



NORTH FOUR CORNERS NEWS

PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY BY THE NORTHWOOD-FOUR CORNERS CIVIC ASSOCIATION ■ APRIL 2026

Housing Bills Considered in Maryland State Legislature

By Sharon Canavan

In January, Maryland Governor Moore submitted a three-bill housing package to the Maryland General Assembly. The bill that presents the most potential concern, the Starter and Silver Homes Act (SB 36/HB 239), is intended to increase the supply of housing via “by-right” development that allows developers to proceed straight to permitting to build townhouses in any single-family zoned areas

throughout the state of Maryland. Townhouses are defined under the proposed legislation as a row of three or more single-family units sharing a common wall with another dwelling unit.

By-right development does not provide any opportunity for public input. Presently, proposed townhouse developments in single-family zoned areas may be considered under the Optional Method of Development, which provides a review by the Montgomery County Planning Board to consider the application and ensure its adherence to zoning and regulatory requirements.

Although this proposed legislation is intended to increase the supply of moderately priced housing, there are no affordability standards, such as those that presently apply to housing development in Montgomery County. It is not even clear whether Montgomery County will be able to enforce its Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDU) program or the county’s requirements to provide workforce units under recently enacted Housing N.O.W. legislation.

Next Meeting On Wed., 8 April

The next meeting of the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association will be held on Wednesday, 8 April 2026, at 7:30 p.m. ***The meeting will be held in person at Forest Knolls Elementary School as well as virtually, but you are urged to attend, as this will be a Delegates Forum (p.2).***

To find the access codes for the online meeting, go to the NFCCA website at www.nfcca.org; the codes will be posted before the meeting.

All residents of the North Four Corners and Forest Knolls area are invited to attend and express their views. Please note that only paid members of the NFCCA are eligible to vote. (Annual dues are \$15 per household and may be paid at the meeting or online.) ■

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Just the beginning of a series on our county’s 250 years of history

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WWW.NFCCA.ORG

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our NFCCA Chili/Curry Cookoff Fundraiser was a success despite the sloppy snowy weather, which couldn't keep people away from a good cause and a fun afternoon. The kids loved the balloon artist; many a balloon sword fight broke out! The NFCCA team of Sarah Dye, Ricky Fitzgerald, and Ema Perez did a fantastic planning job and the event raised \$638.90. Thanks go out to our participating Cookmasters for their tasty offerings and to those who brought treats to sell.

NFCCA's next General Meeting is on Wednesday, 8 April, at 7:30 p.m. at the Forest Knolls Elementary School and NFCCA is hosting a Forum for the candidates running for the three seats in the Maryland House of Delegates for District 19. The format for the Candidate Forum, which we have successfully used in previous election years, mixes a formal opportunity for each candidate to make brief remarks to highlight their principal goals with more informal "speed dating" sessions gathering in small groups to meet with each candidate. For these rounds, each candidate will meet for a limited time with each circle of attendees before moving on to the next seated group. Please plan to attend in person, although there will be Zoom station for those who need to participate virtually.

At the NFCCA meeting, we will also finish collecting NFCCA members' votes on the resolution to change from Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association to North Four Corners Civic Association. Voting is limited to NFCCA members. This potential name change was debated at the October 2025 meeting, but the vote was not finalized pending review of our bylaws requirements. Pro and Con arguments regarding this potential change were discussed in a previous newsletter article at [nfcca.org/news/nn201302i.html](https://www.nfcca.org/news/nn201302i.html). If you cannot attend this meeting, your member household can submit a vote via email to *president AT nfcca DOT org* by the 8 April deadline.

The long-time [26 years!] editor of NFCCA's newsletter, Jacquie Bokow, is downsizing and preparing to move out of the neighborhood. Fortunately, Rise Goldstein, who is an experienced writer and editor, has volunteered to take on the newsletter role, so the *North Four Corners News* lives on! Our great thanks and appreciation go out to both Jacquie and Rise (pronounced "Reesa").

NFCCA is still one Board member short. The "hole" we still need to fill is someone with technology skills, who can maintain and update the [nfcca.org](https://www.nfcca.org) website. Everyone is busy with work and family, but serving on the NFCCA Board doesn't have to be a heavy lift. You can choose to concentrate on an area or on an issue that is of particular interest. Please contact me at *president AT nfcca DOT org* or call me at 240.281.3911 if you have any questions about serving or suggestions for a nominee.

