

WESTERLEE COMMUNITY NEWS



Westerlee: A Proud Covenant Controlled Community

www.westerleenews.com



Editor: John Moore

September 2014

President's Letter



While the summer months sluggishly take their sweaty course we find traffic and schedules thinned, friends and colleagues posting vacation pictures on Facebook, and closer by, our yards thriving in the mix of steamy heat and afternoon thunderstorms. Californians may suffer from draught, dust and firestorms, but we drown in lush greenery, which, I must say, is preferable!

Heat, rapid plant growth, storms and deluges bring about a set of possible conflicts between neighbors, sometimes souring good relations, sometimes starting non-existing relations on the wrong foot and increasingly, frequently going nowhere because there just isn't any relating.

What exactly is going on? Different cultural backgrounds, schedules, work habits, language, and jobs that take us away from home for most of the time? When neighbors have a complaint, but see no way to communicate it fruitfully among themselves, guess what happens? They call the Neighborhood Association! This may not necessarily be a bad idea. After all, neighbors pay their dues, so let this association do something for it, right? Of course, those who appeal to this most local of "governments" are often the same ones who complain about regulations and the "nanny state".

To call upon the Association sounds plausible enough, and may at times, be the right course of action. In general, though, I would like to encourage folks to try to resolve conflicts on their own before they bring in others. A person-to-person discussion will not only allow you to get to know your neighbor better, but can also clear up misunderstandings, motives, and intentions. It is worthwhile to find out if the neighbor is aware of the problem, and already underway to resolve the issue (the ideal case), or whether he/she denies that there is a problem at all and declares you to be crazy for seeing one (short of combat, the worst case).

Often times there is confusion about rights, and who is allowed to do what. Over the years I heard about a variety of interesting cases, although, frankly, most are pretty dull.

One case involved keeping bees on the property, not just those that fly around and sip at your clover, but actual hives (this is regulated by code, you will be glad to know, but not flat-out forbidden). Another case involved hoarding and subsequent trash accumulation (items that look like trash to us look like treasures to real horders).

Water is a common issue causing strife as well, especially water that gets directed to your property because you are downhill from your neighbor and subsequently floods your basement. Although water flow is regulated, gravity typically remains in

WESTERLEE COMMUNITY, INC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Klaus Philipsen

kphilipsen@archplan.com 410-685-2002 (W)

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Secretary: Fred Hickok

Treasurer: Chris Goatee

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Joan Goudy - Bob Hoffman - Jacqueline Johnson

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effect, with the result that water will usually aim for the lower spot, without a doubt. However, nobody is allowed to channel water directly towards you. No roof downspout may release its load directly towards you near the property line.

Border issues are also popular generally. My fence or your fence? This is an often hard to decide thing when the item sits smack on the line. (Most of the time the fence on one side is yours and the other your neighbor's, but without saying which is which, this information may not be of much help). The fence ownership becomes relevant when the darn thing needs repair, falls over or otherwise doesn't serve its intended purpose. Plants don't always care about property lines and grow across them, especially statelier trees are known for that. Is it allowed to occupy the airspace of your neighbor with your tree? Law students get to study cases like this.

Generally, your neighbor's airspace remains firmly his, branches or not, and he has a right to trim plants that are encroaching on his property. Should you decide to clear a neighbor's tree branches, and they fall and damage your neighbor's property as a result of your trimming, you may be liable. But then, as I never tire to point out, trees also have benefits for the entire neighborhood: namely shade, oxygen, and birdsong. Trees share those benefits with everyone, regardless of the property line.

What about shrubs, trees and other plants that may take away your neighbor's sun or view? Tough luck. The neighbor doesn't possess a right to those benefits, except when the enjoyment of his property would be severely curtailed by your actions. Usually, that would entail more than a few plants. To guarantee enjoyment of your property is the purpose of zoning laws, which to this end, require setbacks and height limits for structures.

So what to do if attempts of neighborly dispute resolution go nowhere, and no clear code violation is in sight? Probably you have to tough it out. You might have to accept what you can't control. Much conflict can be mitigated when we maintain good relations with our neighbors, so they have no reason to "get back" at us with some aggravating thing to which they are entitled.

