

# NORTHWOOD NEWS

PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY BY THE NORTHWOOD-FOUR CORNERS CIVIC ASSOCIATION ■ DECEMBER 2013

## 'Nextdoor' Social Website is Proposed for Our Neighborhood

By Thomas Ford

My family and I moved here about four years ago. I am a software developer and have long had an interest in how technology could support building stronger communities, i.e., not the online kind. I'm not a big fan of Facebook. However, someone finally had a the ingenious idea of building a social networking site specifically for neighborhoods!

As their site says, "Nextdoor.com is a company that lets people create private social networks with others who live in their local neighborhood." It has features you can find in Facebook, Google, Yahoo, and other sites. The feature-set is not all that robust because it is a young company; however, it is—as they claim—designed from the ground up for neighborhoods. So, the neighborhood site I created within their site is called: <http://northwood-fourcorners.nextdoor.com>. Or, just go to [www.nextdoor.com](http://www.nextdoor.com) and search for "northwoodfourcorners."

The feature that stood out the most for me was the map. It is an embedded Google map showing the Northwood-Four Corners borders and color-coded dots over each house within the neighborhood boundry which serves as a sort of visual contacts directory. For members (the green dots), you can show a name, phone, e-mail, etc., or nothing. Click a dot to send a private message to that neighbor. You can also see the river and trails nearby.

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## Date Change: Next Meeting on Thurs., 19 Dec.

The next meeting of the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association will be held on Thursday, 19 December 2013, at 7:30 p.m. at Forest Knolls Elementary School. *This a change from our usual second-Wednesday schedule;* FKES was unavailable. The school is located at 10830 Eastwood Avenue, just off Caddington Avenue (there's no access from other sections of Eastwood). Treats—and seats!—will be available.

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 online or at the meeting.) ■

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Another year of trials and joys has almost gone. The destruction of Rachel Carson Meadow and many of its trees has saddened and disgusted us all. From the playground and the kitchen windows of our neighbor's homes abutting the park, University Boulevard can be seen in all its glory for the first time in decades. But thanks to the efforts of some of our members, we did manage to save the Rec Center from demolition.

The bus rapid transit (BRT) system which is being planned by the county to go hurtling through Four Corners is another threat for us to deal with and unite against in 2014.

See you all at our next member meeting on Thursday, 19 December, at Forest Knolls Elementary School.

—Brian Morrissey

## In Praise of 'Vintage' Suburbs

By Carole Barth

Vintage is all the rage: vinyl records are selling again, as are vintage-inspired clothes, home decor, furnishings, and design. At the same time, the historic preservation movement is beginning to address postwar buildings ranging from Usonian-inspired modern homes to the commercial exuberance of Doo Wop and Googie. (As the Doo Wop Preservation League website proclaims, "It's Cool! It's Hip! It's Retro! It's Wild-wood!")

So let me predict the next big style craze: *vintage suburbs*. I'm talking about the inner-ring suburbs, begun in the 1930s but primarily filled out in the mid-twentieth century. To my mind, these neighborhoods combine some of the best features of urban and suburban living, while avoiding the excesses of either extreme.

A short distance from urban centers, vintage suburbs

offer a variety of commuting options, unlike the sprawling, car-dependant suburbs that came later. Small lot sizes and proximity to neighborhood shopping, parks, and schools promote neighbor-to-neighbor interaction, enhance walkability, and provide urban convenience. At the same time, however, mature trees and green space provide a peaceful ambiance, kids have yards to play in, and there's space for gardens, decks, and Florida rooms. One has both urban bustle and quiet retreat.

Many of these communities were developed a few houses at a time, leading to a diversity of housing styles and sizes. This stylistic diversity created an eclectic visual character, which contrasts starkly with the monotony of both the tract-mansion developments and the cookie-cutter mixed-use developments which are prevalent

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## Join One or Both Of the NFCCA's Two List Serves

### NFCCA General List Serve

- Subscribe: [nfcca-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:nfcca-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)
- Post a Message (you must subscribe first): [nfcca@yahoogroups.com](mailto:nfcca@yahoogroups.com)

### Northwood Parents List Serve

- Subscribe (send an email to): [northwoodparents-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:northwoodparents-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)
- Post a Message (you must subscribe first): [northwoodparents@yahoogroups.com](mailto:northwoodparents@yahoogroups.com) ■

## NORTHWOOD NEWS

*Northwood News* is published by the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association. The NFCCA represents the ~1,485 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.

