

WESTERLEE COMMUNITY NEWS

Westerlee: A Proud Covenant Controlled Community

www.westerleenews.com

July 2016



Editor: Pam Jarrell

President's Letter

Southwest retail under stress

The closure of The Sports Authority store in our nearby Baltimore National Pike shopping center, just as the closure of Jo Ann Fabrics, Frank's Nursery, Toys 'R Us, Bally's and Radio Shack before, shows how a nationally precarious retail situation manifests itself with extra verve in Southwest Baltimore County. All these closures were part of a larger bankruptcy and certainly not limited to our local branch stores, but they hit our area extra hard because we don't have any of the really strong and growing brands. There is no Trader Joe's, Wegman's, or Harris Teeter, no Target, Urban Outfitters or DSW shoe store in our neck of the woods. We have no decent bookstore and no locally-owned functional and comfortable coffee shop. (Atwater's is a gem, but its coffee shop upstairs is a provisional afterthought due to the tiny floor space downstairs).

At the same time we have commercially zoned land in abundance. Seas of asphalt for gigantic parking lots are mostly deserted. The top example of "too much space and no good stores" is Security Square Mall, a symbol of the North American phenomenon of dying malls.

The situation cannot be solved by simply demanding that better retail come to our area. That won't happen until the demographic profile in the area becomes younger, more educated and affluent. Such a development would attract retail but is usually called gentrification, and not always welcome, for rising home values which increase property taxes, making homes less affordable. For example, the same homes we find in Westerlee cost twice as much in the Howard County community just a mile west of us.

Attracting upwardly mobile young residents is a matter of survival, though, for communities that don't want to slide into decline. As a planner and urban designer I believe that the southwest area of the County needs to re-designate some of its half-abandoned shopping centers as development opportunities for compact mixed use lifestyle centers, with less surface parking, more green stores, offices and housing. This "urbanization" of some of its sprawling commercial districts is a necessity for Baltimore County, a jurisdiction that is projected to grow substantially between now and 2050. Without better and more efficient development of centers like the ones with the Sports Authority or Security Square Mall, the loss of green spaces and agricultural lands will continue.

WESTERLEE COMMUNITY, INC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Klaus Philipsen

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

Vice President: Wanda Richardson

Secretary: Fred Hickok

Treasurer: Chris Goatee,

Treasurer Elect: Rizwan Mohmoodi

Directors

Joan Goudy - Jacqueline Johnson - Fred Kirk - Joe Reid - Lula Simon

How to sell a home

How to sell a home was recently demonstrated well by one of our oldest neighbors, the original Westerlee resident Lu Yingling, who sold her house to move to a smaller assisted-living type condominium in Ellicott City. Lu moved out before she began putting the house on the market (not always easy to do), removed most but not all furniture to make the spaces look neither cluttered nor vacant. She fixed up some rooms just enough so they looked fresh, but avoided costly rehabilitation that would cut into the proceeds or jack up the sales price beyond being competitive, while rarely meeting the taste of new buyers anyway. She also hired an agent with a track record, staff and a high volume of sales, in short somebody with a large customer base who can direct traffic to the object for sale. The stunning result was that the house received three valid offers after only a couple of weeks on the market. It was under contract shortly thereafter. Lou, well in her nineties, who parks her grass-green Camaro now in Howard County, showed our community how to sell a house. We wish her the best, but miss her as a neighbor.

Newsletter

The newsletter that you are holding in your hand has become possible because neighbor Pam Jarrell, of Cedar Circle Dr., stepped up and volunteered to do it after our previous volunteer, John Moore, stepped down from this task. Some have questioned whether a paper version of a Newsletter is still needed in the age of online social media such as Next Door. In community meetings, however, we are always reminded that not everyone likes online media or the computer, and that a newsletter that one can touch is still an element that builds community. We thank Pam for taking this on. She began her task enthusiastically with a redesign of the masthead to give the Newsletter a fresh and appealing look. We hope you enjoy it.

Klaus Philipsen

2016 Annual Meeting Minutes Woodbridge Valley Elementary School

The meeting was well attended by about 50 residents. From the Westerlee Board were present Klaus Philipson (President), Wanda Richardson (Vice President), Chris Goatee (Treasurer), Fred Hickok (Secretary) and Joan Goudy, Jacqueline Johnson, Fred Kirk and Joe Reid.

The following were invited guests and speakers:

- *Tom Quirk, 1st District County Councilperson
- *Margaret Stokes, Administrative Assistant for Tom Quirk
- *Mike Rye, Highways Superintendent, BC Public Works
- *Officer Alisha Helphenstine, Community Outreach, BCPD

Klaus welcomed two residents attending an annual meeting for the first time. He asked that anyone wishing to receive an invitation to the Next-door site leave their names at the registration table.

