

NORTHWOOD NEWS

PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY BY THE NORTHWOOD-FOUR CORNERS CIVIC ASSOCIATION ■ JUNE 2011

Woodmoor Ousts China House, Moves Subway, Signs Chipotle

By *Jacquie Bokow*

By the time you read this, China House restaurant—a long-time fixture at Woodmoor Shopping Center in Four Corners—will have closed. Their lease expired at the end of May and was not renewed.

“It’s a difficult situation,” said Brian Greene, the leasing agent for Regency Centers which manages the property.

“They’re real nice people. We would have been happy to keep China House here.”

Regency Centers, which manages the 67,403-sq.-ft. shopping center, is still negotiating a lease with the Subway shop already at Woodmoor to move to the China House space. Chipotle Mexican Grill has already signed a lease to take over the space now occupied by Subway.

“Their lease was expiring, Subway’s was expiring,” said Greene. “Subway is a chain, but it’s also popular with a wide range of people and brings a lot of customers to the shopping center. [China House has] been a good tenant, but we had to go with a tenant which would be a better draw.

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Family-owned China House is out, national franchises Chipotle and Subway are in.

WSSC Rep to Speak at Next Meeting 8 June

The next meeting of the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association will be held on Wednesday, 8 June 2011, at 7:30 p.m. in the All-Purpose Room at Forest Knolls Elementary School. The school is located at 10830 Eastwood Avenue, just off Caddington Avenue (there’s no access from other sections of Eastwood).

Our featured speaker will be Brandon Stewart, a customer advocate from Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, who will address our complaints (see page 9).

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.)■

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

After a number of false starts, spring has finally arrived. As the weather warms and the flowers bloom, we all emerge from our homes and venture out. We, in Northwood/Four Corners/Forest Knolls, had two events planned to get us outside and join together as a community.

First, the Lockridge Creek Cleanup was a success [see story on page 11]. With clear skies and warm weather, we had a good turnout (though we would always welcome more neighbors). I was particularly encouraged by the number of first-time participants. It was heartening to see both families with kids and a few empty-nesters out pitching in. Whether knee-deep in creek water or just offering encouragement, all who came were appreciated.

Second, after much planning and hard work (special kudos must be given to Carole Barth and Jim Zepp, who shouldered the yeoman's share of the work in organizing this event), we were ready to have a great Rachel Carson Meadow Festival. Unfortunately, an outside event like this requires cooperation from Mother Nature. As we approached the date, the weather report was positively grim. As the 6:00 p.m. set deadline approached, the forecast called for a 60 to 80 percent chance of rain and thunderstorms Sunday afternoon. The decision to cancel seemed obvious [see story on page 16]. Well, as she will do, Mother Nature had other ideas and the day was beautiful. I am saddened by the lost opportunity to see old friends and meet new neighbors. But, then again, there's always next year!

—Brian Morrissey

Online Photo Blog for SS, 4C

Unique daily photographs of Silver Spring appear in an online blog at <http://silver-springdailyphoto.com>. Images include street scenes, local art, urban environments, architecture, regional development, and other places of interest. The blog is part of the City Daily Photoblog community.

A subcategory for Four Corners exists, too, which includes pictures of Woodmoor Shopping Center. You'll find it at silver-springdailyphoto.com/category/four-corners/.



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- Post a Message (you must subscribe first): 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.

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

Visit Our Website
www.nfcca.org

Update on Saving Rachel Carson Meadow and Youth Soccer Field

By Carole Barth

People are always saying to me, "Well, one good thing about the budget crisis, at least they can't destroy the Meadow for a soccer field." But staggeringly, in the midst of a massive structural deficit that is expected to continue for years to come (fueled in no small part by the rising cost of debt service) when core programs like libraries are being cut, the North Four Corners Park soccer field project remains in the CIP (Capital Improvements Budget.) Moreover, the facilities planning process is scheduled to resume in FY2012.

In case you are new to the issue, here's a little background. In 2008, the Montgomery County Parks Department decided that an adult-size soccer field with a 50-space parking lot should be built at a cost of over \$5 million. As part of this project, the existing soccer field on the other side of the park would be removed.

County Executive Ike Leggett did not recommend funding this project, but the County Council voted to spend the money anyway. This despite the fact the same amount of funds (five to six million dollars) could renovate 11 existing athletic fields. This happened while we were without representation on the Council, and the reason given was, "It would set a dangerous precedent to listen to affected communities."

Recently, our council representative Nancy Navarro and at-large Council person Marc Elrich tried to delay the project for a year during the Council's annual CIP adjustment process. The effort failed when the other members of the PHED committee (Nancy Floreen and George Leventhal) voted against the postponement. Park and Planning testified against the postponement.

So it's time to gear up for the next CIP cycle, which begins in December. We need to do all the classic things (emails, petitions, letters to the editor, coalition building) plus modern social marketing, blogging, and maybe even a flash mob doing environmental art.

And most importantly, we need to speak truth to slander and stereotyping. There are some who claim our opposition to the soccer field is rooted in racism. Those who spread such rumors are doubly disrespecting our diverse community: first, by failing to recognize our existing ethnic diversity and secondly, by perpetuating the stereotype that providing soccer fields is all the county need do to serve its Latino residents.