The *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.

### Editor

Jacquie Bokow  
10603 Cavalier Drive  
Silver Spring, MD 20901  
301.593.8566  
[nfcca@verizon.net](mailto:nfcca@verizon.net)

### Visit Our Website

[www.nfcca.org](http://www.nfcca.org)

# 'Nextdoor' for our Neighborhood

(continued from page 1)

Other useful features include the events, groups, and categorized posts. Groups could include your block, a committee for advocacy, clubs, or anything else. Using a "group" also enables you to target your posts to a specific group of people.

With Nextdoor, messaging works similar to a listserv: you can post from your regular e-mail account and have messages forwarded to your e-mail in a daily digest or individually. However, it is more akin to an electronic bulletin board because everything is saved on the website as well. So, posts like event announcements, resident-provided services, garage sales, etc., can be easily found and viewed on their website or via iPhone or Android using their mobile app. Posting categories include: Classifieds, Crime & Safety, Documents, Free Items, General, Lost & Found, and Recommendations.

Another feature I like is the address verification. They have several ways they can do this, but basically it ensures that people signing up as a member of the neighborhood are actually *in* the neighborhood. When my kids are eventually exposed to online social networking, I would much rather they use Nextdoor than something where they could be communicating with some random weirdo faking his identity.

Additionally, this is the kind of social networking which could help engage kids

in local issues. On a personal note, I grew up with a sense of apathy because many issues seemed too far out of my control to do anything about, hence, "Why try?" Maybe I am too optimistic, but this strikes me as a tool that could give kids that sense that maybe they could make a difference locally. That's where it all starts. Even if it's just organizing a group of friends to go clean up the creek.

There has been a ton of press about the site from ABC, Time, Cnet, FastCo, and more. One recent article stated, "It launched two years ago. Now more than 22,500 neighborhoods in the U.S. use Nextdoor, one in seven neighborhoods across the country." (Source: *latimes.com*.)

Its offices are in San Francisco, Calif. The company has 60 staff and, to date, has totaled \$100 million in investor funding. Its only direct competitor appears to be a company called *Meetey.com* founded in 2012 in Israel with 10 people and no listed funding source.

Currently, the official means of communicating important information and events to members of the neighborhood is through the *nfcca.org* website, the Yahoo listserv, and this newsletter. My hope is that the neighborhood and the NFCCA will embrace this technology and start using the website as its primary communication platform. Please try out the site and come to the next NFCCA meeting to voice your opinion. ■

## 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 2014) are:

### President

Brian Morrissey  
10301 Edgewood Avenue  
301.593.4026  
[merc259@verizon.net](mailto:merc259@verizon.net)

### Vice President

Fiona Morrissey  
10301 Edgewood Avenue  
301.593.4026  
[loveyourhome123@yahoo.com](mailto:loveyourhome123@yahoo.com)

### Treasurer

Linda Perlman  
1203 Caddington Avenue  
301.681.3735  
[LSPerlman@hotmail.com](mailto:LSPerlman@hotmail.com)

### Secretary

Steve Petersen  
10828 Margate Road  
301.593.1597  
[sap108@verizon.net](mailto:sap108@verizon.net)

### At Large

Sondra Katz  
10905 Lombardy Road  
301.593.4542  
[sondrakatz@yahoo.com](mailto:sondrakatz@yahoo.com)

Edward Levy  
212 Thistle Court  
301.593.4584  
[edlevy316@gmail.com](mailto:edlevy316@gmail.com)

Carolyn Van Dyck  
10702 Ordway Drive  
301.244.5371  
[jkvandyck@aol.com](mailto:jkvandyck@aol.com)

### Immediate Past Prez

Carole Barth  
10602 Lockridge Drive  
301.593.7863  
[cbarth@mindspring.com](mailto:cbarth@mindspring.com)

# In Praise of 'Vintage' Suburbs

(continued from page 2)

today. (For example, the only place I've ever seen houses with round screened-in front porches is Woodmoor.)