County Councilperson Tom Quirk: Tom introduced Margaret Stokes and Mike Rye and then discussed the comprehensive rezoning process, which is taking place every 4 years and is on right now. The County Council will hold a public hearing at Catonsville High School on June 16 at 6:00 p.m. People may also communicate their views by sending emails, which are kept on file. Tom mentioned that he is sensitive to community opinion. For the 1st District, with its 120,000 residents, he has requested about 700 acres of parkland be protected through the Neighborhood Commons zoning overlay. He said that the final rezoning decisions will be made in August. A Westerlee resident thanked him for protecting open spaces. Tom urged residents to become involved with NeighborSpace, Catonsville Rails to Trails and Patapsco Heritage Greenway.

Rezoning Issues for Westerlee: Klaus mentioned that Tom's office has been very receptive to Westerlee's concerns. He explained that the Planning Board makes recommendations to the County Council.

Klaus showed maps of the land bordering the eastern section of Powers Lane. He remarked that in 2008 Sam Moxley, the then County Councilperson, had responded to a request for rezoning a property from residential to business by having the property rezoned for lower residential density. In 2015 Antwerpen Motors had applied for a variance so that a parking lot for its inventory vehicles could be built. It would extend toward the Westerlee homes on Cedar Circle Drive and bring extra noise and lighting. Westerlee testified at the hearing. We had support of neighbors of properties adjoining the property in question. The judge denied the request for a variance but Antwerpen filed an appeal. However, they also requested a zoning change under the comprehensive rezoning. Because of this action the Board of Appeals denied to set a date for the appeal. Klaus mentioned that there had been several rezoning issues for properties north of Powers Lane in the past.

There is also a property at the western end of Powers Lane with an application to be rezoned for business. Klaus reported that he has argued for keeping the property zoned as residential. He is seeking support from residents of the Westerlee Apartments and the Drexel Woods townhouses. The solution to the impacts from Mile One Auto shouldn't be that residents have to flee and that more land be zoned commercial but that the impacts be reduced. He has suggested that the communities put pressure on the auto dealership to remedy the noise and lighting that has caused significant discomfort to the occupants of the house across the road.

Klaus explained that NeighborSpace cannot afford to purchase the properties north of Powers Lane. He said that while obtaining the Neighborhood

Commons classification for them would be ideal, keeping them zoned as residential for 1 unit per acre would provide a relatively good protection for the community.

Highways Superintendent Mike Rye: Mike introduced himself as the superintendent of 2 shops. He reported that heavy equipment from out of state was brought in to deal with the 30-inch snowfall. Klaus thanked him for the quick clearing of our roads. Mike said that his shops are also responsible for repairs of potholes and water main breaks, road resurfacing, roadside mowing, tree trimming, storm drain cleaning and curb replacement. He stated that the County spends \$50 million each year on road resurfacing. He noted that the lower price of oil has resulted in lower costs for asphalt. His staff surveys roads in the spring and sets priorities. He said that milling and repaving is the best method but overlaying asphalt is sometimes done. That method would be appropriate for Powers Lane, which has no curbs. One resident warned that that could lead to faster speeds and more accidents. Another resident mentioned that there had been a fatal accident on Powers Lane years ago. Klaus suggested that the western section of Powers Lane be turned into a local road as a bike connection to the trails in Patapsco State Park. One resident asked about why certain curbs at street corners are still not accessible. Other residents asked why the Beltway repairs were taking so long. Mike replied that rebuilding of bridges requires construction in stages. He warned that the upcoming rebuilding of the Triple Bridges over the Beltway will be an enormous undertaking.

Officer Alisha Helphenstine: Officer Helphenstine said that residents may go to the County web site for crime statistics. She spoke of handouts in the back about motor vehicle theft. She stated that 95% of thefts in winter are due to owners leaving keys in vehicles while they warm up in the morning and then going inside. She said that even if an owner uses a keyless fob to start an engine, the vehicle may still be driven away by a thief. A Westerlee resident suggested using a remote start device. Officer Helphenstine explained about the "Watch Your Car" program whereby owners may attach decals that indicate that their vehicles are not normally operated between 1 and 5 a.m. Police would then be authorized to stop the vehicles. She mentioned that the Woodlawn precinct has a new captain who holds monthly meetings open to the public. She also noted that she has written tickets for vehicles parked in No Parking zones along Powers Lane.