Please join us in this fight to preserve North Four Corners Park for future generations. If you would like to help, please contact me at cbarth@mindspring.com or call 301.593.7863. ■

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 for 2010-2011 are (terms end at the October 2011 meeting):

Acting President

Brian Morrissey
10301 Edgewood Avenue
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Vice President

Brian Morrissey
10301 Edgewood Avenue
301.593.4026
merc259@verizon.net

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Linda Perlman
1203 Caddington Avenue
301.681.3735
LSPerlman@hotmail.com

Secretary

Tiffany Wright
405 Roylton Road
301.328.7380
wright.tiffany@gmail.com

At Large

Ted Daniel
302 Marvin Road
301.593.0418
ted.daniel@mail.house.gov

M.J. Gallagher
127 Southwood Avenue
301.754.1301
mj.galla@verizon.net

Dee Willner
309 Marvin Road
301.593.1169
deewillner@aol.com

Immediate Past Prez

Carole Barth
10602 Lockridge Drive
301.593.7863
cbarth@mindspring.com

A Few Restaurant Changes at Woodmoor Center

(continued from page 1)

“The idea is that Subway will move over” to the China House space, said Greene. “Once that’s completed, Chipotle will move in.” Greene estimates Subway will open later this year, probably in the early fall (Sept. or Oct.); then Chipotle will open “possibly about the end of this year.”

China House Goes

“We are here 50 years already,” said Nun Kin, who’s been manager of the China House restaurant for less than two years. Kin said they were notified about two months ago that their lease would not be renewed. Although the rumor was that China House would be moving to Langley Park, Kin said that isn’t true.

“We’re closing down,” he said. “Everyone’s out of work.”

Greene, though, says he’s

working on a new lease with the owners for a space in Takoma Park Shopping Center, which also is managed by Regency. “It’s a smaller space. They may not be bringing everyone over.”

According to Greene, the lease for the current tenant started in 1996, but ownership changed in October 2009. “That’s typically done when a business is sold,” he said, so there may have been a Chinese restaurant at Woodmoor for 50 years but the business may have been sold many times over that time. Listed owner Mei Zhu could not be reached for comment.

Subway Stays, But Must Move

Although Greene said, “Subway’s a valuable tenant of ours,” the move—which will result in a loss of more than 500 square feet to the eatery, from 1,990 square feet to 1,440—is not welcomed



Subway franchise owner Joseph Gomes does not want to move but says he’s being forced to by the corporation

by Subway franchise owner Joseph Gomes, who runs the place with help of his sister, Stella Drozario, and her daughter, Goretti.

“I don’t want to move, but they’re forcing me to move,” said Gomes. “I don’t have [a] choice.” As of this past October, when their lease ended, Gomes had been running the Subway for five years. Less than four years ago, he and his sister spent \$65,000 to remodel the store.

Because Subway is a franchise, Regency deals with the regional corporate office of the national company which signs the lease, not with Gomes.

“We’d love to stay here,” said Gomes, but “as a franchisee, I have no power.” Gomes said he called Brian Greene, but “he didn’t want to talk to me.”

Gomes said he had no idea about the changes that would affect his store. “We heard from customers in the

(continued on page 5)



The Subway sandwich shop, considered more of a draw, will probably move into the space that had been China House’s.

Woodmoor

(continued from page 4)
neighborhood about Chipotle before [corporate headquarters] told us.

“All I can tell you is it isn’t right, not with this economy.”

Vacancies Still Available for Rent

“The challenge is that parking is very tight,” said Greene, explaining why he couldn’t keep all three restaurants despite two current vacancies on the street level at Woodmoor. “From a code standpoint, we can’t add more restaurants to what we have today.”

The spaces formerly occupied by Miller’s Framing and Togs for Tots are currently empty. Greene is now in negotiations with a cell phone store for the 1,446-sq.-ft. former frame shop and is “talking with a women’s hair salon” to replace the 2,420-sq.-ft. kids’ clothing consignment store. There are no takers as yet for the stand-alone building in the parking lot on the eastern edge of the property; there are multiple small vacancies upstairs, as well.

It is due to the code restrictions on the number of parking spaces per restaurant that precludes the addition of the independently owned ice cream parlor longed-for by North Four Corners and Woodmoor residents alike.

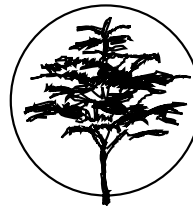
“We would love to do it,” said Greene, “but we couldn’t put in an ice cream” place. Doing so would require a parking variance, and “that’s a long, difficult, expensive process.” ■

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Current Real Estate Snap Shot
Northwood and Forest Knolls
(March 1, 2011 – May 16, 2011)

Active Listings (18)

Address	Type	BR	Baths	List Price	Type of Sale
1109 Caddington	SF	4	2.5	\$360,000	Normal Resale
1117 Caddington	SF	4	1.5	\$370,000	Normal Resale
1004 Chiswell	SF	4	2.5	\$375,000	Normal Resale
10306 Colesville	SF	4	2	\$359,000	Normal Resale
507 Dennis	SF	5	4	\$995,000	Normal Resale
10609 Glenwild	SF	5	3	\$395,000	Short Sale
422 Kerwin	SF	4	2	\$350,000	Normal Resale
133 Kinsman View	TH	3	3.5	\$325,000	Normal Resale
311 Ladson	SF	4	2	\$380,000	Normal Resale
10109 Lorain	SF	3	2.5	\$700,000	Normal Resale
923 Loxford	SF	4	2.5	\$335,000	Normal Resale
800 Malta	SF	4	2	\$309,000	Normal Resale
819 Malta	SF	3	2	\$280,000	Short Sale
917 Malta	SF	4	2	\$390,000	Normal Resale
320 Pinewood	SF	4	2	\$509,000	Normal Resale
1008 Playford	SF	4	1.5	\$285,000	Normal Resale
510 Royalton	SF	5	2	\$260,000	Short Sale
219 University	SF	6	5	\$650,000	Normal Resale

