom she reported, on this and other occasions. Ms. Cuttone said that she was looking into signs to discourage the use of GEP's parking lot by people other than park visitors. Councilmember Long pointed out that signs will only be effective if restrictions are enforced. Ms. Cuttone remarked that the park police cannot enforce restrictions in the absence of signs.

Ms. Cuttone reviewed the Clara Barton NHS fire suppression project for the house. She said it will be a long, multi-year project for which there are, at present no funds. Councilmember Long asked if the American Red Cross could be asked to contribute although such a donations probably not within its mission. Ms. Cuttone remarked that she believed it should be federal rather than private funds. Clara Barton NHS needs a new heating and cooling system, roof,

¹ Abbreviations used in this document include EA (Environmental Assessment) GEP (Glen Echo Park), GEPPAC (Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts & Culture), GWMP (George Washington Memorial Parkway), NCC (National Community Church), NHS (National Historic Site), NHP (National Historical Park), NP (National Park), NPS (National Park Service) and Washington Gas (WG).

fire suppression system and paint. During these projects, the entire collection in the house would have to be moved out and stored elsewhere. Ms. Cuttone said that she believes that NPS is responsible for the preservation of the Clara Barton NHS. Clara Barton NHS receives approximately 8,000 visitors a year; she noted that cutting back on interpretative tours at the House would save some funds.

Ms. Cuttone announced that she was able to find the NPS plans to reroute GEP parking lot traffic from Oxford Road. These were the plans presented to the town in March 2006 by then GEP Site Supervisor Kym Elder. NPS employee Gareth Shul designed the plans which were the subject of a public meeting in the Town Hall. Ms. Cuttone encouraged Town Council to pursue this project with the next GEP Site Manager.

Ms. Cuttone said that she will be meeting with Katey Boerner, executive director of GEPPAC, the next day. Councilmember Long said that it was very important to maintain a strong NPS role at GEP. Councilmember Matney said it is difficult to have an appropriate balance of responsibilities in the GEPPAC agreement with the temporary Site Manager situation. Ms. Cuttone suggested that the Town reach out to the NPS management to request continuity of Site Managers renegotiation of the agreement between NPS and Montgomery County regarding management of GEP.

Ms. Cuttone reported that Ranger Kevin Patti is reaching out to local communities to recruit volunteers for GEP and Clara Barton NHS. A volunteer open house will be held on January 26th at 1:30 at GEP.

Councilmember Long reported that an event planned for October 14th (Dancing with DC Stars) has the potential to attract a large crowd and to cause possible parking problems. Ms. Cuttone said that under the current agreement with GEPPAC, if overflow parking is anticipated, GEPPAC is required to identify off-site parking locations. Program planning must limit events attracting large crowds to no more than five such events per year.

Councilmember Long asked if Ms. Cuttone will write a final report on her time at GEP. Ms. Cuttone said she was writing a report, five pages of ideas, however it was for the NPS only. Councilmember Long suggested that Ms. Cuttone include in her report the question of acquisition of land across MacArthur Boulevard from the park: this treed hillside provides substantial enhancement to the park-like setting of GEP. A push from the county for denser housing population might open that land for development. [*N.B.* – A number of years ago, a proposal was floated to develop this land with town houses; the proposal was defeated by local residents and like-minded Montgomery County and Army Corps of Engineers officials.]

Council thanked Ms. Cuttone for her work as acting Site Manager at GEP and wished her good luck in her next position.

26 WELLESLEY CIRCLE

Joe and Martha Shannon of 26 Wellesley Circle presented their revised plans to build an addition to their home. The addition will have a walkway to the main home and a studio on the lower floor. The intent of the addition is to allow them to “age in place.”

NATURAL GAS SURVEY

Resident Nick Lambert reviewed the current survey results gathered by Catherine & Stephen Hathaway. Mr. Lambert noted that 7 of the replies were unclear and 19 households did not reply at all. Of the valid responses, 80% of residents were committed to changing one or more appliances to natural gas. Mr. Lambert said that the proposed pipeline from WG missed Columbia Avenue and Radcliffe Lane. Survey responses revealed that residents of lower Harvard Avenue and almost all of Princeton Avenue do not wish to have natural gas. This could possibly reduce 800 feet out of the proposed 5475 feet of pipeline in Glen Echo. Matt Stiglitz questioned the logic of shutting out future residents of Harvard and Princeton Avenues based on the non-responses of current residents.