The variety of available housing also means that students, growing families, and empty-nesters can all be accommodated in the same neighborhood. It is hard to convey how much cultural richness this age diversity provides. I treasure the friendships I've made across the age spectrum in my neighborhood; I have learned from young and old alike. It's been a special joy to watch children grow as they participate in community life, from their first steps "helping" with a cleanup or tree planting to their adult pursuit of careers that enhance others' lives.

In fact, some of these

developments were actually designed to include housing stock for a range of economic levels, and others were specifically designed to be affordable for first-time home-buyers. (Indeed, some of these communities are still among the most affordable in the County.)

This affordability also enhances diversity, enabling older residents to "age in place" while providing many immigrants their first chance to buy a home. This housing resource will become all the more important as the current rush to build tract mansions, luxury condos, and expensive townhomes further skews the housing market away from affordability.

There is history here as well. In our neighborhood, we have the 1939 World's Fair

House, as well as homes built by the first member-run housing cooperative in the state of Maryland. (In 1951 a group of mainly Jewish federal workers founded Northwood Park Housing, Inc., and bought 10 acres of land. The cooperative designed and built 44 homes, four of which continue to be occupied by their original owners.)

However, I think what I like best about the vintage suburbs are their human scale. They are cozy without being crowded. You are not dwarfed either by huge estate homes or high-rises; instead, it's more of a "village" feel.

Since these communities possess many of the attributes planners are ostensibly striving to promote (diversity, walkability, sense of place), you would think the County would be working to preserve them and help them thrive into the future. However, nothing could be further from the truth.

Instead, they are being treated as obstacles to get around, mere speed bumps in the way of the current fad for ultra-high density development and sprawl-enabling, long-distance transit schemes. To my mind, this is every bit as short-sighted as was the "urban renewal" movement and the paving over of many urban neighborhoods for freeways.

Thus, I predict that in the future, those vintage suburbs that survive obliteration will be "discovered" as the new cool place to live. But why wait? You, too, can be in the vanguard of the next wave: go vintage! ■



*Our "vintage suburb" neighborhood offers cultural, stylistic, and age diversity; walkability; a sense of place; a variety of commuting options; proximity to neighborhood shopping, parks, and schools; urban convenience; mature trees; and green spaces. We have both urban bustle and quiet retreat.*



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1205 Caddington Ave	\$405,000	Raised Rancher	5	2	0
507 Dennis Ave	\$825,000	Colonial	6	4	0
10609 Edgewood Ave	\$390,000	Rambler	4	2	0
205 Hannes St	\$354,900	Rambler	3	2	0
406 Kerwin Rd***	\$351,900	Cape Cod	4	2	0
11203 Lombardy Rd	\$405,000	Rambler	3	2	0
11109 Lombardy Rd	\$389,900	Rambler	5	2	0
10710 Lombardy Rd	\$409,900	Bi-level	3	2	0
900 Malta Lane	\$399,000	Split Foyer	3	3	0
101 Southwood Ave	\$498,900	Colonial	4	2	0

**CONTRACTS on the following properties:**

1000 Caddington Ave*	\$225,000	Rambler	5	2	0
411 Eisner St	\$379,000	Split Level	4	2	1
10711 Glenwild Rd	\$379,900	Transitional	3	2	0
425 Kerwin Rd	\$429,000	Cape Cod	3	2	0
317 Ladson Rd*	\$279,900	Cape Cod	4	1	0

\*Short Sale \*\*Foreclosure \*\*\*REO/Bank



•• Information deemed reliable but not guaranteed ••

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# Stumped About Stumps? Reconsider Their Value

By Carole Barth

A lot of what we're taught about gardening—or what we've learned by watching others—actually results in needless work. Sometimes this extra work is actually counterproductive. A case in point is the effort and expense that many homeowners will undergo in order to remove the stump after having a tree cut down. Professional stump removal can cost between \$80 and \$400. Doing it yourself can involve lots of hard hand labor or renting a stump grinder for several hours.

## Why We Remove Stumps

So why do we remove stumps? In ultra-urban environments, where the tree boxes along streets are quite small, you may have to remove the stump in order to have space to replant. Or, let's say you've cut down a tree in order to build a patio in your backyard. You might need to remove the stump in order to have a level surface to build on. But in most cases, the stump can stay and actually be a resource for your garden.