Homes Currently Under Contract (10)

Address	Type	BR	Bath	List Price	Type of Sale
901 Caddington	SF	4	2.5	\$260,000	Short Sale
1104 Chiswell	SF	3	2.5	\$310,000	Normal Resale
11108 Foxglove	SF	3	1.5	\$269,000	Short Sale
49 Kinsman View	TH	4	3.5	\$320,000	Normal Resale
10610 Lockridge	SF	5	3	\$299,000	Short Sale
10708 Margate	SF	5	2.5	\$435,000	Short Sale
315 Pinewood	SF	2	1	\$379,000	Normal Resale
140 Southwood	SF	4	2.5	\$299,000	Short Sale
201 University	SF	4	3	\$230,000	Short Sale
415 University	SF	4	4	\$549,000	Normal Resale

Sold Homes (13)

Address	Type	BR	Bath	Net Sales Price*	Type of Sale
314 Dennis	SF	3	1	\$190,000	Normal Resale
10306 Colesville	SF	3	2	\$224,000	REO / Bank Owned
1015 Chiswell	SF	3	2	\$296,000	Short Sale
301 Dennis	SF	3	1 + 2	\$323,000	Normal Resale
10308 Edgewood	SF	4	2	\$414,000	Normal Resale
405 Irwin	SF	3	2	\$300,000	Normal Resale
512 Kerwin	SF	4	2	\$397,000	Normal Resale
67 Kinsman View	TH	3	2.5	\$294,000	Normal Resale
10212 Lorain	SF	3	2.5	\$440,000	Normal Resale
1001 Loxford	SF	4	2.5	\$400,000	Normal Resale
1007 Loxford	SF	4	2.5	\$361,000	Normal Resale
407 University	SF	5	2	\$264,000	Short Sale
130 Woodridge	SF	3	2	\$355,000	Normal Resale

**Net Sales Price reflects any seller subsidy involved (buyers' closing costs paid by seller)*



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Resident—Kerwin Road

And All the Special Exceptions are Unexceptional

By Jim Zepp

The Zoning Board of Appeals' special exception hearing for the proposed child care facility at University Boulevard and Brunett Avenue was held on Friday, 15 April. The developer's six witnesses (the project owner, Craig Kay; Dr. Memon, the Child Way owner, who will rent the facility; and an architect; land planner; traffic expert; and stormwater planner) were originally expected to need four hours for their testimony and cross-examination by the attorneys for both sides. Instead, the developer's attorney spent from 9:30 a.m. to nearly 6:00 p.m. questioning her own witnesses. The attorney representing the South Four Corners community was able to cross-examine some, but not all, of these witnesses. Consequently, the hearing will

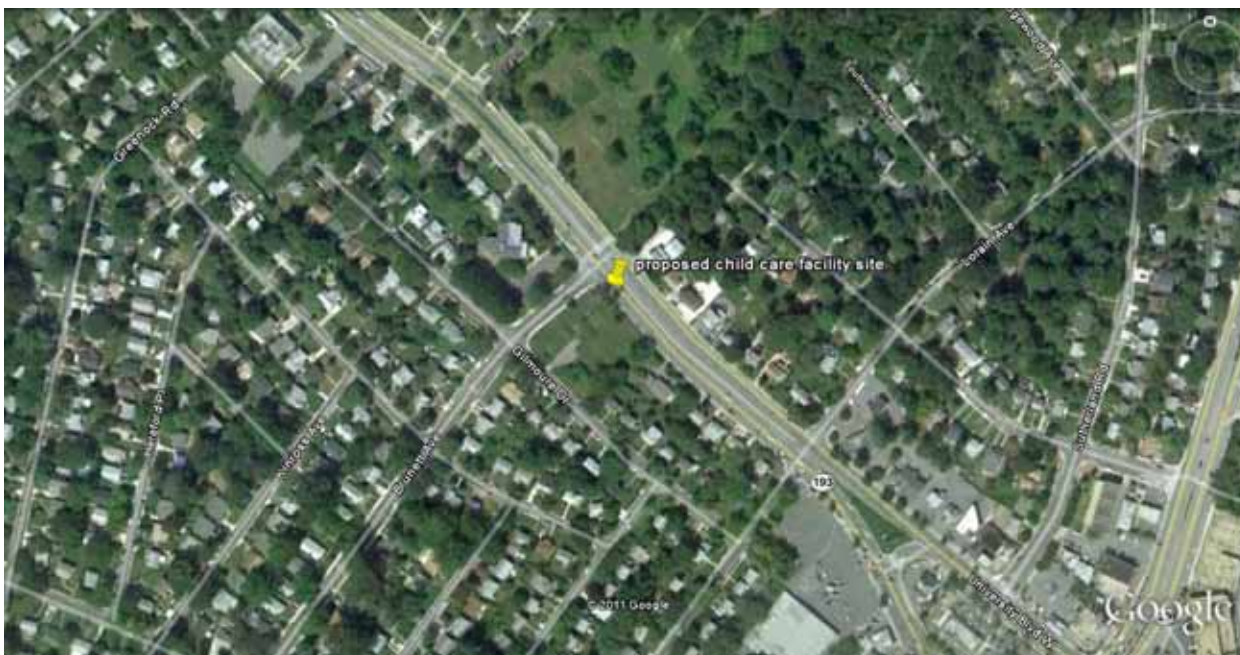
be continued on Monday, 20 June.

