



NORTHWOOD NEWS

PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY BY THE NORTHWOOD-FOUR CORNERS CIVIC ASSOCIATION ■ APRIL 2006

An Important Victory for North Four Corners Park

By Carole Barth

In February, we testified at the County Council's public hearing on Park and Planning's CIP (Construction Improvements Program) budget. NFCCA definitely stood out among all the groups asking the Council to spend more money. We presented the Council with a giant "check" for \$5.8 million: the cost of Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission's proposed soccer field and parking lot. (Note: MNCPPC has since increased the estimated cost to \$6.1 million.) Thanks to those who came out to show support or otherwise helped, I think we made an impression.

The action then moved to the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee. Over several sessions, this committee reviewed the entire CIP in some detail, asking questions of MNCPPC staff. I attended these sessions and sent a number of emails offering information to counter what Park and Planning staff said regarding North Four Corners Park and the additional arguments they submitted in writing. At one meeting, I was invited to discuss our community plan for the park. All in

all, the PHED committee devoted a great deal of time and effort to our little park.

At its final session, the PHED committee decided to strike the CIP language stating that a soccer field will be built on the addition. The Committee directed MNCPPC to develop a range of alternatives to be reviewed by the Council in two years. These alternatives are to include a fuller exploration (including cost estimates) of a more natural, "greener" park design for the addition. They will probably also consider an alternative suggested by Council member Praisner. She suggested putting in the large soccer field and parking lot on the addition but removing the existing youth field from the older section of the park. (The old field would then be reforested.) MNCPPC has also been directed to thoroughly consider other possible sites and reassess the need for soccer fields.

Park and Planning was not happy with this outcome, and they fought putting any work into a natural design for the addition. However, the Committee pointed out that the final decision is the Council's, and they would prefer to make a decision not

based on numbers "pulled out of the air." It is expected that the full Council will ratify this decision as we go to press. In addition, after the budget is done, the PHED committee will review the Land, Parks, and Preservation Plan, which is MNCPPC's justification for wanting to build 88 more soccer fields (equivalent to 4.5 more soccerplexes) in the next

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Next Meeting on April 12th

The next meeting of the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association will be held on Wednesday, 12 April 2006, at 7:30 p.m. at the North Four Corners Rec Center. The Rec Center is located at the end of Southwood Road, just off Edgewood Drive. First item on the agenda will be a presentation by a Mr. Gold from Pepco.

All residents of the Northwood-Four Corners-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 \$10 per household and may be paid at the meeting.) ■

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Spring is here, although, as I write this, there's a chance of snow in the forecast. Spring weather may be volatile, but, regardless of the temperature, there are lots of reasons to get outside this time of year. It's always a thrill to find the first delicate blossoms of the spice bush or the aptly named spring beauties. Maybe you look forward to spotting the first robin, or hearing the call and response of the spring peepers. Last year, many of us watched eggs transform to tadpoles in the vernal pool down by the branch. These are the experiences that rejuvenate us, by fostering what Rachel Carson called "the sense of wonder."

But there's another reason I hope all of you will get out and get acquainted with our local parks. This winter, members of the Parks committee spent many hours fighting to preserve the essential character of the North Four Corners Park addition. (See article on page 1.) Over the years, NFCCA has had to fight myriad threats to the Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park—from proposed monorails to trail-paving schemes. As undeveloped land becomes ever scarcer "downcounty," these threats will likely increase.

So explore our local treasures: hike the Rachel Carson Trail; watch the beavers patrol Northwest Branch; check out the ancient black walnut tree in the North Four Corners Park addition. Get familiar with the problems too, so you can be an informed parks advocate. Practice hands-on stewardship [scoop your pet's poop; help out with clean-ups (see article on page 5), invasive plant removals, tree plantings.] Joni Mitchell sang, "Don't it always seem to go, you don't know what you've got till it's gone. They paved paradise and put up a parking lot." I hope all of you will take the time to get to know our little piece of paradise as a special Earth Day celebration.

—Carole Barth

law allows developers to "buy out" of their MPDU requirements by making a one-time payment to the Housing Initiative Fund sufficient to provide significantly more MPDUs in the same general area of the county. Developers bought out one-sixth of all the MPDUs required during the ten-year study period. But, with buyout payments averaging \$16,591 per unit, it is no wonder that no MPDUs have ever been provided to replace the 470 that were bought out during this time. After the MCCF made public the ridiculously low price for MPDU buyouts, DHCA upped the charge and the most re-

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NORTHWOOD NEWS

Northwood News is published by the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association. The NFCCA represents the 1,494 households in the area bounded by Colesville Rd. (Rte. 29), University Blvd. (Rte. 193), Caddington Ave., and the Northwest Branch.