Councilmember Matney requested that Clerk/Treasurer Fraser send a letter to 19 residents who had not responded to the survey and the 7 who had unclear responses. The content of the letter was to include that the Town was interested in their position and that a town resident (Nick Lambert or Diana Hudson-Taylor) would follow-up if there were any questions.

Mr. Lambert offered to negotiate on the Town's behalf with WG. Councilmember Matney said that he would like to see the final numbers and if the Town were to spend tax dollars on this project it will be for the whole Town and not only portions. He could foresee spending town funds to get it to the street but not to cross property lines if residents did not want it. Mr. Lambert noted that in order to negotiate with WG he needs the final numbers of residents interested in natural gas, the Town's firm commitment and the amount that the Town was willing to spend.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion 2013-01 to accept the December 2012 Council Meeting minutes with three changes:

- 1) Under Glen Echo Park Report, first paragraph, first sentence, replace "have" with "has";
- 2) Under Glen Echo Park Report, first paragraph, last sentence, insert a comma after *e.g.*;
- 3) Under Approval of Minutes, first sentence replace "for" with "until".

Motion passed unanimously.

The approval of November 2012 minutes were tabled until February.

COMMUNITY POLICE ADVISORY BOARD

Matt Stiglitz reported on the police advisory board meeting held on Tuesday, January 8th.

Discussed at the meeting:

- December 2012 had a remarkably low crime rate in the Bethesda district (*e.g.*, residential burglaries were down 71% from previous years, only 8 burglaries district wide).
- However, robberies were up 35% for the entire year, aggravated assaults up 70%.
- The entire police department has undergone redistricting. The Bethesda police district has grown (all of Potomac to the village and a small area near White

Flint). Although the area covered has increased by a quarter, the police department does not expect it to be an equal increase of work load.

- The current class of officers is down to 36; the Bethesda district is slated to get 6 new officers.
- The police station is likely to remain where it is now.
- Two robberies occurred in downtown Bethesda but were not reported to the police; no arrests have been made.
- Near Glen Echo, two incidents of note occurred. On November 22nd, a home alarm sounded on Walhonding Road yet nothing was taken. A female jogger, near Goldsboro and River Road (behind the Verizon switching station) was followed by a vehicle on Christmas evening; she reported the incident to the police and the vehicle was registered to a former sex offender.
- The next meeting will occur in two months. The community police board representatives will take a field trip out to the emergency call center.

GEP REPORT

Councilmember Long reminded Council that the NPS planned to hold an open house on the proposed shared use path EA at the Spanish Ballroom on January 24 starting at 6 pm. [N.B. – The EA refers only to the portion of the path that is proposed to be on Clara Barton NHS and GEP NPS land.]

TOWN HALL USE

Councilmember Long reported that the Town Hall was in use by a number of Town residents during the past month. On January 22nd at 8 pm, the Town will host a meeting with Pastor Andy Backus of NCC to update residents on the status of their Vassar Circle property. Town resident Carol Barton plans to hold a seminar on the creation of pop-up books on February 5th, followed by a series of classes, the first class to be held on February 9th. Report attached.

TOWN BUDGET

Clerk/Treasurer Fraser reported that the line item for legal services (3.2) in the budget is nearly exhausted.

Motion 2013-02 to move \$5,000 from budget line item 13.4 (Town Hall improvements) to line item 3.2 (legal services) by Councilmember Arber. Councilmember Long seconded the motion.

TOWN MAINTENANCE

Matt Stiglitz observed that a ridge had formed in the middle of University Avenue and recommended that a slurry seal be added as a preventive measure.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

1. Councilmember Matney asked residents with out-of-state license plates to register their cars in Maryland and also to bring in trash containers off the sidewalk after trash days.
2. After discussion, Council decided by consensus not to make the annual donation to GEPPAC.

3. Town elections will be held on Monday May 6th.

Meeting adjourned at 10:04 p.m.

Deborah M. Beers, Mayor

Date

Attached: Police citation report
 Town Hall use report