
WEST END NEWS

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Fall 2000

President's Message

by Edgar Williams

Activities and issues for WECA seem to grow in inverse proportion to the time available to give them their due attention. Without the enthusiasm and dedication of the board, the committees, and those WECA members who can always be counted on to pitch in, the president's job would be no fun at all. As it is, the pleasure and satisfaction derived from associating with the "workers" for WECA make it all worthwhile.

I invite all recipients of this newsletter to join this unique group working to preserve and improve our community here in the West End. There is plenty of opportunity to help. Just call any board member, or me, or come to our board meetings. They are held monthly on the third Tuesday at 7:00 P.M.. in the county library meeting room and are always open to all members. We'll find a good use for your time and talents!

A number of things new and not so new have been keeping the board busy. Two items in particular will have major impact on the West End -- the birth of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and the Cambridge Zoning Regulation review recently begun by a consultant to the City Council. WECA has been and will continue to be actively involved in monitoring and providing guidance for both of these groups.

The West End Citizens Association's social/community activities continue to grow also. Elsewhere you will read about the yard sale and Christmas decorating contest. The candidate's forum last spring is behind us, but we are considering new membership activities for promoting home ownership, providing historic preservation guidance, increasing our Historic West End tour programs, establishing a web site on the Internet, and other activities and services to benefit our members and our community.

We are also enthusiastic about working with the new City Commission and Mayor. The recent elections have given us an opportunity to create a fresh relationship with our elected city officials and we look forward to helping them lead Cambridge and the West End into what I believe is the beginning of a period of great change and potential progress for Cambridge and Dorchester County. The decisions taken by this city administration will have an impact far greater than those made over the past several decades. WECA intends to help make

sure those decisions are made with foresight and sound reasoning to enhance and protect our community well into the future.

We are working for you. Let us know what you want. Give your neighbors a copy of this newsletter and both of you get involved.

Fall Yard Sale by Donna Casarotti

WECA will hold their annual Fall Yard Sale on **Saturday, October 14, 2000 (rain-date Saturday, October 21, 2000)** from 7:00 A.M. until.... West End residents should contact Donna Casarotti at 410-901-9390 or FAX 410-901-9392 no later than Saturday, October 7, 2000 to register for the event. In case of rain, WECA will readvertise all locations for the rain-date if yard-salers state they wish to participate the following week. There is no charge for joining the event, which is a service available to all residents of the West End. The large number of yard sales located in close proximity to each other makes shopping very attractive.

Advertising for the Fall Yard Sale will appear in the Daily Banner, Star Democrat, Dorchester Star and The Guide, along with public service announcements on our local radio stations.

Tips and suggestions for success: Clean/polish up items for sale. Price items to sell (buyers love a bargain). Have batteries and/or electrical cord handy to show appliances work. Lay out items in as attractive a manner as possible.

The community-wide yard sale provides a really great opportunity to move out those unwanted but still perfectly usable articles from closets, attics, sheds and so on. At the same time, it provides participants some extra spending money. Salable items include but are not limited to, dishes, glassware, kitchen/household appliances, furniture, Christmas decorations (it's just around the corner!), books, tools, gently used clothing, toys and games. Children may want to have their own corner with the chance of a toy box clean-out to earn cash for something new. From previous experience, we know that both buyers and sellers enjoy this family fun time. Don't delay! Call to register as soon as possible.

To make clean-up easy, WECA has arranged for a special bulk trash pickup on the Monday following the event. For any leftovers you do not wish to keep, consider the Salvation Army, the Robinhood Shop and the Lutheran Mission.

Zoning Tour by Carroll Dail

WECA members recently had the opportunity to join Cambridge's zoning consultants on a tour of the West End and describe residents' concerns to them.

On September 8, Marge Hull, First Ward Commissioner Larry Bohlen, and I met with consultants Peter Johnston and Steve Dodd. Regretfully, Ward 3 Commissioner Lee Weldon was unable to join us as he had to attend a funeral.

Mr. Johnston had copies of Cambridge tax maps onto which he had overlaid various colors representing the zoning districts. He had also marked x's on locations where he wanted to inspect commercial buildings in residential neighborhoods. The morning's tour was designed to look at all of them. A mistake on his copy of Map 301 indicated that the odd numbered side of Court Lane was all zoned R-3 when in fact 507, 509 and 511 Court Lane are zoned C-2, according to the DPW zoning map. I called this to his attention and hope he checks and corrects it.

Some of the key items that were reviewed and discussed are:

The vacant lots in the R-4 zone along the waterfront, at the west corner of Water Street and Vue de l'Eau Street and the Oakley Beach tract. We expressed our concerns about the impact on our neighborhood of multifamily residences built on these properties.

From Vue de l'Eau Street out, the only existing building that requires R-4 zoning is the Oakley Terrace Apartments at 2 & 4 Oakley Street and 908 Oakley Terrace.

