

**TOWN OF GLEN ECHO  
COUNCIL MEETING  
December 9, 2013**

ATTENDANCE: Debbie Beers, Mayor  
Nancy Long, Councilmember  
Steve Matney, Councilmember  
Mark McCaffrey, Councilmember  
Matt Stiglitz, Councilmember  
Nicole Fraser, Clerk-Treasurer

VISITORS: Aaron LaRocca, Supervisory Park Ranger, GEP/CBNHS<sup>1</sup>  
Phyllis Fordham, resident and editor of The Echo  
Bill Vincent, resident and reporter for The Echo  
Sally & Jim McGunnigle, residents  
Eve Arber, resident  
Rex Rhein, resident  
Aaron Hirsch, owner of the Baptist Annex  
Norman Knopf & Benjamin Arem, Town Attorneys  
Anna & Chris White, residents  
Norman Hudson-Taylor, resident  
Andy Malmgren, resident  
Shannon Kraus, resident  
Anna & Chris White, residents  
Edie & Renny Springuel, residents  
Joanne Murray, resident  
Tim Brangan, resident  
Matt Hertz, resident  
Carol Barton & Henry Barrow, residents  
Leah Hertz, resident  
Raya Bodnarchuk, resident  
Matt McFarland, resident  
Emily Siegel & Dawn Tanner, resident  
Jim & Kelly Bohi, residents  
Blair Anderson, resident  
Julia Wilson, resident  
Andy Malmgren, resident  
JoAnne Murray, resident  
Michael T. Nalls & Nicole Lang, residents

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

**GLEN ECHO PARK REPORT**

Supervisory Park Ranger Aaron LaRocca reported on proposed renovation plans for CBNHS (new roof, fire suppression, climate control, *etc.*). NPS will receive comments online, mail or

---

<sup>1</sup> Abbreviations in this document include CBNHS (Clara Barton National Historic Site), DOT (Department of Transportation), GEP (Glen Echo Park), GEPPAC (Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture), NPS (National Park Service) and ROW (right-of-way).

email to the superintendent's office. Councilmember Long asked if funding is or will be available for any of the plan. Mr. LaRocca said that the fire suppression system was funded for FY 14-15. For the proposed work to proceed, the collections must be removed to storage areas and space for the collections (over 43,000 artifacts related to the early American Red Cross) is difficult to find. CBNHS will be closed Mondays and Tuesdays.

Mr. LaRocca's notes are attached to the minutes.

### **GEPPAC**

Mayor Beers said GEPPAC has requested a \$2500 donation from the Town; in past years, the Town has given \$2000. GEPPAC's proposed term limits and *ex officio* voting rights for the Town have not been adopted. Councilmember Long noted that it is very important for the Town maintain a good working relationship with GEPPAC. She noted also that the Puppet Company is celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the park; she hoped the Town would be able to give a contribution to them in recognition of the excellence of their work and of the years of enjoyment their presentations have provided to Town residents, especially our children. [*N.B.* – The puppet Company is one of the early elements selected by NPS as an important addition to its developing program activities.]

**Motion 2013-30** To make a donation to GEPPAC for \$2500. Proposed by Councilmember Long. Councilmember Matney amended the motion to \$2300. Councilmember Stiglitz seconded the amendment. Councilmembers Long, Stiglitz & Matney voted in favor. Councilmember McCaffrey abstained.

### **DISCUSSION OF 2 VASSAR CIRCLE**

Mr. Hirsch reported that he has had direct discussions with residents in Town regarding the 2 Vassar Circle property. Mr. Hirsch proposed four houses with a 1500 sq ft footprint to be built on Vassar Circle in a farmhouse style. He presented renderings showing the scale of the proposed homes (compliant with Montgomery County setback requirements, lot size and height restrictions). Storm water management, rights-of-way and other concerns are covered in the subdivision process and reviewed by relevant authorities. Resident Norman Hudson-Taylor asked if the three parking spaces depicted on the renderings was a guarantee; Mr. Hirsch said he would be happy to sign a voluntary agreement for 3 parking spaces on each lot. Mayor Beers said that the Town might own a chunk of the property already. If the Town needed to widen the street for emergency access, the right-of-way might extend into the 2 Vassar Circle property. The lower area of Vassar Circle (the road) is already one of the narrowest roads in Town at approximately 17 feet wide. Mr. Knopf said that normally MC Park & Planning makes a decision based on DOT recommendations for road width. The Town has a right to widen the street; the County mandates but a waiver is available.

Resident Joanne Murray proposed that the Town trade, with Mr. Hirsch, Town owned properties (the Town Hall, 6106 Harvard, pocket parks, *etc.*) so that 2 Vassar Circle could be the new Town Hall with a park surrounding it, similar to those found in New England.

Mr. White thanked the Town for the memo from Mr. Knopf (memo attached to the minutes). Mr. White hoped that the Town would make it clear to all developers in the public process that the Town opposes the plan to make four lots. Mr. Knopf said that Park & Planning has

subdivision authority, not the Town. The Town must have a valid legal reason to oppose the development. The Town has very limited power in blocking the development. Mr. White said that shape is a consideration during the subdivision process and the proposed subdivision does not create shapes that conform with the rest of the Town. Mr. Knopf said that the current circular lot is non-conforming, the proposed subdivision of four pie-shaped lots would be more conforming.

Mr. Hirsch said that he feels that his plan is the most viable plan. As a Town resident, he will be sensitive to the choice of proposed homes so that it fits architecturally with the rest of the Town and is of high quality construction. Mr. Knopf said that another developer would not likely be as accommodating as Mr. Hirsch and could sue the Town to get their way.

After discussion, Council and Mayor directed C/T Fraser to have a boundary survey completed to determine the ROW. Mr. Hirsch agreed to pay half but that the Town would be the sole client so there would be no conflict of interest for the surveyor.

Mr. Nalls asked if there was a shadow study (light diffusion) survey to be done. Mr. Knopf said it was unlikely as the proposed development was across the street from current residences.

Mr. Barrow said that these houses seem to be large to most of the people in Town. Ms. Barton noted that some zoning requirements could be altered. Mr. Knopf said that the Town can change the zoning rules up until construction. If the Town chooses to have a 30 feet height limit, it would have to apply to the whole Town and not to target this specific property. Mayor Beers said that the Town Council's main concern is the safety of the roadway and the parking situation; the rest of the complaints concern aesthetics which the Town may not control.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion 2013-31** Council approved the November Meeting minutes with no revisions. Councilmember Matney proposed the motion; Councilmember Stiglitz seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nicole Fraser  
Clerk-Treasurer

---

Deborah Beers, Mayor

Date

Attachments: GEP/CBNHS November 2013 park report by Mr. LaRocca

Memo from Norman Knopf regarding the Town's position on 2 Vassar Circle