NFCCA has just started the 2025–2026 dues cycle. So

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)

Communicate!

NFCCA Listserv

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To send messages to group:

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/nfccamoco

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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/517319962826076>

Compost Crew: 5-gal. @ \$22, 12-gal. @ \$29, [compostcrew.com](https://www.compostcrew.com)

Seasonal Roots: Sign up @ \$25, [seasonalroots.com/nfcca](https://www.seasonalroots.com/nfcca)

NORTH FOUR CORNERS NEWS

The *North Four Corners News* (formerly *Northwood News*) is published by the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association. The NFCCA represents the 1,600+ households in the area bounded by Colesville Road (Rte. 29), University Blvd. (Rte. 193), Caddington Avenue, and the Northwest Branch.

Any resident of this area is eligible to join the NFCCA. Annual dues are \$15 per household and may be paid online, at any Association meeting, or mailed to the treasurer.

The *North Four Corners News* is published five times a year—in October, December, February, April, and June. To place an ad or discuss a story, please contact the editor.

Editor

Jacquie Bokow
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editor AT nfcca DOT org

Visit Our Website
www.nfcca.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

far, 163 households have paid their dues, as compared to last year's total membership of 282 households. Information on how to pay NFCCA dues is below. Please support your civic association!

—Sharon Canavan

NFCCA Dues

Online Payment ★ Check ★ Cash

Mail your \$15 annual dues, check payable to "NFCCA," to Treasurer Sondra Katz at 10905 Lombardy Road. *Please don't mail cash.*

No stamps? **Hand-deliver** your check or cash to the mailbox at the Treasurer's home. **Or**, at one of our meetings or events, give your dues payment to any NFCCA Board member. **Or** arrange for a Board member to pick up your payment by calling *North Four Corners News* Editor Jacquie Bokow (landline 301.593.8566).

Pay online at nfcca.org or use the QR code below. Online payments via PayPal can be made by debit card, credit card, or a transfer from a PayPal account.

PAY DUES HERE



Wazzup?

Here are the upcoming neighborhood events, so Mark Your Calendars!

■ NFCCA's next General Meeting is on **Wednesday, 8 April**, at 7:30 p.m. at the Forest Knolls Elementary School. **NFCCA is hosting a Candidate Forum** for the candidates running for the three seats in the Maryland House of Delegates for District 19.

■ Meet at North Four Corners Local Park at 10:00 a.m. for our **All-Ages Community Bike Ride on Sunday, 26 April**. Donuts, coffee, and fun!

■ Sign up to participate in the **5th Annual NFCCA Community Yard Sale, scheduled for Saturday, 16 May 2026**, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. [Rain date 17 May.] The sign-up sheet will close on Friday, 8 May 2026, at 7:00 p.m. to prepare the map/list of participating houses. Sign up here: <https://forms.gle/cP2z8sX-WuuEEohPLA>. For questions, email Karen at kdonnelly119@gmail.com or Julie at marjulst@comcast.net.

■ The Northwood Garden Club will be hosting its **Annual Plant Swap on Saturday, 30 May**, at 309 Dennis Avenue from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Bring a transplant or extra seedlings to swap for a different plant from your neighbors' gardens. If you don't have anything to swap, stop by at the end to pick up something left over.

For further details on these events check nfcca.org or upcoming posts on the NFCCA listserv. ■

NFCCA BOARD

The Board of Directors for the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association serves for one year and meets every month except July and August. Current officers (until October 2026) are:

President

Sharon Canavan
10213 Edgewood Avenue
240.281.3911
president AT nfcca DOT org

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10707 Edgewood Avenue
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veep AT nfcca DOT org

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Secretary

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At Large

Brandon Boback
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717.873.0665
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Richard Fitzpatrick
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Vacant

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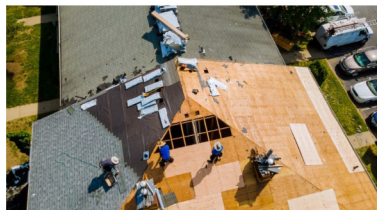
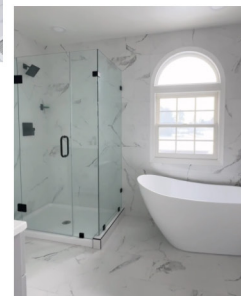
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Housing Bills

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Also, the proposed legislation—by allowing by-right development and, therefore, limiting planning department review—undermines existing county-imposed environmental protections, storm-water mitigation controls, and evaluation of infrastructure capacity, such as schools and utilities.