The inability of existing neighborhood streets to handle the traffic and parking volume resulting from an R-4 build-out was discussed. The large percentage of paired one-way streets was mentioned in support of this. It was also noted that the bumper-to-bumper parking on some of the blocks we walked was not evident only because many residents were at work.

Johnston was interested in neighborhood character "break points", so we showed him break points between Oakley and Willis Streets and between Mill Street and Choptank Avenue.

Johnston also asked about our goals. We replied that we wanted to increase the level of owner occupancy in the West End and to protect property values and general quality of life. He asked about the percentage of rental properties in the West End. I replied that a detailed count I did about five years ago showed that 46 percent of the residences in the West End were rentals and that I felt that percentage was still about the same.

I asked why so little of Cambridge's R-4 zoning is located along state routes 16, 341 and 343, when these are the logical corridors on which to locate multifamily buildings.

There are many reasons why these routes are logical R-4 districts:

1. The state maintains and upgrades these routes with road use tax funds rather than with the property tax revenue the city must use on neighborhood streets.
2. The numbered routes are capable of handling, higher traffic volume than our paired one-way neighborhood streets.
3. Routes 16 and 343 lead directly to Cambridge's employment centers on Route 50 and Woods Road. Route 16 will lead to the Hyatt when completed. Route 341, Race Street extended, leads to the downtown business district. Placement of residences close to employment centers is one of Maryland's "smart growth" objectives. Zoning designed with "smart growth" in mind should make access to state aid funding easier.
4. The numbered routes provide better access to emergency vehicles.
5. This idea works well where practiced in Montgomery, Prince Georges and Anne Arundel counties, where I have lived in apartments located along numbered routes.
6. A portion of Route 16 near Woods Road has no established neighborhoods that would be disrupted by multifamily development. The same thing is true of the 2300 block of Route 343.

Johnston expressed concern about creating a large number of nonconforming uses by rezoning. Commissioner Bohlen mentioned the possibility of "sunsetting" grandfathered nonconforming uses by restricting the conveyance of nonconforming status to new owners.

How to selectively preserve commercial uses in residential districts was discussed at the corner of Travers and Choptank. How can we avoid unusable buildings, such as the Variety Corner now a boarded-up storefront.

We looked at many examples of deterioration and blight, both in rentals and owner occupied properties.

We talked with Christiane Williams, who has bought 802 Locust Street and is renovating it as an upscale duplex. She claims to have signed up tenants who didn't balk at high rent.

Johnston asked if other neighborhood groups such as ours existed. We said we were unaware of any. Commissioner Bohlen suggested he contact the Pine Street Committee to determine if they would be interested in participating.

It is impossible to determine what, if any, impact our morning's effort will have on the consultants' final product. The important thing is that we gave them our input.

COMMISSIONERS' CORNER

Thoughts from the First Ward

by Larry Bohlen

The newly-seated Cambridge City Council has rolled up its sleeves and gotten down to work. The pace has been very busy, but a great deal has been accomplished in a relatively short period of time.

Several issues that impact the First Ward have come to the forefront and I would like to take this opportunity to update members of the community.

The city is in the process of hiring a City Planner/Grantsperson. The need for this position, I feel, is long overdue. Such a person would provide the needed expertise for future development of the city and those projects which the city would undertake and seek funding for -- projects in the area of housing, commercial development, neighborhood rehabilitation and their effect and impact on the city, its character and infrastructure.

Also coming together is the comprehensive rezoning for the city. WECA has been very helpful in getting public involvement concerning this important issue. Both Commissioner Lee Weldon and I attended the WECA-sponsored meeting at the Dorchester County library. Mr. Peter Johnston of the consulting firm Redmond-Johnston, brought us up to date with the status of the project, what it will entail, and the impact it could have on our neighborhoods and the city as a whole. As a follow up to this meeting, I was pleased to accompany Marge Hull, Carroll Dail, Steve Dodd, and Mr. Johnston on a walking tour of the West End. During this tour Mr. Johnston was able to get a firsthand look at the character of the neighborhoods in the area and feedback concerning existing inconsistencies in the old zoning codes. Mr. Johnston felt the tour was very helpful. When completed, the newly updated zoning will greatly benefit the city and its future development and preservation of our existing neighborhoods.

I was also pleased with the strong showing of concerned citizens about the proposed Glenburn Forest Villas project. I was opposed to this project, primarily because of its location, and other questions concerning the developers. I am, however, committed to the improvement of housing in the City of Cambridge and the construction of good, affordable housing of the type that will be a benefit and asset to our neighborhoods and city overall.