As previously reported in this newsletter, both the Montgomery County Planning Board and its staff had recommended the denial of this special exception request because the Four Corners Master Plan specifically discourages commercial projects—such as this—that would encroach on residential areas and it violates county regulations for minimum space per child for child care facilities. The developer had reduced the size of the facility from 120 to 94 children (infants to high school age) in response to the Planning Board's denial, but it still exceeds the space requirements (75 children maximum for a property of this size). Originally proposed as a 150-child facility, the developer has claimed at each

iteration that the facility's size is essential for its economic viability.

The 37,987-sq.-ft. (0.9 acre) property originally had a single family residence in which the owner also had his dental office. In 2005, Craig Kay bought the property and demolished the house with the intent of building five \$800,000 luxury homes. With the collapse of the housing market, he changed his plans to the construction of a child care facility. The site is designated as an R-60 residentially zoned property. Child care facilities are allowed in this zone, but a special exception request must be applied for, which allows the surrounding community to register its concerns about any proposed projects.

The Four Corners Master
(continued on page 9)



A view from the air shows how the proposed child care facility would encroach on local homes.

Proposed Child Care Facility

(continued from page 8)
Plan, which was adopted in 1996, establishes the goal of preserving and enhancing the quality of the community by maintaining the integrity and stability of the Four Corners neighborhoods. The Master Plan encourages efforts to strengthen the existing business area through renovation and other economic development efforts, while discouraging any spread of commercial uses into the surrounding residential communities. It specifically recommends the denial of any special exception requests along major roads and “immediately adjacent” to the Four Corners commercial area that would encroach into the residentially zoned areas.

The developer’s architect and land planner contended at the hearing that, because the proposed facility is separated by five houses from the Safeway, it is not “immediately adjacent” to the Four Corners commercial area. Furthermore, they argued that the proposed child care facility would be compatible with the surrounding houses because it is a one-story structure, even though the building will be 5,608 sq. ft. in size while most of the nearby houses are only about 1,200 sq. ft.

The land planner also cited the former Yeshiva School, which was across University Boulevard but left the area almost 20 years ago, as the basis for his assertion that the proposed child care facility would restore the school-like atmosphere to that section of University Boulevard. The

traffic planner maintained that a substantial portion of the facility’s 20 staff and parents of the 94 children would use mass transit so it would have minimal impact on the existing rush hour congestion in the Four Corners area. This is despite the fact that the State Highway Administration would not allow the facility to have a driveway on University Boulevard because of the traffic conditions there. Staff and clients using cars will have to drive around the block to the opposite side (Gilmoure Drive) to access the facility’s parking lot.

When the Zoning Appeals Board hearing resumes in June, seven members of the community (including myself) have registered to testify. In addition to the issues associated with the proposed project, a broader concern is its implications for possible future special exception requests in the Four Corners area if this one is granted. This is exactly what the Four Corners Master Plan intended to prevent with its specific wording that discourages approving such requests.

If you want to testify or send in comments, you should identify your communications as related to: Special Exception Request S-2781 Gilmoure-Brunett, LLC Child Care. These can be sent to: Office of Zoning and Administrative Hearings, Stella B. Werner Council Office Building, 100 Maryland Avenue, Room 200, Rockville, Maryland 20850. Or call 240.777.6660 or e-mail ozah@montgomery-countymd.gov. ■

WSSC Rep Will Respond to Our Complaints 6/8

By Carole Barth

By now everyone is surely aware of the WSSSC projects going on in our community. From the plethora of potholes, flooding incidents, and damaged trees to the sediment (along with the improperly installed silt fence) going into Lockridge Creek, North Four Corners is bruised, battered, and—quite frankly—fed up.

With a multitude of subcontractors rampaging around the neighborhood, it has been very difficult for residents to get answers and to figure out whom they need to contact. Therefore, Brandon Stewart, a customer advocate from WSSC, will respond to these issues at the NFCCA meeting on 8 June. The customer advocate positions are relatively new at WSSC, but I imagine they have their hands full already.

So, please send me your complaints and issues and I will send them to Mr. Stewart. (I know a lot of our complaints have already been posted to the list serve, but please send your comments to me anyway so I don’t miss anything.) That way he can bring the appropriate project manager(s), efficiently respond to individual complaints, and we can discuss the big picture of how they are managing the process and how responsive they are to complaints/problems.