Any resident of this area is eligible to join the NFCCA. Annual dues are \$10 per household and may be paid at any Association meeting or mailed to the treasurer.

Northwood 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.

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MCCF Challenges DHCA on MPDUs

By Jim Humphrey, Chair,
Planning and Land Use
Committee, MoCo Civic Fed-
eration

Established in 1974, the Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) Program is intended to benefit households earning up to 65 percent of Area Media Income. Administered by the Department of Housing and Community

Affairs (DHCA), the program now requires that 12.5 percent of all housing in projects 20 units or larger be provided at reduced price.

The MCCF Housing Committee studied implementation of the MPDU Program from 1995 through 2004. An average of 300 MPDUs each year were required to be provided. However, the

Another Update on Our Park

(continued from page 1)
14 years.

This is an important victory, but the “war is not yet won.” We will need to stay involved over the next two years to see that genuine alternatives gets developed. We will need to continue to pursue management and enforcement issues (trash, invasive plants, overuse of the existing field, parking violations). And, of course, we will need to let the Council know which alternative we favor.

Moreover, over the three years we have been embroiled in this fight for North Four Corners Park, it has become

clear that our experience is not isolated. Many communities are suffering from park overuse issues. Many communities have faced a seemingly unstoppable MNCPPC staff “juggernaut.” NFCCA is being asked to share our knowledge and experience with citizens throughout the county who are demanding greater accountability from Park and Planning.

So stay tuned. In the meantime, if you can, send a thank you to the PHED committee (Council members Silverman, Praisner, and Floreen). Then celebrate with a walk in the park. ■

MCCF Claims MPDU Mismanaged

(continued from page 2)
cent buyout allowed was set at \$100,000 per unit.

Developers Violate Agreements

By law, MPDUs must be built at the same time or before market rate units in a project. Last summer MCCF uncovered several projects in which developers failed to provide a total of 131 MPDUs. These are included in the Site Plan Enforcement Study available on our website, at www.montgomerycivic.org. So, of 3,010 MPDUs required over 10 years, 470 were bought out and five percent of the remaining units have not been provided. Some examples:

■ **Kings Crossing in Germantown.** Developer Blumberg and Associates has built 712 market rate homes

yet construction has not begun on 102 MPDUs. An August 26 DHCA letter gave the developer 90 days to begin construction or threatened that a \$500 per day per unit fine would be imposed, but no further action has been taken.

■ **Regency at Leisure World.** Developer Classic Communities was required by the Site Plan, a Council rezoning resolution, and the MPDU Agreement to provide 11 MPDU townhouses in this project and six more units elsewhere in Leisure World. All of the market-rate homes are built, bought, and occupied, but no MPDUs have been provided. No enforcement action by DHCA.

■ **The Edgemoor III Highrise in Bethesda.** De-

(continued on page 5)

NFCCA BOARD

The Board of Directors for the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association meets five times a year, in October, December, February, April, and June. Current officers:

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It's Creek and River Clean-Up Time

It's time for our annual spring cleanup of Lockridge Creek. This year will be our 16th clean-up! Lockridge Creek flows into Northwest Branch. The Northwest Branch and the Northeast Branch join together at Bladensburg to form the Anacostia River.

Scheduled for Earth Day, **Saturday, April 22nd**, our cleanup coincides with the regional Anacostia River Earth Day Cleanup and Celebration. Join us at 9:30 a.m. at the

Lockridge Drive and Dennis Avenue intersection. Be sure to bring gloves and wear sturdy shoes, long sleeves, and long pants. The rain date for our cleanup will be Sunday, April 23rd.

We are hoping someone can volunteer the use of their van or truck to consolidate the trash for pickup by the County. If you can help us out, or need more information, call Carole Barth, 301.593.7863 or email cbarth@mindspring.com. ■

MCCF Challenges DHCA on MPDUs

(continued from page 3)
veloper P.N.Hoffman agreed to provide a 12-unit MPDU building on another part of the site if no MPDUs were required in its luxury condo highrise. After the condos were completed, DHCA allowed the developer out of responsibility to construct the MPDU building and agreed to accept *land only in lieu of units*, an action specifically prohibited by law. The Housing Opportunities Commission is now planning to build 12 affordable units on the land, at taxpayers' expense.

