

WEST END NEWS

Email: weca@cambridgemd.org

Web Sites: www.cambridgemd.org www.dorchesterlibrary.org/wecanews



Spring 2001

President's Message

by Edgar Williams

If you are reading this newsletter for the first time and wondering what in the world it is, please at least finish this article and glance through the rest before you drop it in the wastebasket. There is a lot of good stuff in here – information on what is happening in your neighborhood and in your city, and how your neighbors are helping to keep the West End and the City a great place to live.

That is what the West End Citizen's Association does – we act on your behalf to promote, preserve, and enhance the good life in Cambridge through keeping informed of what's going on and seeing to it that your interests and those of your neighbors are protected. We invite you to join us in 2001 and become part of a group dedicated to the betterment of our community.

In addition to our current members, all residents and businesses eligible for membership in WECA – about 1,000 recipients – will receive this newsletter. Our annual membership drive is underway and we need to motivate all of you to part with \$6.00 or \$12.00 (individual or household) of your hard-earned cash to buy an annual membership.

The WECA officers, Board members and other volunteers have worked hard in past years and will continue to work to make sure that everyone gets their money's worth. Elsewhere in this issue, you will find a membership renewal (or new membership) form for the year April 2001 – April 2002.

Some of the activities we undertook last year included:

- Holding the Public Forum for city council and mayoral candidates for the 2000 election year;
- Sponsoring a public meeting with the urban planner hired by Cambridge to prepare a comprehensive rezoning plan for the entire city;
- Developing a Cambridge Historic Tour program to provide hundreds of visitors with tours of the historic West End;
- Continuing our annual events - the Christmas Decorating Contest and the Neighborhood Yard Sale;

- Providing strong support for the *Cambridge Historic District Design Guidelines* and the Historic Preservation Commission;
- Supporting the proposed Main Street Program;
- Opposing inappropriate development and property use proposals throughout the West End;
- Initiating efforts to correct past zoning errors in order to preserve neighborhood integrity; and
- Continuing to develop an effective working relationship with elected and appointed members of city government.

Many of the above activities are a continuing effort and will be pursued during the coming year. Other continuing services to the community include our informative newsletter, our Welcome Basket program to acquaint new residents with our community and local businesses, a West End Property Database, a new WECA Website (www.cambridgemd.org), monthly open Board meetings covering all sorts of interesting stuff and, last but not least, the opportunity for you to come join us and help guide WECA through these exciting new times of growth and promise. Fill out the membership form and send it in TODAY!

WECA Nominating Committee

by Herm Kramer

We are once again in the process of putting together a slate of candidates for the election to be held at the Annual Meeting in April.

The positions for officers are: President, Vice President, Treasurer and Recording Secretary.

The positions for the co-chairpersons of the standing committees are: Membership, Community Pride, Neighborhood Data and Oversight, Publicity and Special Projects.

Should you be interested in standing for any of these posts, or to give some of your time as committee members, please call Herm Kramer at 410-221-6294 before Monday, March 19, 2001.

We need all the help we can get and can guarantee you a place to use your talents.

See page 4 for your WECA membership/renewal form.

WOWE

by Jane Devlin

The Welcomers Of West End (WOWE) Committee has begun deliveries. With the continued support of all committee members, we have assembled 20 baskets. To date, 8 have been delivered to new West End property owners, with 12 more to be delivered in the upcoming weeks. Our present inventory will permit the assembling of 80 additional baskets.

“Thank you” to Carroll Dail for not only providing the storage space and work area, but for maintaining the list of new property owners.

We also thank all donors who have aided in supplying over 60 items to the Welcome Basket. The Baskets include a wealth of information pertaining to city, county, social services and businesses, as well as information about WECA. Gift and discount certificates add to the welcoming of new residents.

A special “thank you” to Simmons Market for putting the professional finish to the Baskets by shrink-wrapping and decorating them. The resulting Welcome Basket is a delight!

WOWE is looking forward to spreading hospitality to those who choose the West End as their new home.