Often people say they are removing the stump to keep it from re-sprouting. To my mind, this only makes sense if the original tree was undesirable (such as an invasive) or it was badly placed (say a large canopy tree planted right against the house.) Otherwise, re-sprouting is great!

Re-sprouting is an efficient and natural means of reproduction. Indeed,

more trees in the forest grow from stumps than grow from seeds. When we lost a number of trees to hurricane Floyd, I selected the sprouts I wanted to let grow, and cut off the rest. Within three years we had good-size saplings, and within five years we had trees tall enough to provide shade.

These trees grew more quickly than store-bought trees because they had the benefit of nutrients, fungi, and water from the mother tree. (In many ways, fungi is the lifeblood of the forest, more about that in a future article.) Thus I wound up with bigger replacement trees (and more of them) than I could have afforded if I'd relied upon the nursery.

So why do people think re-sprouting is a bad way to grow trees? This is a hold-over from commercial forestry. Commercial tree plantations are designed to grow trees as a crop suited to mechanical harvesting. They want their trees as uniform as possible in age and size for efficient clear-cutting. So unless you're planning to log your property commercially, re-sprouted trees are just fine.

## Looking for the Beauty in Stumps

But what about the stump itself? Isn't it an ugly eyesore? Well, beauty is always in the eye of the beholder, but personally, I love my stump garden. As my stumps were re-sprouting, I planted ferns and other woodland plants in and around them, as well as some shrubs. The result was

a woodland in miniature that never fails to make me smile. Apparently, I'm not the only one who likes this look, because you can actually buy decorative fake stumps (complete with fake plants and fake bears or racoons.)

Another option is to use the stump as a pedestal for a bird bath or planter. But that's not all. In 1999, Artist Madelon Galland launched the STUMP Project to decorate tree stumps on New York City sidewalks as a way to "honor that which had been diminished, and bring it back into relationship with the neighborhood." She upholstered the stumps as unauthorized public art, and now there are lots of websites with instructions for making your own upholstered stumps. In other words, you are limited only by your own creativity. How about stump fountains? Stump sculptures? Stump landscape lights?

Eventually, of course, your stump will decay, enriching the soil of your garden. Decaying wood does more than return nutrients to the soil, however. Spongy, rotten wood can absorb and hold an amazing amount of water. This is why you can see lines of young trees in the forest. They have grown in and around a decaying log. Because of the water held in that log, they got a head start and were able to outpace other young trees on the forest floor.

So next time you have to remove a tree, consider saving the stump. ■

# The Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board Brings Government Closer to Residents, and Vice Versa

By Ed Levy

A Monday night crowd filled the room for the monthly meeting of the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board. Many were there due to their interest in senior citizen housing (the main topic that evening), others came to hear County Councilmember Valerie Ervin report on fast-breaking news, and still others were there to raise additional issues or just to stay informed about the Silver Spring/Takoma Park community.

The Board discusses and acts on a wide range of issues that affect the Silver Spring Region defined as the west-east area between Rock Creek Park and the Prince Georges County line, and the north-south boundary of I-495 and the District of Columbia, including all of Four Corners

and all of the City of Takoma Park.

The Silver Spring Board is one of five regional advisory boards working out of the County government's Regional Service Centers. Board member applications are solicited from interested residents, nominated by the County Executive, and approved by the County Council.

The Silver Spring Board meets on the second Monday evening of each month at the Silver Spring Civic Center (across from the Regal Majestic movies near Fenton and Ellsworth Streets). The Board has three committees (Neighborhoods, Commercial Economic Development, and Transportation, Energy, and Environment) which meet at the Center on the fourth Monday of each month. All Board meetings are open to

the public.

The Board is organizing the fourth Taste of Fenton Village event on 4 May 2014, to highlight the unique Silver Spring restaurants south of Wayne Avenue and north of 410. About 30 restaurants will participate with two stages of music and other performers all around the neighborhood.

Evan Glass is the Board's Chair. Glass states the Silver Spring Advisory Board was the first group of any kind established to advise the Montgomery County Government. He is focused on the challenges and opportunities of Silver Spring's continuing redevelopment, keeping new construction aesthetically pleasing, and maintaining sufficient green space for area residents.