In addition, the developer of **Layhill Village East**, Magruder Reed, failed to begin construction on all MPDUs in that project by September 30 as required, but DHCA has taken no action. When asked in a recent Council work session whether MPDU construction had begun on this project, DHCA Director Elizabeth Davison stated she had no idea since

she does not have enough staff to conduct field investigations.

Ineptitude or Cover-Up?

MCCF requested DHCA Director Davison explain her department's failure to implement MPDU laws, but has received no reply. When asked why she has not levied fines on developers who fail to provide required MPDUs, she replied to a *Gazette* reporter that "fining people isn't going to get those (units) built." Assessing fines for violations, which in the case of Kings Crossing would exceed \$1.5 million to date, would send a message to the development industry that our MPDU laws must be obeyed. And the money could be put to good use, perhaps toward buying rental apartments at risk of condo conversion to keep them in the affordable housing stock.

We urge DHCA to issue a report on the MPDU pro-

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gram to answer questions on its implementation. How many applicants are there at present? What marketing of the program has been done? How many units that come up for resale are offered to applicants, and how many are bought by HOC and converted to rental units? Why hasn't DHCA informed Permitting Services of MPDU Agreements, as required by law prior to issuing of building permits for housing projects? What size staff would be appropriate to properly administer the MPDU program?

We also urge the Council as our citizen representatives to do a better job of oversight. The Committee has fallen down on its job of insuring that affordable housing laws are properly implemented. ■

Becoming “Long Term Care Aware”

By Norbert Fichtel

Long Term Care Insurance Representative

10416 Edgewood Avenue

Silver Spring, Md. 20901

Office: 301-593-0163

Cell: 301-938-9426

www.norbertfichtel.com

(Long Term Care Information Website)

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Many people don't understand what long term care is, don't understand the odds that they may need it some day, don't know how much it can cost, and don't know the options available to them.

What is long term care?

Unlike medical care, long term care is not primarily intended to cure a medical condition and restore normal functioning. Instead, it focuses on coping with a person's reduced level of functioning over an extended period of time, sometimes indefinitely.

Commonly, that means an individual needs assistance with what are called Activities of Daily Living, such as bathing, continence, dressing, feeding, toileting, and transferring.

I'm not old enough to be concerned ... or am I?

Anyone of any age can need long term care. However, the likelihood that any individual will need long term care increases in

the Golden Years. According to the federal Agency for Health Care Policy and Research, it's estimated that some 42 percent of Americans who reach the age of 70 can expect to utilize some type of long term care.¹

Does that mean going into a nursing home?

Years ago, “long term care” usually meant “nursing home care.” No longer. Today, most long term care is provided in the person's home, either by family or friends (called “informal caregivers”) pressed into duty by the circumstances, or by paid health care professionals who visit the home to provide care.

Long term care is also delivered in other settings, including assisted living facilities or community-based facilities like adult day care centers.

Finally, the most intensive care is still delivered in skilled nursing homes or special care facilities like Alzheimer's units.

¹ “Investing in Retirement—Long Term Care—Shelter from the Storm: Why more people in their 40s are buying nursing home insurance.” *Barron's*, 03/22/04

² Genworth Financial 2005 Cost of Care Survey, conducted by the independent research firm of CareScout and issued May 25, 2005.

How much can it cost?

That varies depending on the type of care, the type of facility in which it's delivered, and the area in which the individual lives.

However, nursing home costs have historically provided a benchmark. A recent survey commissioned by Genworth Financial's Long Term Care Division showed that the average nationwide cost of a year of skilled care for a private room in a nursing home facility is \$69,400.² Depending on where you live, those costs could be very different. Nursing home care in New York City averaged \$133,663 a year (private room), while such are in Louisiana averaged \$44,614 a year. At those rates, it's easy to see how long term care costs could deplete the assets accumulated over a lifetime.

But I have health insurance...

It's a common misconception that long term care is covered by health insurance. In fact, most health care insurance policies do not cover long term care costs. Generally, neither does Medicare, except under very specific circumstances, and following a qualifying hospital stay. And Medicaid, the federal program for the needy, won't help until one has exhausted almost all one's assets.

How can I make sure I've prepared properly?

Here are some ways. You can consult with your financial planner, you can meet with an insurance agent who specializes in long term care insurance, you can educate yourself through independent research.

One of the tools available on the Internet is the Genworth Center for Financial Learning. It's a free, educational website that does not sell, advertize, or promote products. It is available in both English and Spanish, and accessible at www.genworth.com.