Send your emails to me at cbarth@mindspring.com. ■



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1117 Caddington Ave	\$369,000	Split Level	4	1	1
1109 Caddington Ave	\$359,900	Split Level	4	2	1
1004 Chiswell Lane	\$374,900	Split Level	4	2	1
10306 Colesville Road	\$359,000	Cape Cod	4	2	0
507 Dennis Ave	\$995,000	Colonial	5	4	0
10609 Glenwild Road*	\$395,000	Bilevel	5	3	0
49 Kinsman View Circle	\$319,900	Townhouse	4	3	1
133 Kinsman View Circle	\$325,000	Townhouse	3	3	1
422 Kerwin Road	\$349,900	Cape Cod	4	2	0
923 Loxford Terrace	\$335,000	Split Foyer	4	2	1
311 Ladson Road	\$380,000	Cape Cod	4	2	0
10109 Lorain Avenue	\$700,000	Cape Cod	3	2	1
10308 Lorain Ave	\$495,000	To Be Built	4	2	1
917 Malta Lane	\$389,500	Split Foyer	4	2	0
819 Malta Lane*	\$280,000	Split Level	3	2	0
800 Malta Lane	\$309,000	Rambler	4	2	0
320 Pinewood Avenue	\$509,000	Cape Cod	4	2	0
1008 Playford Lane	\$285,000	Split Level	4	1	1
510 Royalton Road*	\$259,900	Rambler	5	2	0
219 University Blvd W	\$650,000	Colonial	6	5	0

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1104 Chiswell Lane	\$309,900	Split Level	3	2	1
901 Caddington Avenue*	\$260,000	Split Level	4	2	1
11108 Foxglove Lane*	\$269,000	Split Level	3	1	1
10610 Lockridge Drive*	\$299,000	Rambler	5	3	0
10708 Margate Road*	\$435,000	Rambler	5	2	1
315 Pinewood Avenue	\$379,000	Dutch Colonial	2	1	0
140 Southwood Avenue*	\$299,000	Colonial	4	2	1
201 University Blvd W*	\$230,000	Cape Cod	4	3	0
415 University Blvd W	\$549,000	Arts & Crafts	4	4	0

*Short Sale **Foreclosure

** Information deemed reliable but not guaranteed **



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21st Creek Cleanup and Vine Vigilante Vengeance

By Carole Barth

We had great weather for the spring creek cleanup, and a very good turn out. It was especially nice to see some new faces. I always enjoy chatting and getting to know my neighbors better as we work our way down Lockridge Creek to the Northwest Branch.

The amount of trash was the highest it's been for several years, although it wasn't a record-breaker. The most interesting item found was a gift card for a wine bar. So the moral is: if you don't come to the creek cleanup, you don't get to find the good stuff.

Since we had such a good turn out, we were also able to get quite a bit of work done on the invasive vines. Workers of all ages commented how satisfying it was to save a tree from the vines that were killing it. And once you save one tree, you feel a need to save the next tree, and the next. At least it's a healthy addiction.

Indeed, there seems to be enough interest to have

an invasives work day before the fall creek cleanup. If you would like to join us some Saturday or Sunday, send me your email. We'll pick a day that works for most of us and have at it. (This is also a great way to learn about plants that are probably encroaching into your own garden as well as an opportunity to learn firsthand what a Weed Warrior does.) We'll show you how to identify the repeat offenders and how to safely bring them down.

Most exciting of all, I believe we are making progress in the battle to save our riparian buffer trees. When you first start a project (especially if you're working alone) it seems daunting, if not downright hopeless. So you start off trying to save individual trees. But the truth is, you really *can* save a park from invasives.

Dr. Marc Imlay has demonstrated that a concerted effort by volunteers to remove large populations of invasives predictably yields control after five to seven years. He



Roxanne Beltran—along with husband Aleks and elementary-school-age daughters Katya and Tatiana—pitched in.

uses a high-intensity program with regular projects conducted in winter, early spring, late spring, summer, and late summer. This is followed by a low-intensity annual maintenance program for plants that were missed, plants emerging from the seed bank, and occasional plants migrating in from neighboring areas.

Although we have not launched that kind of all-out offensive, I am seeing definite improvement. Last year I noted the strip in front of my house, and the portion of the stream around the last culvert on Lockridge had attained that maintenance phase.

Now those gains have been extended. Nonetheless, there is still plenty to do along the creek, within the woods, and in North Four Corners Park. So consider joining up, either as a Weed Warrior or as one of our neighborhood "militia."

Finally, I need to recognize our "commander in chief," Brian Morrissey, for organizing the cleanup and consolidating all the trash at the end of the day. ■



Volunteers of all ages found they really can make a difference.

Protecting Our 'Hoods: MoCo Zoning Law Revisions

By Linda S. Perlman

Montgomery County has enacted new zoning restrictions limiting the total area of your front yard that can be paved, prohibiting parking on front lawns, regulating the parking of heavy commercial and recreational vehicles in residential zones, and imposing new requirements on home-based businesses. These zoning law changes became effective on 24 April 2011 and are intended to preserve the residential nature of our neighborhoods.

Parking and Front Yard Paving Restrictions

The new law limits the paved surface of your front lawn to *no more than* 35 percent of the yard or 320 square feet, whichever is greater, in the R-40 and R-60 zones (which encompass most of the NFCCA area). You do *not* have to remove existing paving in your front lawn, even if your entire front lawn is paved—provided the paving was in place before 26 October 2010—but you cannot increase the paved area.

The new front yard paving restrictions apply *only* to the front yard. Paved areas on the side or backyard of a house, including side or rear yard garages or carports, do not count as paved areas in determining the percentage of the lot that can be covered with pavement.

