

TOWN OF GLEN ECHO
COUNCIL MEETING
JULY 8, 2013

ATTENDANCE: Debbie Beers, Mayor
Nancy Long, Councilmember
Steve Matney, Councilmember (absent)
Matt Stiglitz, Councilmember
Nicole Fraser, Clerk-Treasurer

VISITORS: Eve Arber, resident
Jerry & Elaine Bodlander, residents
Renny & Edie Springuel, residents
Speke Wilson, resident
Phyllis Fordham, resident
Diana Hudson-Taylor, resident
Susan Grigsby, resident
Ellen Leary Edelman, resident
Gloria Levin, resident
Deborah Lange, resident
Beth Rockwell & Jim Ford, residents
Stephen Hathway, resident
Carol Barton, resident
Andy Malmgren, resident
Julia Wilson, resident and Echo reporter
Raya Bodnarchuk, resident
Aaron Hirsch, owner of the Baptist Annex
Jim McGunnigle, resident
Aaron LaRocca, Supervisory Park Ranger/Site Leadership Team, CBNHS
& GEP¹

Mayor Beers called the meeting to at 8:05 p.m.

GLEN ECHO PARK REPORT

Aaron LaRocca announced that his detail as Site manager has ended and CBNHS/GEP will operate under a leadership team led by himself and Sharna Platter. He reported that the agreement with Montgomery County over the shared-use path has yet to be signed but once signed the NPS will issue the permit. GEPPAC will be allowed to view the document, they will have input on the construction document. Mr. LaRocca extended the offer to the Town as well. Councilmember Long asked about the environmental issues surrounding the creek. Mr. LaRocca noted that the hydrologist and others have expressed concern about the creek during the project, but their concerns have been accounted for. Councilmember long asked NPS to mark the trees along the creek that are to be cut. Eve Arber asked who would be in charge of maintaining the bike path and if it would be plowed for snow. Mr. LaRocca said that NPS does not plow their trails and who would maintain the path (Montgomery County or NPS) is still to be worked out.

¹ Abbreviations in this document include CBNHS (Clara Barton National Historic Site), GEP (Glen Echo Park), GEPPAC (Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture), NPS (National Park Service) and WG (Washington Gas).

Mr. LaRocca reported that the intern program was successful and two paid employees will come back to GEP/CBNHS. An “app” for CBNHS has been developed and will be finalized by the end of summer. The Washington Folk Festival had a smaller number of visitors and staff but the event was managed well.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion 2013-15 Council approved June Council meeting minutes with no changes.

Councilmember McCaffrey proposed the motion; Councilmember Stiglitz seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

WASHINGTON GAS

Mayor Beers reported that Washington Gas has offered to install gas lines and connect 73 houses for a flat fee of \$209,877. This offer is solely a contract with the Town. The 73 residents have a year to connect to the gas lines after the mains are installed. Any residents that wish to connect after a year will negotiate directly with Washington Gas. Each resident is responsible to run the interior lines to their appliances. Mayor Beers noted that there is concern about the effect on the Town’s reserves. One proposal (by Nick Lambert) was a permitting fee of about \$300. She noted that natural gas is something the Town has wanted for 30 years and now is the opportunity to bring gas to Town.

Ms. Fordham noted that this is a very different proposal than initially presented to the Town (where the price was based on the number of appliances that each resident committed to install) and asked what if more than 73 homes wished to sign up. Mayor Beers said that she felt that some residents when faced with the cost of gas conversion will drop out.

Councilmember Stiglitz said that he has issues with the evolution of the Washington Gas proposal (from only \$35,000 if all houses sign up to a flat fee of \$209,877 and it doesn’t matter how many houses sign up). Mayor Beers said that she would follow up with Washington Gas with specific questions raised during the discussion (what kind of appliances are required in the 73 houses and what if more than 73 residents wish to install natural gas in this one year window).

Councilmember McCaffrey introduced an ordinance to amend Articles 17 and Article 23 of the Town ordinances to allow a permitting fee to be paid by residents for natural gas installation (see attached).

Ellen Leary asked if there is sufficient money in the town budget to take care of what the disruption is going to be in the storm drain runoff. Mayor Beers said that the Town might use A Morton Thomas (civil engineering firm that has consulted on street repair) to insure that the installation and replacement of the sidewalks and roads is to the specifications of the recent road projects in Town. Mayor Beers noted that she is reluctant to take a vote without all of Council present (Councilmember Matney was unable to attend) and she anticipated calling another meeting.

Mayor Beers noted that there will be personal property corporate tax revenue from WG (just as there is from Pepco and Verizon) of nearly \$5,000 a year and in time the Town will recover the

money. She encouraged Town residents to think of the value added to their homes and resale value of their homes. Councilmember McCaffrey noted that he was in favor of the project having looked at the increase in oil prices. Councilmembers Stiglitz and Long said that they were still undecided and waiting to see the paperwork from WG.

TOWN HALL RENTAL POLICY

Councilmember Long put together a packet of information regarding rental of the Town Hall and some possible suggestions to improve the website. Mayor Beers offered to review the situation but was interested in renting out the Town Hall to non-residents two times a month.

REBUILDING TOGETHER

The non-profit group “Rebuilding Together of Montgomery County” (formerly known as “Christmas in July” a program to repair homes for needy residents) requested a resolution of support from the Town of Glen Echo.

Motion 2013-16 Council approved a resolution of support for “Rebuilding Together of Montgomery County.”

Councilmember McCaffrey proposed the motion; Councilmember Long seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

ADDITIONS TO THE TOWN AGENDA

Clerk/Treasurer Fraser noted that there was a complaint from Karen Leas of Bethesda Builders about more cars on Oberlin that appear to be connected to Exeter Trust of 6110 Oberlin Avenue. The cars are stored on the street limiting parking for clients and others on Oberlin Avenue. Clerk-Treasurer Fraser said she would have Lee Holland, one of the off-duty Montgomery County police officers hired by the Town to look into it.

Councilmember Stiglitz requested a waiver of the 60 day requirement to remove one and maybe two trees on his property (one cherry and one conifer); an arborist confirmed rot in the limbs of the tree.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Nicole Fraser
Clerk-Treasurer

Deborah Beers, Mayor

Date

Attachments: Proposed amendment to ordinances Articles 17 & 23
Councilmember Long’s packet on Town Hall Use
Police report