Reemberto Rodriguez is Director of Montgomery County government's Silver Spring Regional Center, and is very pleased with the productive partnership between the Regional Center and the Advisory Board. He believes that the Board is a model of successful community infrastructure, similar to efforts in Atlanta, Portland (Ore.), and Syracuse. The Board is also similar to the District of Columbia's Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANC) but on a larger scale. (D.C. has 39 ANCs serving a population of about 600,000, while Montgomery County's five Advisory Boards serve a population of 971,000.) ■



*Citizens Advisory Board Members march in last year's Thanksgiving Parade through downtown Silver Spring.*

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## Scenes from This Year's Halloween Parade in the Park



*Parents bring their young children to the grounds of the rec center each year for the neighborhood's annual Halloween parade and trick or treating. Thanks to Jane Kohlenstein for the photos.*



Part 2 in a Series

## Preventing Cancer in Pets: Vaccinations

By Anna Pritchard

To recap: preventing cancer in pets can be divided into three important areas: feeding the proper diet, vaccinating the least, and avoiding and eliminating exposure to toxic environmental chemicals. In the last issue, we discussed diet. Now, let's talk about vaccinations.

### Vaccinate the Least

This is a really hot topic and is extremely important to understand correctly. When I first met my cat Tasha's holistic vet when Tasha was three years old, she told me she wasn't in favor of giving Tasha any more vaccinations. Tasha was up-to-date on her shots at that point. The vet explained that current thinking was that there are risks to vaccination, and that vaccinating may be unnecessary, anyway, since Tasha is an "indoor" cat. I was so glad to hear that because I had read about the risks of vaccinations.

Dr. Barbara Royal, DVM, says, in her book *The Royal Treatment, A Natural Approach to Wildly Healthy Pets* (Atria Books, New York, N.Y., 2012), "I am not *against* vaccination; I am *for* a healthy immune system." Dr. Christina Chambreau, DVM, who founded the Academy of Veterinary Homeopathy, said, more strongly, in her lecture on "7 Keys to Healthy Animals" that 70 percent of all illness in animals occurs after vaccinations. She also said

that vaccines harm animals in two ways: (1) they contain heavy metals and other chemicals and animals don't detoxify these substances well, and (2) they "push" the immune system which leads to bad results. Both veterinarians agree that vaccinations are given too often.

Dr. Chambreau says that studies show immunity antibodies are high for 10 to 16 years longer than the guidelines for distemper and parvo

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**There should be absolutely**

**NO vaccinations for an animal**

**with cancer: "It is like pouring  
gasoline on a fire."**

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in dogs. She recommends a few vaccinations when dogs and cats are babies, and then no more. All holistic vets I am familiar with recommend doing a "titer" (a blood test that shows if the animal is still immune) before giving any repeated vaccinations. A titer can also show the appropriate dose of the vaccine the animal needs, if they need it at all.

### Rabies Vaccines Every Seven Years

Regarding rabies vaccines, Dr. Royal says that studies are showing the three-year rabies vaccine actually provides immunity for *five to seven years*. The FDA is investigating this

and may soon recommend giving rabies vaccinations every five to seven years. Owners of cats kept indoors may be able to sign a waiver to avoid giving them a rabies vaccine, but certain considerations apply.

Dr. Royal also says, "Building immunity against a life-threatening disease is a good idea. But vaccination where immunity already exists makes no sense." When immune cells are over-stimulated, it is often at the expense of other immune functions, so there can be a greater risk of imbalance and disease."

Royal says that "administering vaccines to cats is not a purely benign procedure." She adds that she is always concerned when she administers one to an animal and asks herself a number of questions before giving it. She says in her book that, "Cats can develop vaccine-associated sarcomas [tumors] at the sites of vaccines." She goes on to say that new protocols were developed because of this. Cat vaccines are no longer given in the neck area and are now given in the leg so that if cancer is found there, the leg can be amputated! She says safer vaccines and safer vaccine protocols *must* be developed.