Vehicles in a front yard must be parked on a surfaced area only and no more than one vehicle is allowed for every 160 square feet of front

driveway or lawn surfaced area. Cautionary note: this part of the law change—*i.e.*, prohibiting parking on non-surfaced areas or on surfaced areas of less than 160 square feet per vehicle—does not take effect until 24 October 2011. Current law already prohibits (1) a vehicle from blocking a public sidewalk while parked in a driveway, and (2) inoperable or unregistered vehicles from being stored anywhere on residential property for more than 30 days. Inoperable or unregistered vehicles may never be parked on a public roadway.

Large commercial and recreational vehicles are no longer allowed to be parked in residential neighborhoods, except for temporary parking for purposes of loading and unloading. Effective 24 April 2011, only one light commercial vehicle, such as a tow truck, and one recreational vehicle per household can be parked off-street on surfaced areas in residential neighborhoods. (“Heavy commercial vehicles” are those with a gross vehicle weight of more than 10,000 pounds, vehicles with a capacity of more than one ton, or vehicles that are more than eight feet high. “Recreational vehicles” include motor homes and trailers.)

Those metal storage containers commonly known as PODS (“portable on-demand storage”) can remain on private property—on driveways or yards—for up to seven days without a permit. For PODS on residential property for

eight days or more, a building permit is needed. The building permit will require the PODS to be placed on the rear of the residential property and also to comply with the setback requirements for accessory structures (such as sheds).

Home-Based Businesses

Montgomery County allows you to operate your business from your home, subject to various restrictions. There are three types of home businesses allowed: (1) no impact [no registration is required]; (2) registered [a permit from the Department of Permitting Services (DPS) is required]; and (3) medical practitioners [registration is required]. Contact Montgomery County at 311 to determine which type of home occupation applies to your business.

In general, a homeowner who operates a home-based business employing at least one nonresidential employee and receiving at least 20 customers or clients per week must register the home business with DPS. Home day care facilities and medical practitioners may be subject to other regulatory laws.

A general requirement for all home-based businesses is that the person who performs the occupation must live in the home. Only one nonresidential employee is allowed per day. For “no impact” home businesses, visits are restricted to five customers or clients per week. Registered home businesses are allowed

(continued on page 15)

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Don't Fear the Trees, Part 2

How Trees Enhance Our Lives—In So Many Ways

By Carole Barth

Everyone knows that trees grace our lives with beauty. “No town can fail of beauty, though its walks were gutters and its houses hovels, if venerable trees make magnificent colonnades along its streets.” ~Henry Ward Beecher, *Proverbs*, 1887. We admire the transformation from winter’s pared-down sculptural forms to the lush abundance of summer shade. We look forward to the glad rags of autumn and the somber elegance of evergreens in winter.

If we take the time to get to know individual trees, we begin to appreciate their idiosyncratic beauty: a zig-zagged trunk that tells of a deadly, slow-motion battle for sunshine; or a lacework wrought by generations of woodpeckers. Like laugh lines on a beloved face, they simply deepen our definition of beauty.

But trees also enhance our lives in very practical ways. They provide a wealth of ecosystem services. While it’s impossible to put a price tag on services such as good health, clean air, and clean water, one can estimate the dollar value of some services such as: pounds of pollution removed, reduced heating and cooling costs, amount of carbon sequestration, and so on.

According to TreeBaltimore, when you add these benefits together, it is not unreasonable to conclude that \$57,000 in economic and environmental benefits

is provided over the life of a single tree. You can estimate the economic value of a tree in your yard or on your street for yourself with the tree calculator at www.trees.maryland.gov/calculator.asp.

These services also include some you may not have considered. You may not associate trees with stormwater management, but it turns out that one large tree can eliminate 5,000 gallons of stormwater runoff each year. And while you may know that the net cooling effect of a healthy young tree equals 10 room-sized air conditioners operating 20 hours a day, you may not know that the shade can also significantly prolong paving life, thus lengthening the time between road repairs.

Of course, we all know that trees are important for wildlife, providing nesting space for birds and nectar, fruits, seeds, and nuts to feed many animals. But did you know that Hackberry, Cottonwood, Hawthorn, Wild Cherry, Willow, Ash, Linden, River Birch, Eastern Red Cedar, Chokecherry, Flowering Dogwood, Holly, Muscledwood, Locust, Sweetbay Magnolia, Maple, Pawpaw, Wild Plum, Redbud, Shadbush, Black Walnut, and Sassafras trees are all host plants for butterfly larvae? Did you know that the first hummingbirds to arrive each spring depend on tree sap rather than flower nectar?

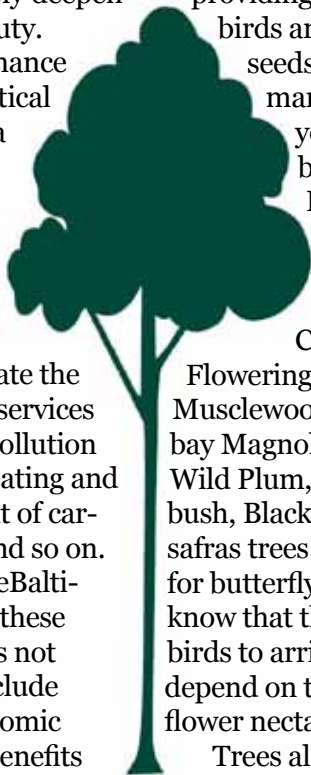
Trees also support wildlife

that doesn’t live in or on the tree. Without the carpet of fallen leaves, salamanders would have no winter home. Without streamside trees, there is no woody debris to form in-stream habitat, no shade to protect stream life, and no food for the base of the fishes’ food chain. Research in the Northwest has documented an additional link between forests and fish. As expected, there are more salmon in well-forested streams. Interestingly, forests also grow better where there are more salmon, because they get nutrients from the salmon coming upstream to spawn.