There is lots more going on: meetings about the Hyatt Project and the tremendous activity at that location, the Main Street Project and other developments in the historic district, but

more on those in a future article. Most importantly though, is the enjoyment I have found in helping solve citizens' problems. Some have been easy, some I'm still working on, but I make this pledge: that I will try to do the best that I can for the residents of the First Ward. If you need to get in contact with me, please call 410-228-4020 at City Hall, or 410-221-0098 at home. Thank you for your time, and let's make Cambridge a city we can all be proud to call home.

Third Ward Report by Lee Weldon

What an exciting time it is in Cambridge! First, let me thank those of you who supported me in the July election. The Third Ward is, in my humble opinion, the most important ward in the city, encompassing our historic neighborhood, much of downtown, the waterfront, and a large portion of our traditionally Afro-American neighborhoods. It is truly a cross-section of Cambridge.

In these past few weeks that we have been in office, we have made tremendous strides to strengthen our neighborhoods and boost our local economy.

Here are some of the highlights:

Our Maryland Main Street application is back on track and moving forward under the guidance of Armond Hayward and Rev. Dr. William Wallace. The Steering Committee will formulate the governing board of the Main Street program, which will draw on the talents of our business community, with help from all other segments of the community in and around our downtown area.

Your Mayor and Council are pleased to report that the final resolution of the Combined Sewer Separation project is at hand. Work will begin shortly on the first phase of the project once final details and schedules are ironed out. I am working with David Pritchett, Director of Public Works, to schedule a public forum for the neighbors around Mill, Water, and Vue de l'Eau Streets, so the scope of the project and the disruptions you can expect can be discussed in detail with you. It will be a lengthy and messy job, and we want you to experience as few surprises as possible. We will let the WECA board know as soon as we have scheduled a meeting with the contractors for you.

Your Historic Preservation Commission has also had many successes since its inception. Many residential rehab projects have been approved, and the improvements to our neighborhoods are beginning to take shape. A major success was the cooperative effort between the HPC and Rolston's Chesapeake Grille on High Street. The rehabilitation of the old Nathan Building is nearing completion, and the restaurant recently

opened to rave reviews. This project has not only preserved and restored an important downtown building, but has also created numerous jobs for the people of Cambridge.

The first meeting of our Cambridge Waterfront Committee has taken place, and we have begun working on a comprehensive redevelopment plan that takes into account our marina facilities, waterfront businesses and residential sections, environmental issues, and public access, among other things. It's not too late to get involved -- call me if you would like to participate.

I am also working with the Traffic and Safety committee to look at the placement of stop signs in the West End to help slow down traffic and make our neighborhood safer for motorists and pedestrians alike. Through traffic to the Sandy Hill and Algonquin areas of the county is increasingly a problem in the West End, and I'd like your suggestions.

I welcome your input. Feel free to contact me at 410-228-5775, or by e-mail at weldon@fastol.com.

Oakley Beach Update

by Edgar Williams

On September 21, 2000, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) considered an application from IDS, a developer, for a Certificate of Appropriateness for a development design for 46 living units contained in two 4-story apartment buildings and 14 townhouses on the 3.14 acre Oakley Beach property. Along with the application form, there was submitted only a footprint drawing and no elevation drawings showing the proposed exterior design of the various units.

The HPC ruled the application to be incomplete and it was returned to the developer. WECA was prepared to testify at the hearing that the housing density and building mass on the site were incompatible with the surrounding neighborhood, but the testimony proved to be unnecessary as the application was rejected.

Last November, the developer had failed to receive conditional approval from the Cambridge Planning and Zoning Commission (it was a tie vote), so this step also needs to be retaken.

WECA will keep members advised of progress of events in the Oakley Beach proposal.

Ed. Note: Following the September 21 HPC meeting, it was discovered that the Daily Banner had failed to publish the required meeting notice to the public; therefore, this meeting must be held again. The new date and time is October 11, 2000 at 7:00 P.M. at the Cambridge City Council Chambers.

Property Transfers by Carroll Dail June 6, 2000 through September 18, 2000

Anastasio, Thomas A. & Jenkins, Virginia Scott 315 Oakley Street	\$176,000
Gscheidle, James R. & Kimberly D. 114 High Street	\$230,000
Coll, James M. & Ann C. 1106 Glasgow Street	\$45,000
Foxwell, Robert M. & Bonita S. 315/317/319 Choptank Avenue	\$8,000
Le, Quang N. 610 Church Street	\$156,500
Cornish, Randall E. & Rhonda D. 406 Leonards Lane	\$79,500
Alvarez, Emily H. 1105 School Street	\$109,000
Williams, Christiane J. 802 Locust Street	\$30,000
Wilson, Yolanda 408 Glenburn Avenue	\$77,900
Steilke, Charles David & Tami Marie 724 Glasgow Street	\$40,000
Larmore, Dana Raye 218 Market Square	\$142,500
Er, Donna F. 111 Oakley Street	\$145,000
Smith, Jeffrey E. & Laurie A. 437 Oakley Street	\$11,500
Mohan, William J. & Staley, Barbara L. 107 Choptank Avenue	\$78,000
Molock, Edna M. 426 Oakley Street	\$63,500
Milhollan, Eric David 6 Willis Street	\$77,500
Lyon, Barbara M. 600-2 Water Street	\$116,000
Brannock, Edward D. & Virginia W. 320 West End Avenue	\$64,000

Judging for WECA's annual
Christmas Decorating Contest
will take place on December 14, so put on your
creative holiday thinking caps and get ready.