The legislation strives to reduce home building costs by preempting zoning requirements that mandate minimum lot size, property setback requirements, and lot coverage limitations. The legislation proposes to prevent counties from requiring lot sizes of more than 5,000 square feet and from establishing front setbacks of more than 10 feet or side setbacks of more than 5 feet. The proposed setbacks would be significantly less than the 25-foot front and 8-foot side setbacks that apply in an R-60 zone (the NFCCA community is primarily zoned R-60).

Provisions of the legislation would also preempt localities from establishing maximum lot coverage rules. In Montgomery County, the zoning code generally limits structures to 35% of the lot, which is important to preserve rain-permeable areas and control stormwater runoff. Nor could local jurisdictions set design, architectural, or aesthetic standards for single-family construction.

For more details on the bills see the link to “Montgomery Planning” on the www.nfcca.org homepage. ■

Hearing on Funding FLASH BRT 2

On 2 March 2026, the Transportation and Environment (T&E) Committee of the Montgomery County Council met to discuss 2027–2032 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) funding, including \$115 million for further design and construction of a Dedicated Median Lane for Phase 2 of the Flash Bus Rapid Transit route (BRT Phase 2) on U.S. 29/Colesville Road. (See article describing how this project potentially impacts Four Corners in the February 2026 issue at <https://www.nfcca.org/news/nm202602f.html>.)

On 23 February 2026, District 5 Councilmember Kristin Mink sent a letter to the T&E Committee raising concerns about funding a two-lane wide, barrier-separated, Flash-only Dedicated Median Lane through Four Corners and asked for consideration of three alternatives:

- Run BRT Phase 2 buses in mixed traffic through Four Corners;
- Reconsider the Managed Lane option for a curb-running bus lane for Flash and other buses; or
- Construct a one-lane-wide BRT lane through Four Corners that reverses during peak rush hours.

Although not a T&E Committee member, Councilmember Mink attended the hearing to provide more detail regarding her concerns, including the potential for extreme gridlock posed by removing two traffic lanes near the Four Corners intersection.

Transportation officials, including Department of

Transportation Director Chris Conklin, lined up against the Managed Lane option, arguing that the Dedicated Median Lane option will better serve public transportation riders and would not present the enforcement challenges that a Managed Lane might if scofflaws drive in the bus lane. Conklin also believes that potential federal funding could be lost if the Managed Lane alternative is pursued.

Councilmember Mink noted that dedicated median bus lanes are not a feature proposed for the county’s other BRT routes. Director Conklin responded that congestion is worst on U.S. 29 right before the U.S. 495 exit ramp, so a two-lane BRT busway would be the most effective at this point, and he added that other BRT route corridors are less congested with fewer choke-points.

Conklin noted that adjustments to the proposed design, such as reducing lane width to 11 feet, can still be made to avoid reducing sidewalk width near the Woodmoor Shopping Center and to avoid having to take property at the Burnt Mills Auto shop and elsewhere. However, he did not recommend altering the median bus lane design to address our communities’ concerns about access turns at Lorain Avenue.

T&E Committee Chairman Evan Glass indicated he has heard numerous concerns about the BRT 2.0 proposal voiced by Four Corners residents and small businesses. He also acknowledged that

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

Neighbors, Flavors, Fun at the Cook-Off Fundraiser

Another successful Chili and Curry Cook-Off Fundraiser is in the books! Despite the rainy and snowy weather, we still had a good turnout with over 300 tickets sold, more than 80 people attending, and a net income of \$638.90, thanks to our participating community members. These funds can now be used towards future events, administrative costs, and for continuing the print edition of the *NFC News*. Thanks to all who came out!

One would never have guessed how dreary it was outside with the buzz of activity inside Forest Knolls School that afternoon. There were neighbors meeting each other for the first time and others coming together to spend an afternoon with friends. Balloon Magic was in the house, and kids took home all sorts of colorful balloon sculptures, custom-made to each child's liking. Then there was the live music and accompanying slide show of pictures taken at NFC-CA events throughout 2025.

There were 11 fantastic entries this year from our community Chili and Curry Masters who stepped forth to take the challenge—nine chili entries and two curry entries. Participants ranged from solo chefs to partner teams to parent and child teams and entire family teams, so the diversity was certainly there for our awesome chefs. The skillset was also broad among our Chili and Curry Masters, from people who regularly cook, to those cooking for fun, to those just learning the trade.