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President's Letter - continued

To make good neighbors is such a worthy goal that the Association decided this year to go all out with a Community Party (see announcement on the back of this Newsletter) that includes free catered food and merriment. We may not be able to resolve your neighborly conflicts, but we can offer a party where you can chat with neighbors in a pleasant setting on neutral ground. Even if you live entirely conflict-free and in great harmony with everybody around you, don't miss the September community party. See you there!

Klaus Philipsen

Code Enforcement Information

Lionel van Dommelen, Chief
County Office Building, Room 213
111 West Chesapeake Avenue
Towson, Maryland 21204
Phone: 410-887-3351

Code Enforcement Fax: 410-842-2642

Housing and Urban Development Fax: 410-887-2824

E-Mail: paienforce@baltimorecountymd.gov

See if the complaints involves a code violation. If so, the Association can become active but so can you. If person to person contact didn't bring change, the County maintains an online option for complaints here: <http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/permits/codeenforcement/codecomplaint.html>

- a. frequent violations are: trash on property
- b. Unlicensed or non driveable vehicle on property
- c. Commercial vehicle on private property (extended time)
- d. Construction without a permit

From The Editor

I wanted to take a moment to remind all of our neighbors in Westerlee to take a look at a new private social network we're participating in: Nextdoor.com. What is Nextdoor? Here is a bit of info from the Nextdoor.com website: *Nextdoor is the private social network for you, your neighbors and your community. Nextdoor's mission is to use the power of technology to build stronger and safer neighborhoods. And it's free.*

Once you're registered you can post recommendations for local services, add a classified ad, let everyone know you've lost or found something, or notify the neighborhood of suspicious activity. All of these things contribute to a safer and more cohesive neighborhood. There is even a mobile app for your Android or iPhone, so you can keep up on the latest info wherever you roam. I hope you'll give Nextdoor a try... here's the invite link: www.nextdoor.com/join/JMYJSM

John Moore, Editor

How to Submit Material to Our Newsletter

PLEASE do not submit text in Adobe Acrobat .pdf format or in any other file format except .doc files. You may also include your article in an email if you prefer. All photos must be JPEG or PNG files. You can send the files as attachments to your email. Send to jlmoore3rd@verizon.net



By Fred Hickok

Director, Benjamin Banneker Planetarium
CCBC Catonsville Campus

August 18 - Conjunction of Venus and Jupiter. The two brightest planets will come unusually close to each other, only 1/4 of a degree, in the east just before sunrise. Also, the beehive cluster in the constellation Cancer will be only 1 degree away.

September 9 - Full Moon. This full moon was known by early Native American tribes as the Full Corn Moon because the corn is harvested around this time of year. This moon is also known as the Harvest Moon, which occurs closest to the September equinox each year.

October 8 - Full Moon. This full moon was known by early Native American tribes as the Full Hunters Moon because at this time of year the leaves are falling and the game is fat and ready to hunt. This moon has also been known as the Travel Moon and the Blood Moon.

October 8 - Total Lunar Eclipse. A total lunar eclipse occurs when the Moon passes completely through the Earth's dark shadow, or umbra. During this type of eclipse, the Moon will gradually get darker and then take on a rusty or blood red color.

October 23 - Partial Solar Eclipse. A partial solar eclipse occurs when the Moon covers only a part of the Sun, sometimes resembling a bite taken out of a cookie. A partial solar eclipse can only be safely observed with a special solar filter or by looking at the Sun's reflection.

November 6 - Full Moon. This full moon was known by early Native American tribes as the Full Cold Moon because this is the time of year when the cold winter air settles in and the nights become long and dark. This moon has also been known as the Moon Before Yule and the Full Long Nights Moon.

December 6 - Full Moon. This full moon was known by early Native American tribes as the Full Hunters Moon because at this time of year the leaves are falling and the game is fat and ready to hunt. This moon has also been known as the Travel Moon and the Blood Moon.

December 13, 14 - Geminids Meteor Shower. The Geminids is the king of the meteor showers. It is considered by many to be the best shower in the heavens, producing up to 120 multicolored meteors per hour at its peak. It is produced by debris left behind by an asteroid known as 3200 Phaethon, which was discovered in 1982. Best viewing will be from a dark location after midnight. Meteors will radiate from the constellation Gemini, but can appear anywhere in the sky.

