

**TOWN OF GLEN ECHO
COUNCIL MEETING
June 9, 2014**

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/CBNHS¹
Marie LeBaw, Office of the Fire Marshall, Montgomery County
Jeff Robertson and Jared Carhart, CAS Engineering
Herb Niles, resident
Stacey Malmgren, resident
Renny & Edie Springuel, residents
Leah Hertz, resident
Phyllis Fordham, resident and editor of The Echo
Eve Arber, resident
Jerry Bodlander, The Echo reporter
Gloria Levin, resident
Jim Ford, resident
Tim Brangan, resident
Susan Grigsby, resident
Ben Arem, Knopf & Brown, legal counsel to the Town

Mayor Beers called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m.

Mayor Beers announced that on Tuesday June 3rd, 2014, the Town Council went into closed session to consult with Town attorney Knopf under state government article 10-508(a)(7) to provide information regarding subdivision procedure.

DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED ROAD ORDINANCE

Messrs. Carhart and Robertson of CAS Engineering brought the exhibit concerning development in the Vassar Circle area that had been submitted to the Fire Marshall for review. Mayor Beers noted that a number of residents as well as the Town Council have questions about the submission. Mayor Beers asked why the exhibit noted that there was no parking on either side of Vassar Circle. Mr. Carhart said that he had seen the yellow curbs painted on the outer side of Vassar Circle. Mayor Beers said parking is permitted on some sections the outer side of Vassar Circle; the yellow curbs are there to denote areas of no parking: driveways, corner visibility and fire hydrants but do not include the whole circle. Mr. Carhart said that the proposed plan has no roadway improvements, however each house will have two off-street parking spaces and would propose to increase the road width to 20 feet including parking. Mr. Carhart said that in their computer analysis they felt that 12 feet of road width would be sufficient for fire trucks to come

¹ Abbreviations in this document include CBNHS (Clara Barton National Historic Site), GEP (Glen Echo Park) and NPS (National Park Service).

through. Ms. LeBaw (Montgomery County Fire Marshall office civil engineer that specializes in emergency vehicle access) said that the fire department needs 20 feet of clear road width which is to allow for the passing of the vehicles' actual operational width and the setup to operate the equipment. Fire engines need a minimum of 18 feet and the minimum effective turning radius of 25 feet.

Ms. Hertz raised a few points and questions regarding the subdivision proposal submission by CAS Engineering. The fire access diagram designates 16.8 feet as the minimum width of Vassar Circle (in front of the McGunnigles' home, 15 Vassar Circle). At the previous meeting, Ms. Hertz reported that Mr. Schreffler (of CAS Engineering) hypothesized that parts of Vassar Circle may be covered by soil through natural processes (*i.e.* "downhill creep"). Ms. Hertz dug at various parts of the slope and found no pavement located underneath; the edge of the asphalt is clear therefore, the road is not wider than it appears. The current church parking lot is a *de facto* access lane and overflow parking lot that serves as an alternative to the current narrow character of the Vassar Circle roadway. CAS Engineering proposed that a new traffic study is not necessary to allow for the development to proceed. The characterization of the current church building as a one-story building is misleading as the slope of the lot reveals a completely exposed basement level. Ms. Hertz provided photos depicting the curve of the street and the lack of visibility around the turn (not the 150 feet of visibility as described in the subdivision submission). A map submitted with the plan does not depict several (smaller) existing homes and their elevations surrounding Vassar Circle. This map is used to suggest that the proposed house size and elevation are of the same scale as the current homes adjacent to the site.

Mayor Beers asked Ms. LeBaw if a one-way street changes the need for the width. Ms. LeBaw said the prescriptive code does not take into account one way or two way streets, the concern is that the width is sufficient for access and operations. Mr. Springuel noted that the Glen Echo Fire Truck comes through Vassar Circle once a year for Santa Claus, the truck comes to a complete stop in front of 13 Vassar Circle and inches its way past. Ms. LeBaw noted that she had not seen the Vassar Circle site in an effort to keep herself free of opinions. She will visit the site. Ms. LeBaw said that if emergency vehicles are unable to drive around the street, her agency can restrict parking on the street. Mayor Beers said that no one wants that outcome to occur.

Mr. Springuel and Mr. Niles read their statements (attached to these minutes). Ms. Fordham said that the proposed right of way of 50 feet is far too wide and it would detract from the character of the Town and is unnecessary. Councilmember Stiglitz said that a width of 28 to 30 feet brings the road closer to the rest of those in town; the 50 feet would include easement and sidewalks. Mayor Beers said that at most it would be 10 more feet of pavement; this is an opportunity to correct the width of the streets. Mr. Bragan, of 9 Vassar Circle, reported that there is evidence that narrower streets are safer than wider streets; the narrowness of the streets causes cars to slow down and simultaneously adds character to the Town. Councilmember Stiglitz said that the best result would be a width that would accommodate the Fire Marshall's requirements, keep parking on one side, one lane of traffic and sidewalks. Mayor Beers said that ordinance here could be modified.

Motion 2014-18 To introduce the proposed road ordinance with technical amendments from the Town attorney.

Councilmember Matney introduced the motion; Councilmember McCaffrey seconded. No vote taken.

Councilmember Stiglitz said that this ordinance is a starting point; it does not mandate a road width but a point of discussion for the Town to engage developers and residents. Mayor Beers said that the Planning Board will ask if the Town has road width standards; if the Town does not have road width standards, the Planning Board may choose or create standards for the Town, an outcome the Town does not want.

Motion 2014-19 To approve the proposed road ordinance with technical amendments from the Town Attorney.

Councilmember McCaffrey introduced the motion; Councilmember Matney seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

GLEN ECHO PARK REPORT

Mr. LaRocca reviewed recent events at GEP/CBNHS. Mr. LaRocca noted that the Washington Gas contractor damaged a National Park Service sign on Oxford Road; the sign has not been repaired. Ms. Arber asked what work was occurring at the turnaround on the Clara Barton Parkway. Mr. LaRocca said that there was a rock slide on the inbound side of the lanes; the work there is to stabilize the slope.

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

INTRODUCTION OF CLERK-TREASURER

Mayor Beers appointed Stacey Malmgren as the new clerk-treasurer to start in July 2014

Motion 2014-20 Motion to move \$18,000 from street paving to be allocated as necessary. Motion made by Councilmember Stiglitz. Amended by Matney to \$20,000 into the categories as clerk-treasurer sees fit. Motion passed unanimously.

GAS LINE UPDATE

C/T Fraser reported that 27 houses have service lines installed, 69 permits have been issued. Only five households have submitted load letters but have not paid their permits.

TOWN HALL USE

Councilmember Long noted that the Red Cross Blood Donor Drive event seemed to go well. The Town Picnic will be held Sunday July 13th.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Nicole Fraser
Clerk-Treasurer

Deborah Beers, Mayor	Date
Attachments: GEP/CBNHS June 2014 park report by Mr. LaRocca	
May 2014 Police Report	
Letter/Report from Leah Hertz, regarding proposed subdivision at 2 Vassar Circle	
Letter from Renny Springuel, regarding proposed road ordinance	
Letter from Dr. Herb Niles, regarding proposed road ordinance	