The truly amazing aspect

was how different each of these dishes tasted, even though they were either a “chili” or a “curry.” Take it from our community Tasters who sampled all 11 entries! The savory flavors of habañeros, a variety of spices, meats, beans, tomatoes of all kinds, and even cinnamon came into play with a few of the tasty creations.

Last year's overall Chili and Curry Cook-Off winner, Antoinette Ramdeth, had the honor of handing out top prizes to this year's winners. With

none of the 2025 winners returning as Chili/Curry Masters to defend their titles, the competition was wide open and full of delicious possibilities. Top prizes were:

1st Place: Frances Spiegel and daughter, Elise, for their “Pork Vindaloo Curry.”

2nd Place: The Chili Owls, led by Elizabeth Reilly, and their “Paleo Chili.”

3rd Place: Galia Maranon-Ramos and her “Just Chili.”

[Read more and see photos at www.nfcc.org.] ■

Flash BRT Phase 2 Funding

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

the county is facing budgetary challenges so the Council must make tough choices between projects they want and projects they need. Glass noted building an effective public transportation system is necessary, but the goal is to assure a proper balance between other county needs, cost containment, and effectiveness. Finally, he stated that BRT Phase 2 improvements are critical to serve the significant low- and moderate-income ridership in East County, Howard County commuters, and future public transportation demand after Viva White Oak is developed. But it is important to note that Dedicated Median Lanes are for BRT Flash buses only, and by increasing traffic backup would disadvantage all non-BRT forms of public transit, such as Metrobus and RideOn.

Councilmember Kate Stewart stressed that public transportation improve-

ments are a key element of the county's master plan and expressed strong concern about enforcement if the Managed Lane approach is adopted. Councilmember Marilyn Balcombe underscored the necessity to gather more data on potential alternatives to analyze before making a funding decision.

After discussion, Committee members settled on an approach that will allow the Transportation Department to continue with design of the Dedicated Median Lane BRT but gave direction to develop additional data and analyze two BRT options at Four Corners: (1) a single, reversible dedicated median lane, and (2) the BRT bus traveling in mixed traffic. This analysis would include detailed cost estimates, including cost per rider estimates. After receiving this information, the Committee will make a final decision on funding. ■

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Annual Plant Swap on Saturday, 30 May, on Dennis

The Northwood Garden Club will be hosting its Annual Plant Swap on Saturday, 30 May 2026, at 309 Dennis Avenue from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

If your garden beds are getting too crowded because annuals have re-seeded, perennials have spread, you started too many vegetable seedlings, or you have extra

garden gear, bring them to the plant swap! Each plant you bring can be traded in and swapped for a different plant from one of your neighbors' gardens. Come on over to meet and mingle with some neighborhood gardeners. If you don't have anything to swap, feel free to stop by at the end as there are always plants remaining. Everything

must go!

The Northwood Garden Club meets to share gardening tips, resources, and information. We welcome beginners as well as experienced gardeners. If you are interested in joining this group, send an email to *Northwood GardenClub+subscribe@nfccca.groups.io*. (You must first join the NFCCA listserv.) ■

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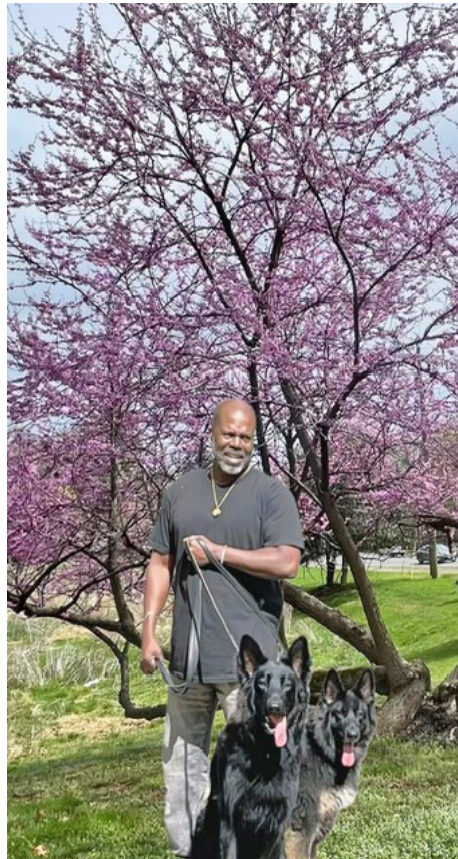
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I'm Deren Blessman. As Realtors, my wife Jeni and I study the neighborhood market regularly for our real estate business and to monitor the values of our own home on Malta Lane.