Committee Reports:

Newsletter: Wanda announced that Pam Jarrell has volunteered to do the newsletter.

Block Captains: Wanda expressed thanks to the block captains for delivering the flyers announcing the annual meeting.

Dumpster Day: Jacqueline announced that the dumpsters will be at Nuwood and Cedar Circle Drive on the morning of Saturday, April 30, from 8 to 12. We will also be accepting paint.

Social Committee: Jacqueline reported that the holiday decoration contest was judged on December 21 with two new categories. She announced that the yard sale will be held on Saturday, May 14, and urged participants to obtain the balloons to mark their yards. She said that community party will be scheduled for the second or third Saturday in September and will be held at Klaus' yard at 2018 Cedar Circle Drive.

Report Continued on Page 3

Annual Meeting Minutes Continued:

Treasurer's Report: Chris gave the following summary for 2015:

Beginning Balance:	\$6,375.52	
Income:		
Dues:	4,640.07	
Interest:	0.61	+11,016.20
Expenditures:		
Newsletter/Flyers:	324.68	
Annual Meeting:	42.04	
Insurance:	100.00	
Community Party:	948.42	
Office Supplies:	175.60	
Sympathy:	102.06	
Lawyer:	1,274.00	-2,966.80
Ending Balance:	8,214.90	

Klaus hoped that we would get a greater percentage of residents paying dues. He noted that Westerlee can put a lien on a property at the time of sale for all unpaid dues, penalties and interest. Fred K. remarked that the \$25 annual dues are low compared to other communities. A resident asked why notices are not sent out. Klaus replied that mailing notices would be expensive. Another resident suggested that reminders appear in the newsletters.

Board Elections: When Klaus asked for volunteers to serve on the board, two residents indicated that they would like to put their names in consideration. Rizwan Mahmoodi said he lives on Fernnglen Way and is a security investment officer for Wells Fargo. Lula Simon said she lives on Wisteria Drive and is a retired administrator. After confirming that current board members would continue their service, Klaus asked that the residents in attendance vote for the entire slate. The slate was unanimously approved. Klaus mentioned that the board will elect officers at its next meeting.

Homes for Sale: Klaus asked residents to keep the board informed about sales. He said that the community is well served when homes have good values. He said that any resident suspecting a code violation, may bring it to the attention of the board or report it directly to the County. That action may lead to an inspection, notice to the owner and a fine.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Treasurer's Position Update by Chris Goatee

At the April HOA meeting, I requested to step down from my position as Treasurer, realizing that I am not able to give that position the time necessary to be effective. My intentions in assuming this position were good and I realize that my execution left much to be desired. Rizwan Mahmoodi, one of our new board members, will take over as Westerlee HOAs Treasurer. Rizwan and I will work to transfer the records over a 2 month time period, to be completed by the end of July. I sincerely appreciate that Rizwan is willing to take over this role and I look forward to working with him. During this transition, anyone who wishes to pay their dues can continue to send them to me through mid-July at 2118 Cedar Circle Drive. After that time, dues should be sent to Westerlee Homeowner's Association c/o Rizwan Mahmoodi at 2126 Fernnglen Way.

It has been my pleasure to serve on the Board for the last 7 years, with 5 of those as Treasurer. This year my personal life has become rather hectic, caring for my Mother as she gets back on her feet from a medical crisis. This has left little time for any additional work/activities. I am aware that many checks have been delayed being deposited and I sincerely apologize. Additionally, I want to thank the Board and all my neighbors for their support, patience, and understanding.

Westerlee Committee Heads

Social Committee: Jacqueline Johnson

Architectural Review Committee: Klaus Philipsen

Code Violations Committee: Klaus Philipsen

Block Captains Committee: Joe Reid & Wanda Richardson

Community Yard Sale by Chris Goatee

The Westerlee Community Yard Sale took place on May 14th this year. Given the prolonged rainy weather that plagued the East Coast throughout the month of May, we were very lucky to have the weather hold out until just after the posted end time of 2pm before the skies opened up again and we had another week of storms!

I have participated in this event for the past 4 years with 2 of my friends. While our sales were fairly good, we did notice that there was significantly less traffic this year as compared to previous years. The folks who stopped by were quick to tell us that our community yard sale is one that they look forward to, so that was so nice to hear!

On a personal note, I wanted to thank both Wanda Richardson and Jacqui Johnson for organizing the yard sale, posting the signs, and providing balloons to all the participants to make it easier for yard sale go-ers to locate all the potential treasures!

Best \$25 You'll Spend All Year!