This website also offers online courses, financial dictionaries, and over a dozen online calculators to help you plan a variety of financial needs from long term care to your child's college education to your retirement.

However you choose to do it, you owe it to yourself and your family to make yourself "long term care aware."



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Silver Spring/Northwood Real Estate Report – March 2006

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Montgomery Co./Silver Spring Sales

(Settled 01/01/06 – 2/28/06)

(DOM—Days on Market from List Date to Contract Date)

Subdivision/Area/City	# Units	Aver. Price	DOM
Aspen Hill	4	\$443,793	45
Burnt Mills	2	\$382,000	8
Colesville	6	\$1,050,417	97
Dumont Oaks	3	\$356,333	15
Forest Knolls	1	\$460,000	38
Hampshire Greens	1	\$1,575,000	88
Hillandale	3	\$594,633	108
Indian Springs	5	\$504,900	60
Kemp Mill	9	\$483,539	31
Leisure World	17	\$279,465	49
North Hills	3	\$549,167	49
Northwood	7	\$424,000	44
Sligo	9	\$438,444	52
Springbrook	3	\$483,333	58
Takoma Park	24	\$468,568	51
University Towers	3	\$232,667	55
Woodmoor	3	\$508,267	55
Woodside	12	\$465,888	73

Recent Northwood Sales

Address	Sale Price	Style	BR	BA/HBA		DOM
				BA	HBA	
10609 Glenwild Rd	\$479,000	Bilevel	4	3		26
1101 Playford Ln	\$460,000	Split Foyer	5	3		38
513 Kerwin Ct	\$456,000	Cape Cod	4	2/1		7
10613 Eastwood Ave	\$430,000	Cape Cod	4	2		147
215 Hannes St	\$428,000	Rambler	4	2		6
303 Irwin St	\$415,000	Split Level	3	2/1		99
702 Dryden St	\$412,000	Cape Cod	4	2		46
305 Dennis Ave	\$380,000	Rambler	3	1/1		9
15 Kinsman View Cir	\$380,000	Townhouse	3	2/2		11

Forest Glen Metro Area	20	\$442,565	46
Wheaton Metro Area	17	\$444,100	40
Wheaton Regional Park	6	\$539,833	52

Bethesda	126	\$791,411	63
Chevy Chase	38	\$1,008,008	54
Kensington	21	\$550,805	64
Olney	45	\$448,457	40
Potomac	60	\$1,375,103	93
Rockville	170	\$479,065	52
Silver Spring	417	\$427,026	46
Total (Montgomery Co.)	1,585	\$509,830	54

Information from MRIS deemed reliable, but not guaranteed.

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Northwood Update January 16, 2006 - March 15, 2006

11 SOLD

Average Sale Price: \$446,955 Average DOM: 48

6 UNDER CONTRACT (3/15/06); AVG DOM: 38

409 BELTON RD	\$459,900
414 BELTON CT	\$455,000
319 LADSON RD	\$427,550
705 UNIVERSITY BLVD W	\$489,999
10205 SUTHERLAND RD	\$525,000
10601 GLENWILD RD	\$485,000

4 ACTIVE (3/15/06)

10312 COLESVILLE RD	\$495,000
217 UNIVERSITY BLVD W	\$484,900
511 KERWIN CT	\$429,950
11109 LOMBARDY RD	\$499,900
601 UNIVERSITY BLVD W	\$529,000

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Active	List Price	Style	Bedrms	Full Baths	Half Bath
601 University Blvd W	\$529,000	Cape Cod	5	3	0
217 University Blvd W	\$484,900	Cape Cod	4	2	0
11109 Lombardy Road	\$499,900	Rambler	5	2	0
10312 Colesville Road	\$495,000	Colonial	3	2	1
<u>Contract/No Kick Out</u>					
319 Ladson Road	\$427,550	Cape Cod	3	1	0
511 Kerwin Court	\$429,950	Cape Cod	4	2	0
844 Loxford Terrace	\$439,500	Split Level	4	2	1
414 Belton Court	\$455,000	Rambler	3	2	0
905 Malta Lane	\$495,000	Rambler	3	2	1
<u>Contract</u>					
10424 Edgewood Avenue	\$690,000	Cape Cod	4	3	0
805 Malta Lane	\$459,000	Split Level	4	1	1
10205 Sutherland Road	\$525,000	Colonial	3	1	1
409 Belton Road	\$459,900	Rambler	3	2	0
10601 Glenwild Road	\$485,000	Rambler	5	2	1
705 University Blvd W	\$489,999	Split Level	5	3	0

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