Like the relationship of trees and salmon, trees have provided special benefits to humans since time immemorial. Farmers and watermen relied on practical phenology (the study of periodic biological phenomena, such as flowering, breeding, and migration, in relation to climatic conditions) to correctly schedule their work. No matter how weather patterns shifted from year to year, the farmer knew it was time to plant corn when the leaves of the dogwood tree were the size of squirrel ears, and watermen knew the shad were running up the river whenever the shadbush tree was in blossom.

Today, we pay more attention to how trees provide other economic benefits. According to appraisers, trees add seven to 25 percent of the total value of a particular property. Homes adjacent to forests are priced eight to 20 percent higher, commercial rents increase

(continued on page 15)



Trees Enhance

(continued from page 14)
seven percent. Shoppers are even willing to pay nine to 12 percent more to shop in areas with trees.

Surprisingly, trees also contribute to crime prevention. “Kuo and partners (2003) have found that the presence of trees within high-density neighborhoods lowers levels of fear, contributes to less violent and aggressive behavior, and encourages better neighbor relationships and better coping skills.” [*What Could We Lose? Economic Values of Urban Forest Benefits*, Kathleen Wolf, University of Washington.]

A recent study in Portland, Ore., associated large trees with a reduction in crime. Among the tree variables analyzed, canopy size of both street and yard trees and the number of trees growing on a lot had the most effect on crime occurrence. The researchers reason that large trees signal to potential criminals that a neighborhood is better cared for and would, therefore, increase the likelihood they will be caught.

And, finally, scientists are beginning to document how trees and nature in general impact our mental and physical health. School children with ADHD show fewer symptoms and girls show more academic self-discipline if they have access to natural settings [Faber Taylor et al., 2001]. Hospital patients recover more quickly and require fewer painkilling medications when having a view of nature, and passive views of nature are associated with reduced physiological

stress response [Ulrich, 1986]. Office workers with a view of nature are more productive, report fewer illnesses, and have higher job satisfaction [Kaplan, 1993].

When you take all these benefits together, it seems clear that we should place much greater emphasis on planting and preserving trees. As Teddy Roosevelt said in his 1907 Arbor Day message, “It is well that you should celebrate your Arbor Day thoughtfully, for within your lifetime the nation’s need of trees will become

serious. We of an older generation can get along with what we have, though with growing hardship; but in your full manhood and womanhood you will want what nature once so bountifully supplied and man so thoughtlessly destroyed; and because of that want you will reproach us, not for what we have used, but for what we have wasted.”

In the next installment of “Don’t Fear the Trees,” we will look at how trees continue to play a vital ecological role even after death. ■

Zoning Law Revisions in MoCo

(continued from page 12)
up to five customer or client visits per day or 20 per week. The on-site parking for home occupations is limited to two spaces for customers or clients on your property, but parking is also allowed on the street. Lawn maintenance companies, operating as home occupations, are permitted one single-axle trailer or truck at any one time.

Owners of home-based businesses must now verify that the business owner actually lives in the residence (such as by a letter or other piece of mail to the residence bearing the owner’s name).

Enforcement

Enforcement of these Montgomery County Code laws is primarily by complaint. Home-based businesses, the paving of front yards, and off-street parking violations are the primary responsibility of the Department of Permitting Services (DPS).

Unregistered/inoperative vehicle complaints are handled by the County Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCD)—unless the vehicle is on the street, in which case the complaint is handled by the Police Department. Complaints can be filed anonymously or, if you wish to hear back on a complaint, confidentially. Call the County’s Customer Service Center at 311 or 240.777.0311 or visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/goodneighbors.

Upon receiving a complaint, DPS or DHCD will assign an inspector to investigate the complaint. A Notice of Violation (NOV) will be issued if cause is found. Generally, violators are given 30 days to correct the violation. If the violation is not corrected or dismissed during this time period, then a citation—with a \$500 fine—may be issued. On-street parking violators can be ticketed by the County Police Department. ■

Capricious Weather Leads to Festival Cancellation But There's Still Plenty of Fun to Be Had in the RCM

By Carole Barth

After much agonizing, and hours of obsessively checking weather maps and predictions, festival organizers made a decision Saturday evening [14 May] to cancel the Rachel Carson Meadow Festival planned for the next day. This was a very difficult decision, given how much work, love, and coordination goes into this event. As the rain bucketed down later that night, and water started roaring through Lockridge Creek, we felt we had done the right thing. By making the decision Saturday night, we didn't keep the musicians, singers, dancers, volunteers, exhibitors, and those leading workshops hanging in suspense until the last moment.

Of course, once we had given up any hope of better weather, the weather turned and Sunday was, in fact, a beautiful day. A-a-rghhh! This hit especially hard because we had no rain date to fall back on. (It is quite a coup to get the Washington Revels to schedule a Festival Day in our community, given their tightly packed performance schedule. Moreover, our special-use permit from the Parks Department is both date- and time-specific.)

Still, it's important to remember why we created the festival in the first place. The communities of Four Corners have been fighting for eight years to save this open space in North Four Corners Park which is slated to be bulldozed,



leveled, and buried under 20 feet of fill dirt in order to build an adult soccer field and a 50-car parking lot at a cost of \$5-6 million sometime around 2014. The same CIP project would also remove the park's existing youth soccer field.