### Homeopathic Immunizations

Some holistic veterinarians now use some homeopathic immunizations. Dr. Richard Pitcairn says in his

(continued on page 10)



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## HOLISTIC HEALTH

(continued from page 9)  
book, *Dr. Pitcairn's Complete Guide to Natural Health for Dogs and Cats* (Third Edition, Rodale, 2005), that there should be absolutely *no* vaccinations for an animal with cancer: "It is like pouring gasoline on a fire."

### Vaccinations may be

### unnecessary for "indoor" cats.

In her book, Dr. Royal gives her recommended vaccination protocol and guidelines for dogs and cats on page 260. She also recommends "detoxing" with homeopathic medicines prior to and after a vaccine is given, on pages 352-

353. Also, for more details on vaccinations, please go to Dr. Chambreau's website, *www.myhealthyanimals.com*, and look at all of her information on the subject, or e-mail her with your questions. Before making decisions about vaccinations, because it is such an important topic, I highly recommend consulting a holistic veterinarian about your specific pet.

*[Pritchard is a licensed massage therapist, certified Montessori teacher, nutritional counselor, Doctor of Naturopathy, and R.N. She also is trained in reiki for animals. She lives on Ladson Road and can be reached at 301.593.5463 or annarpritchard@aol.com.]* ■



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# Two Bills Passed During Summer Protect Trees

By *Jacquie Bokow*

Two bills to protect trees in the County were passed during July by the County Council. One (35-12) would help preserve the tree canopy (the area covered by the crown of one or more trees) in the downcounty; the other (41-12) deals with replacing trees on County rights-of-way (between the curb and the sidewalk). Both amend the current MoCo Code.

## **Bill 35-12: MoCo Tree Canopy Conservation Law**

The main purpose of the act is “to save, maintain, and establish tree canopy for the benefit of County residents and future generations” and to provide for mitigation when trees (or potential growing space for shade trees) are lost as a result of development. It also establishes a program to plant shade trees on both private and public property. A “shade tree” is defined as a tree capable of growing to heights greater than 50 feet.

The law applies to any person required by law to obtain a sediment control permit. Only a homeowner who plans to disturb more than 5,000 square feet of earth, which would require the permit, would trigger the tree canopy restrictions. This probably would not affect any individual plot owner in our neighborhood. This permit is almost always used for construction of a new home or similar-scale construction. So, removing trees on your own property is your choice, as long as you aren’t required

to obtain a sediment control permit.

A property owner who applies for a sediment control permit must either plant shade trees on the affected property or pay a fee. (Actual dollar amounts are not spelled out in the bill, but mitigation fees are based on the square footage of tree canopy disturbed, increasing as the amount of tree canopy disturbance increases.) At least three trees must be planted for up to 6,000 sq. ft. of disturbed soil, up to 15 trees per 40,000 sq. ft. If feasible, the trees planted must be native to the Piedmont area of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The reason this helps is that the existing Forest Conservation Law (FCL) only applied to forests (not individual trees) and only to disturbances of 40,000 sq. ft. or more. So the kind of infill developments (including tear-downs and mansionizations) we experience in our area were almost never protected by the FCL. (Funny that *Parks* should be exempt!)

The law doesn’t apply to cutting trees on a public utility right-of-way for electric generation. According to the bill language, “public utility” means any water, sewage, electric, gas, telephone, or cable company. The law also doesn’t apply to “any activity conducted by the County Parks Department.”

Bill 35-12 was introduced by then Council President Roger Berliner at the request of County Executive Ike Leggett and approved

unanimously by the Council. Violation of this law carries a maximum civil penalty of \$1,000 per day.

## **Bill 41-12: Roadside Trees Protection**

This bill states no one may construct any road, sidewalk, curb and gutter, driveway, or drainage structure; begin any such construction (including clearing, grading, and tree cutting); or perform any tree work on any roadside tree (including removing a stump in a County right-of-way), without a permit from the Director of Permitting Services.

The law will affect both residential and commercial property owners whose property abuts a right-of-way and who wish to remove trees or stumps, or engage in projects that impact trees situated in the rights-of-way. The difference now is that tree protection measures will have to be used if it’s possible to save the tree. If that isn’t possible, the tree must be replaced *and at least two additional trees must be planted*. This is important because of the backlog of tree maintenance and replacement.