By far the most important use of our community dues is when the board needs to allocate funds to fight urban sprawl! We love Westerlee because it's a beautiful oasis hidden amongst the ever growing concrete jungle. Our board uses our money to pay for whatever is necessary, including lawyers, to keep the growth from encroaching on our neighborhood and protecting the value of our homes.

If you have not paid your dues, please send to: Westerlee Homeowner's Association c/o Rizwan Mahmoodi at 2126 Fernnglen Way.

CELESTIAL SIGHTS

By Fred Hickok - Professor Emeritus of
Astronomy Community College of Baltimore County

August 11, 12 - Perseids Meteor Shower.

The Perseids is one of the best meteor showers to observe, producing up to 60 meteors per hour at its peak. It is produced by comet Swift-Tuttle, which was discovered in 1862. The Perseids are famous for producing a large number of bright meteors. The shower runs annually from July 17 to August 24. It peaks this year on the night of August 11 and the morning of August 12. The waxing gibbous moon will set shortly after midnight, leaving fairly dark skies for should be an excellent early morning show. Best viewing will be from a dark location after midnight. Meteors will radiate from the constellation Perseus, but can appear anywhere in the sky.

August 27 - Conjunction of Venus and Jupiter.

A spectacular conjunction of Venus and Jupiter will be visible in the evening sky. The two bright planets will be extremely close, appearing only 0.06 degrees apart. Look for this impressive pairing in the western sky just after sunset.

October 16 - Full Moon, Supermoon.

The Moon will be located on the opposite side of the Earth as the Sun and its face will be fully illuminated. 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. The Moon will be at its closest approach to the Earth and may look slightly larger and brighter than usual.

November 14 - Full Moon, Supermoon.

This full moon was known by early Native American tribes as the Full Beaver Moon because this was the time of year to set the beaver traps before the swamps and rivers froze. It has also been known as the Frosty Moon and the Hunter's Moon.

November 16, 17 - Leonids Meteor Shower. The Leonids is an average shower, producing up to 15 meteors per hour at its peak. This shower is unique in that it has a cyclonic peak about every 33 years where hundreds of meteors per hour can be seen. That last of these occurred in 2001. The Leonids is produced by dust grains left behind by comet Tempel-Tuttle, which was discovered in 1865. The shower runs annually from November 6-30. It peaks this year on the night of the 16th and morning of the 17th. The waning gibbous moon will block many of the fainter meteors this year, but if you are patient you should be able to catch quite a few good ones. Best viewing will be from a dark location after midnight. Meteors will radiate from the constellation Leo, but can appear anywhere in the sky.

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

Free Family Fun Life is Great in 21228!

Lurman Woodland Theater

614 Hilltop Road, 1-877-278-0961, or www.lurman.com
Free outside concerts, most Saturdays & Sundays thru August featuring all different kinds of music.

Frederick Road Fridays

15 Mellor Ave. 6:30-8:30pm June 10-August 26. Concerts put on by the Catonsville Chamber and proceeds go to various charities.

Sunday Farmers Market

Parking lot behind Friendly's. 10am-1:30pm Thru November 20th.

Benjamin Banneker Planetarium Shows

CCBC Catonsville, Math & Science Hall, Rm 030A, 800 S. Rolling
Saturday July 30, 8 PM "Hunters, Dogs, and Temples, Oh My!" (Outside observing afterwards, weather permitting)

Friday August 12, 8 PM "Meteors, Comets, and other Rogue Bodies" (Outside observing afterwards, weather permitting)

Friday September 23, 8 PM "Seasonal Equality" (Outside observing afterwards, weather permitting)

Saturday September 24, 10 AM "Pickles Means Pluto" (children's show)

Friday October 28, 8 PM "Legends of the Heavens" (Outside observing afterwards, weather permitting)

Saturday October 29, 10 AM "Space Witch" (children's show)

Friday, November 11, 8 PM "The Super Moon" (Outside observing afterwards, weather permitting)

Saturday November 12, 10 AM "Dudley the Curious Duckling" (children's show)

Thank You Very Much!

We welcome our 2 new board members:
Rizwan Mahmoodi and Lula Simon.

We hope you will enjoy serving on our board!

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Special thanks to Chris Goatee, we appreciate all you have done for the community!

Newsletter Ponderings, by Pam

I would like to thank John Moore, past newsletter editor, for helping me get off to a good start with the newsletter! I was a graphic designer many many moons ago but a lot has changed! John set me up with everything I needed to be up and running. He also told he would be happy to help should I have any problems, to which I am very grateful! I am working with new technology so bare with me:) This newsletter belongs to us all and I welcome any input you might have.