Recap of the Zoning Meeting

by **Herm Kramer**

On Tuesday August 15th at 7:00 P.M., 32 West Enders turned out to listen to Mr. Peter Johnston of Redmond-Johnston & Associates discuss his firm's involvement in the new zoning and sub-division plans to be instituted within the city.

Mr. Johnston explained that his firm was hired by the City Council (previous to the past election) and could not go into detailed specifics because his report would first have to be sent to the City Council who contracted for this with Redmond-Johnston.

Mr. Johnston stressed that any zoning requires consistency and that sensitive areas such as streams, buffers, habitat, and flood plains were considered in the zoning update. He also stated that according to Article 66 of the Maryland State Code any zoning regulations and sub-division ordinances must come under and from the City's Comprehensive Plan (which, it was noted, needed to be updated) and also be consistent with the Historic District Guidelines.

There were a number of questions and comments from the audience:

- Where R1 & R2 zoning currently exists, will there be only R1 zoning?
- What of group homes and assisted living homes in residential neighborhoods?
- Will R4 be dropped from existing waterfront areas within residential neighborhoods?
- Should zoning not be based upon existing land use?
- What will new zoning ordinances do to the sub-standard housing currently in the West End?
- Why are you using a zoning map that is out of date and does not show the streets in the un-incorporated areas to the west of the city limits which account for the high density traffic flowing through the major streets of the West End?
- Why can you not share detailed information with us since are we not the citizens who voted in the City Council and pay the taxes which support the city government?

Mr. Johnston did his best to comment on these within the limits of what he felt he could reveal considering the Redmond-Johnston contract with the City Council.

There will be a final walk through the city before the report is submitted. The West End walk through has already taken place

with Marge Hull and Carroll Dail and is covered in a separate article in this issue.

We do thank Mr. Johnston for his time in coming to this informative meeting. Also we appreciate our West End Councilmen, Larry Bolhen (Ward 1), and Lee Weldon (Ward 3) taking their time to attend and comment.

WOWE by Marge Hull

The **W**elcomers **O**f **W**est **E**nd met in July to reactivate the delivery of welcome baskets to new property owners in the West End of Cambridge. This project was started in 1998, and since then WOWE has delivered over 60 baskets.

Recipients have expressed both surprise and great pleasure when receiving a Welcome Basket. It is full of gift and discount certificates and useful information about our city, county, social services and businesses. Simmons Center Market on Race Street shrink-wraps and decorates each basket, making for a very professional presentation.

In 1999 the committee of six ran into difficulty. Our supplier of baskets moved out of town. It took a number of months to locate a supplier and then several more before our order could be processed. The baskets have finally arrived.

Our past deliveries completely depleted our supply of items to put into each basket. Therefore, committee members Barbara Williams, Jane Derlin, Sharon Lock, Marti Weiler, Kathie Dean and Marge Hull are now contacting the businesses and services that contribute items to the baskets to replenish our inventory. Asking a donor (there are over 60) to give a supply of 100 of the item donated takes some time. WOWE greatly appreciates the cooperation these businesses and services have given to this project.

It will take a month or two to get back into full stride. The real estate sales in the West End have dramatically increased during the year 2000, as can be seen by the property transfer information in our West End newsletters.

If you are a people person and would like to meet your new neighbors, or have good organization skills, you would find it fun to become a member of WOWE. There are few meetings, and many hands make light work. Please contact Marge Hull at 410-228-7927, or e-mail marghull@fastol.com for more information.

Due to lack of space in this issue, the report on our Historic District Tours will appear in the December issue of the West End News (apologies to Jackie Vickers for the postponement of her article.)

West End Citizens Association
P. O. Box 13
Cambridge, Maryland 21613

Web Site Update by Doug Kyle

One major change to WECA is a new web site. WECA obtained the name www.cambridgemd.org and will be setting our e-mail address to be weca@cambridgemd.org.

Our goal is to keep the site current and fresh along with all of the information you can find in our brochures. We are hoping that with an umbrella name like “cambridgemd”, we will be able to link to other groups in Cambridge. We will also be looking into advertising as a revenue builder for the group. We can have our minutes, goals, and calendar of events on the site.

If you have any ideas for the site, let me know and I will get working on them.

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