Every year, the county removes 2,000+ trees and plants about 1,700 trees with a budget of about \$250,000. Two fiscal years when funding was eliminated by the County Council (finally restored in FY2012) have resulted in a huge backlog of street tree services, including thousands that haven’t been replanted, a thousand more in need of

*(continued on page 13)*

## 2 New Tree Laws Protect Canopy

*(continued from page 12)*  
pruning or removal, and—as of 2011—a seven-month backlog of new inspections of trees in the public right-of-way.

According to Conservation Montgomery, a goal of the new law is to prompt decisions up front—prior to the commencement of a building project—as to whether a street tree can be saved. If the tree can be saved, an applicant will be required to take appropriate measures to protect the tree. If not, the permit applicant will be required to remove and replace the tree, if space allows, and plant at least two additional trees or pay into a fund if the applicant is unable to replace trees at the same location where

they were removed. The tree type must appear on the County recommended tree list.

The requirement for planting three trees for each street tree removed is intended to offset shade canopy lost by tree removal. The law does not prevent the removal of street trees. Instead, it links tree removal with replacement and/or fees in lieu so that desirable levels of tree canopy along the roadside are maintained.

A fee is charged for each right-of-way permit application unless it's to remove a tree that endangers a person or property or is a stump in the right-of-way. Half the fee will be refunded if the permit

is rejected or withdrawn before construction begins.

A licensed tree expert doesn't need the permit if a tree is uprooted or severely damaged because of a storm or vehicular collision, if a broken tree branch contacts a wire carrying electric current, or the tree or branch immediately endangers a person or property.

The right-of-way tree bill, which took six years to get passed, was introduced by Councilmen Roger Berliner and Marc Elrich. Councilman George Leventhal (D-At Large) of Takoma Park voted against the bill, as did Councilwoman Nancy Floreen (D-At Large) of Garrett Park, who called it “unnecessary legislation.”

Both bills take effect 1 March 2014. ■



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# Making Your Voice Heard in the County Council

By Carole Barth

We often ask residents to write to the County Council about issues which affect us in NFCCA territory. But what is the most effective way to send in your comments? Given how short the time is between when documents are made available to the public and when the Council votes on them, “snail mail” is not really an option.

Phone calls can be effective, particularly if you can speak directly with the Councilmember, and face-to-face meetings are great if time allows. However, if you speak with a councilperson’s staff, your well-reasoned argument may be reduced to a simple tally (*one for or one against* the proposed action).

This is important, because many council staff do not consider feedback worth reporting unless they receive 200 e-mails and calls on a subject. (Note: If you sign an online petition or “click here to send the council an e-mail,” your e-mail won’t count as much. Identical e-mails must reach an even higher threshold to get noticed by council staff.)

So, you’re going to send an e-mail. Where do you send it? If you write to the Council President (currently Nancy Navarro, but that will change in early December) or to [county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov), the following applies:

All correspondence addressed to the Council President in his or her official capacity—including e-mail messages—is included in the daily mail log, which is available to all Councilmembers and staff, and becomes part of the official public

record.

It’s important to have your message become part of the official public record, but that doesn’t guarantee that staff (let alone Councilmembers) will actually look at it. Indeed, more likely, you’ve just become part of a generic pro-and-con tally that will be reported to all Councilmembers and their staff people.

So, how about if you e-mail each Councilmember at the addresses listed on the Council website? (These addresses have the format *councilmember.ervin@montgomerycountymd.gov*.) This gets you closer; your e-mail will be read by that Councilperson’s staff. However, what happens next depends upon that staff person. They may choose to engage you in discussion over the issue, they may bring your e-mail to the Councilmember’s attention, they may just add it to their tally, or they may filter it out as not worth passing along. If you want to send it directly to a Councilmember’s e-mail box, use the following format: *valerie.ervin@montgomerycountymd.gov*. Now let’s hope the Councilmembers you’re writing to keep up with their e-mail.

Another technique that can help get your e-mail read is to CC the press. (Who knows, you might even generate some interest from that quarter!)

Another approach is to post something on the Councilmember’s Facebook page. This doesn’t work for long, complicated testimony, but it’s great for a short, personal message. You may even get a real-time response when you

go this route. Even better, once you’ve posted, you can ask your friends to “like” your post, quickly showing lots of support for your position. It’s hard for someone to ignore lots of traffic on their page. If enough people tell their friends they like your post, you can cause quite a ripple effect.