Spring is trying to happen; crazy March weather we're having! We're gearing up to walk the dogs more often so we can see all the beautifully manicured and colorful yards in our neighborhood.

We are both seeing a lot of market activity, which is normal in the spring, along with more inventory and steadier prices than in the last few years. Hopefully the rates will go down a little; however, the projection is not for a lot of change this year.



The real estate market is changing daily, so if you have any questions or concerns in Maryland, D.C., or Virginia, Jeni & I are here for you, and your friends and family. Even if you're not ready to sell, let us know if you'd like a free Home Market Analysis for your home. We also have excellent Realtor associates throughout the country if you need an excellent agent referral.

The Blessman Team with Keller Williams has YOU covered with over 40 years collectively in the business. Please give us a call, text, or email for any of your real estate needs:

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Much love and peace to you all!

Deren & Jeni



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A Bit of Montgomery County History After 250 Years

By Sondra Katz

Did you know that Montgomery County is only a few months younger than the United States? In 1688, Henry Darnell patented the first tract of land in this area, a strip on the east side of Rock Creek. The region initially became part of Prince George's County and later Frederick County when that county was created in 1748.

On Saturday, 11 June 1774, at Hungerford's Tavern in Williamsburgh (now Rockville), the leading men of lower Frederick County met in response to new taxes imposed by the British and agreed:

"Resolved, unanimously, That it is the opinion of this meeting that most effectual means for the securing of American Freedom will be to break off all Commerce with Great Britain and the West Indies until the said act be repealed and the right of taxation given upon permanent principles."

These resolutions, called the Hungerford Resolves, were published in the Maryland Gazette and brought to the Maryland Assembly in Annapolis.

On 31 August 1776, Dr. Thomas Sprigg Wootton, a member of the Maryland Constitutional Convention, introduced a bill to divide Frederick County into three smaller counties: Frederick, Washington, and Montgomery (south section of Frederick County). The measure passed on 6 September 1776, creating Montgomery County officially on 1 October 1776.

The county was named for General Richard Montgomery, a Continental Army officer who died in action in Quebec in 1775 and never set foot on the land that would bear his name. The naming of both Montgomery and Washington counties was a deliberate act of defiance against Great Britain during the Revolutionary War; they were the first counties in the nation established by elected representatives and the first in Maryland named for popular Americans rather than old-world aristocrats.

The first elections in the new county were held at Hungerford's Tavern. On 20 May 1777, Hungerford's Tavern became the seat of government for the county and where court was held until a separate courthouse was built in 1779.

18th Century Items of Interest

- White's Ferry began operating in 1786 and operated until 2020.
- Georgetown was ceded to Washington, D.C., in 1781.

19th Century Items of Interest

- Rockville was officially established in 1801 (name changed from Williamsburgh).
- There were a number of Black communities established before the Civil War: for example, Sandy Spring from the late 1700s and Big Woods in upper Montgomery County. Sharp Street Methodist Episcopal Church, built in 1822, was the first Black church in Montgomery County. In 1800, the black population was 44% of the entire population of the county. The



White's Ferry on the Potomac River between Maryland and Virginia, c. 1970s. Established in 1786, historic White's Ferry is east of Poolesville, Md., and allowed vehicles to cross to and from Leesburg, Virginia.

percentage kept going down until the 1970s when it was only 6% of the county. The percentage has gone up since then and reached 18% in the 2020s.

■ In 1814 Brookeville was where President James Madison took refuge when Washington, D.C., was burned by the British Army.

■ St. Mary's Church in Rockville was built; it's the oldest church still in use in Rockville. However most people know it as the place where F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald are buried.

■ In 1849, Josiah Henson published his first memoirs of his time enslaved on the Isaac Riley plantation near Bethesda. Harriet Beecher Stowe used elements from his life story as inspiration for events and characters in her novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

■ In 1855, the *Montgomery Sentinel* newspaper began publication and lasted until 2019.

[This history of Montgomery Co. will continue in subsequent issues and be available online with more photos.] ■

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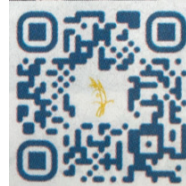
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