Source: http://www.seasky.org/astronomy/astronomy_calendar_current.html

Free Planetarium Shows:

Saturday 10 a.m. CCBC Catonsville Room LABB-003

September 20 - Equinox, a Time of Equality

November 1 - Space Witch

November 22 - An Astronomical Autumn

December 6 - Christmas Story

Westerlee Community Association Board Meeting - July 17, 2014

The board meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m.

Present were officers Klaus Philipsen (President), Wanda Richardson (Vice President), Chris Goatee (Treasurer) and Fred Hickok (Secretary) and board members Joan Goudy, Bob Hoffman, Jacqueline Johnson, Fred Kirk, John Moore and Joe Reid.

Treasurer's Report: Chris presented the treasurer's report, which appears at the end. John offered his wife's help with QuickBooks. Klaus said that notices should be sent to members who have not paid dues.

Newsletter: John stated that newsletters will come out the months following board meetings. He announced August 1 as the deadline for submitting items. He mentioned that with no ads this time there will be more space for articles. Klaus recommended photos and success stories. Klaus noted that Chuck Sprague will continue to assemble sets for the block captains.

Community Party: Jacqueline said that Saturday, September 27, would be a good date. She reported that a caterer quoted \$22.50 per person and with fees that comes up close to \$28. She noted that we would need to purchase paper goods. The board approved \$1,500.00 for an expected group of 50 people. Jacqueline mentioned that she can obtain tables and chairs from her church. She suggested music from an iPod and children's activities, such as bubbles.

Klaus said that we should look into renting the Woodbridge Valley Pool grounds but otherwise we would use Nuwood. He suggested charging \$10 per person but John stated that the Academy Heights Association, where he lived before, had no charge. The board decided that there would be no charge this year.

Walkway: Klaus reported no progress on obtaining permission from the townhouse company or from the County about opening up a fence.

Nextdoor: Klaus mentioned that there are now about 50 members. He suggested announcing the community party on the site. Chris suggested including photos.

Russel Lot: Klaus reported that the lot has been paved and has landscaping, fencing and lighting.

Sawmill Branch Property: Klaus noted that Baltimore City had deeded to Baltimore County property at the dead end of Maple Avenue off Frederick Road in Catonsville and that the Neighbor Space organization will be acquiring it.

Catonsville Elementary School: In light of the plans to turn the Bloombury Community Center into a new Catonsville Elementary School, Klaus recommended that we support the conversion of the current school into an arts center instead of demolition.

Vacant House: Fred K. reported that a Cedar Circle Drive house that has been vacant for several years has been sold at a low price. He suspects that the property will be flipped.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Fred Hickok

CY 2014 - Q3 Treasurer's Report

April 1, 2014 - June 30, 2014

Beginning Balance.....\$8,263.80

Income:

Dues Received.....500.00

Bank Interest.....0.20

Total Income.....500.20

Expenditures:

Newsletter218.84

Yard Sale.....68.00

Shredder520.00

Annual Meeting.....38.33

Miscellaneous48.49

Total Expenses893.66

Ending Balance\$7,870.34

Heads of Westerlee Committees

Social Committee: Jacqueline Johnson

Architectural Review Committee: Klaus Philipsen

Code Violations Committee: Klaus Philipsen

Block Captains Committee: Joe Reid & Wanda Richardson



Complaint Resolved

After complaints of Westerlee, Inc., Russel Automotive recently made good on their 2006 obligations for their lot on Powers Lane per the Baltimore County Zoning Board. The variance that the Board had granted for commercial parking in a residential area stipulated that the applicant needed to landscape, pave, light and fence the lot in question and limit the use to just over 30 parking spaces only for employees.

Westerlee Community Block Party/Cookout
Join Us For A Little
Grillin' & Chillin'!

Saturday, September 27, 2014
3:30-7pm
2018 Cedar Circle Drive

RSVP by 9/13 to
Wanda: wandapace-rich@comcast.net or 410-206-2418
Jacqui: 4wunmind@hotmail.com

MENU:

Grilled Burgers (Turkey and Veggie)
Grilled Hot Dogs
Open Pit Beef
Italian Sausage
Baked Beans
Hot Wings
Pulled Pork BBQ
Cole Slaw
Potato Salad
Fresh Fruit
Potato Chips & Pretzels
Ice Tea, Lemonade, and Water

Bring Your Favorite Dessert!