We fight because the meadow serves as our "village green" where Four Corners residents walk dogs, chat, watch fireflies, sled, toss a frisbee, read, and enjoy a hundred other pursuits. It's a convenient spot for families, where kids can engage in unstructured outdoor play. Next door to The Oaks independent living facility, it's also convenient for seniors. All of these uses, however, are effectively invisible to the Parks Department and ignored by park planners because they require no construction or permitting.

So we created the meadow festival to demonstrate what a valuable resource this is for the highly developed, densely populated, and diverse communities of down-county. We have also named this plot of land "Rachel Carson Meadow" to honor the pioneering environmentalist who lived just across the Northwest Branch, and to celebrate her last book, *The Sense of Wonder*, about the importance of sharing nature with children.

But we also want to celebrate and demonstrate how we use and enjoy the meadow all year long. To that end, we created a facebook page, www.facebook.com/pages/Friends-of-North-Four-Corners-Park. On this page, you can watch the video of last year's festival, post pictures, and tell us what you like to do in the meadow. Whether it's hunting Easter eggs in spring, watching fireflies in summer, collecting walnuts in fall, or sledding in winter, it's important to show this is a well-used park, not vacant land awaiting development.

If you want to help the meadow with deeds as well as words, call Brian Morrissey or myself [see page 3] and we will be glad to show you the invasive plants you can help remove and the native plants we are fighting to save. And speaking of deeds, I would be remiss if I didn't thank everyone involved: the Washington Revels, Jim Zepp, Brian Morrissey, Linda Perlman, Tony Tran, Catherine Zimmerman, Carrie Ganz, Reuven Walder, Fiona Morrissey, M.J. Gallagher, Sarah Stecher, Aleks Beltran, Jacquie Bokow, Tiffany Wright, and everyone who helped prepare for the festival and/or who volunteered to be part of it. ■



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Annual Easter Egg Hunt Rolls into Northwood Park

By Kristen Mastroianni and Chi Nguyen

What began as a discussion among parents in Spring 2008—while watching their children play in Northwood Park—on how to win tickets to the White House Easter Egg Roll led to an annual Easter Egg Hunt right here in Northwood Park.

On a sunny Sunday afternoon on 17 April, over 30 children and their families gathered in Northwood Park for the annual Easter Egg Hunt organized by Kristen Mastroianni and Chi Nguyen. Participating families and friends brought nut-free treats in eggs to hide in the playground for their children to find, along with snacks and sweets to share with all during storytime performed this year by Tom Schoenberg, who is married to Mastroianni. This year's event also featured an Easter egg roll and bunny sack jump lead by Rachel and Ramil Palmaira.

Mastroianni, a mother of

active five-year old twin boys and a two-year old girl, maintains a neighborhood contact list of families with young children (the “baby network”).

“Having twins and being a new stay at home mom, the ‘baby network’ was a great resource for me, and we still occasionally get together with a few children who we met and who will be going to For-



Neighbors Luke Schoenberg [son of Kristen Mastroianni], left, and Alex Hickman race each other to see who can roll his egg to the finish line first.



No Easter celebration is complete without a hunt for Easter eggs (Easter hats and bunny ears optional)!

est Knolls with the boys in the fall,” noted Mastroianni. For those who are interested in the “baby network,” forward your contact info and age of child to KristenMastroianni1@verizon.net.

If you cannot wait for next year's Easter Egg Hunt, there is the Halloween Parade and Trick-or-Treat in Northwood Park in October. This is another annual event organized by both Mastroianni and Nguyen that provides parents and their children with a wonderful opportunity to get together in Northwood Park and to meet others in the community.

Of course, the Spring and Summer provide great weather for other events in Northwood Park. Mastroianni and Nguyen would like to encourage neighborhood parents to organize other activities in Northwood Park, such as monthly playdates.

[Note that this group is separate from the Northwood Parents list serve.] ■



Tom Schoenberg read stories while families snacked.

Fitness Fiat: Make It Fun, Let's Move Together!

Summer's about here so it's a great time to enjoy the weather and get active! There are plenty of low-cost, fun ways to get your daily exercise. One of the *best* ways to get a great workout with your entire family is to add more "play-time" into your day.

Play is by far the best exercise for your kids during this season. There are practical and fun ways to make it part of your daily lifestyle and all you need is 30 to 60 minutes every day! Take a power walk together or play tag in the park.

Whatever you do, make it your mission to bring the play back into your child's day and keep them healthy

for a life time!

10 Fun Activities to Do With Your Kids

- Jump rope competition
- Roller skate or roller blade
- Take a nature hike
- Start a bike club
- Make your own backyard obstacle course
- Play one-on-one basketball
- Play hopscotch
- Participate in a green project together (e.g., clean the creek)
- Relays at the track (include whistles and make it fun!)
- Join a cause together and "train" (e.g., St. Jude's, Autism, Race for

the Cure, etc.)

Fitwell Fitness Reminders

- Always Warm Up
- Work Your Core and Balance
- Move Better with Muscles
- Do Something Active Every Day
- Challenge Yourself Regularly

[Valerie Merriweather is Chief Executive Officer of Fitwell Training Solutions (www.fitwellsolutions.com), a personal training and wellness company specializing in the health and fitness needs of families. She lives on Playford Lane.]

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