However, to be able to do this you must first “friend” the Councilmember. Likewise, your friends won’t be able to see your post unless they also are “friends” with the Councilmember. It may take a few days for your friend request to be confirmed, so it’s best to do this in advance.

Similarly, you can tweet something in response to the Councilmember’s Twitter feed. This is even more limited in length, but the odds are pretty good that you will get a timely personal response from the Councilmember.

So, if you want to try e-mailing the Councilmembers directly, use these addresses:

- [marc.elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:marc.elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov)
  - [nancy.floreen@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:nancy.floreen@montgomerycountymd.gov)
  - [george.leventhal@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:george.leventhal@montgomerycountymd.gov)
  - [nancy.navarro@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:nancy.navarro@montgomerycountymd.gov)
  - [phil.andrews@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:phil.andrews@montgomerycountymd.gov)
  - [roger.berliner@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:roger.berliner@montgomerycountymd.gov)
  - [valerie.ervin@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:valerie.ervin@montgomerycountymd.gov)
  - [craig.rice@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:craig.rice@montgomerycountymd.gov)
  - [hans.riemer@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:hans.riemer@montgomerycountymd.gov)
- Happy writing! ■

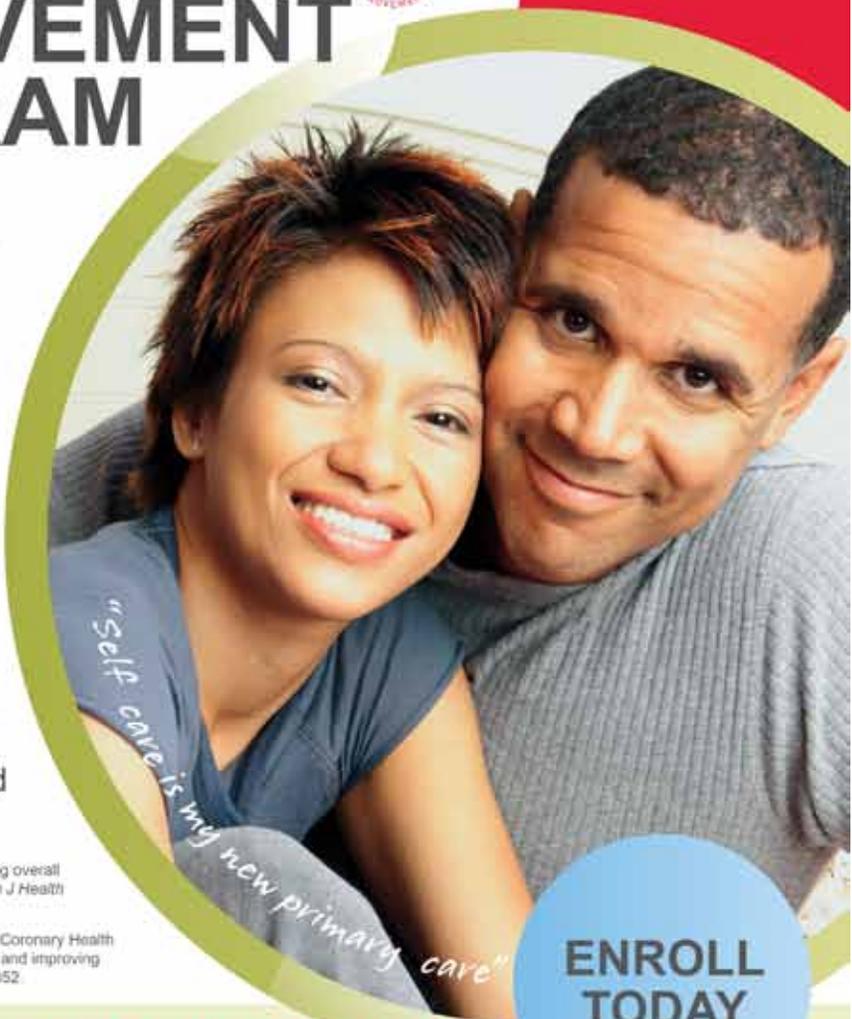
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