Cambridge Waterfront Committee

by Herm Kramer

This committee formed by Third Ward Commissioner Lee Weldon has continued its monthly meetings to review and to update the Cambridge Creek Planned Waterfront Community District (PWCD).

The Committee is currently reviewing the PWCD Ordinance dated March 19, 1984 (with revisions) and the “Rouse Plan” as it relates to Cambridge Creek.

Since this is in the overall interest to the continuing rebirth of the City of Cambridge, and part of this area touches upon the West End, WECA will continue to serve on this Committee and report progress in future issues of the *West End News*.

There is much work yet to be completed. If you are interested, do feel free to volunteer to help on this important project. Call Third Ward Commissioner Lee Weldon and offer your assistance.

Property Transfers

by Carroll Dail

November 17, 2000 through February 14, 2001

Federal National Mortgage Association 504 Edlon Park Drive	\$89,000
DICKERSON, Steven Michael 428 Willis Street.....	\$30,000
LEDGER, Julie C. 304 Academy Street, Unit 402	\$195,000
GIBSON, John W. & Karen L. 904 Glasgow Street	\$76,500
WOOLFORD, Vincent L. 328 West End Avenue	\$49,750
ELLIOTT, Rodney A., Sr. 708 Locust Street	\$89,000
COLLINS, Deborah L. & JOSEPH, Bobbi Jo 710 Church Street	\$45,000
COOKE, Frank E. & WHITE, Claudia A. 303 Mill Street.....	\$175,000
ISENBURG, Eric A. & Abby M. 1000 School Street	\$95,500
TRAN, Huy Ngoc & Kim Van 405/407 Oakley Street.....	\$78,000
VELESZ, John P. & ELY, Barbara B. 105 West End Avenue	\$89,000
CARPENTER, Flossie M. 309 Willis Street.....	\$65,000
DODD, Steven M. & Laura K. 415 Edlon Park Drive	\$80,000
Cator House LLC 411 Muse Street	\$170,000
CASSIDY, Carrie E. 212 Belvedere Avenue	\$85,000
MILLIGAN, Elsie M. 403 Oakley Street	\$72,000
COOLAHAN, Carmelita & Eileen M. 104 Belvedere Avenue	\$138,000
ADAMS, Steven A. 4 Belvedere Avenue	\$130,000

Mark your calendar...WECA's Annual Membership Meeting will be held on April 17, 2001, at 7 p.m. in the Dorchester Library Meeting Room. Election of officers and committee chairpersons for the coming year. Open to the public, but only members in good standing can vote. Send in membership form now, or join at the door.

Preserving Preservation

by Edgar Williams

Late last year, a City Council member proposed to eliminate or greatly reduce the Cambridge Historic District and eliminate or downgrade the Cambridge Historic Preservation Commission (CHPC) to an advisory panel. WECA was a primary force in the 10-year effort to develop and finally shepherd the regulations through the Cambridge City Council in 1999. Our dedication continues unswerving to the belief that historic preservation for Cambridge is absolutely essential to the future well-being of our community. Accordingly, we responded with a vigorous campaign of public support for the Historic District, encouraging our members and other supporters throughout the city, county and state to write letters and newspaper commentaries opposing any diminution of the current regulations. The response was solid and vigorous. At a subsequent Council meeting in early January, the matter was tabled until a later date. This issue has not gone away, and WECA will continue to monitor any efforts to damage the Historic Preservation program in Cambridge.

Meanwhile, we are also working with the CHPC to develop programs and literature to more fully inform and advise Cambridge Property owners of the advantages and details of the administrative process for the Historic District. We will keep you informed in future issues of the newsletter and by articles in the newspaper.

Historic Preservation

by Armond Hayward, II

This is the first in a series of articles that will address Historic Preservation issues. I may be preaching to the choir here, but let's start with the basics. Why have an historic district? According to an issue of *Small Towns Institute*, there are several good reasons why historic districts are a necessary and viable force in communities such as ours:

1. **To preserve architecture.** Buildings significant to the character of the community reveal a great deal about the times of our ancestors. By preserving these buildings a strong sense of history can be saved and a strong foundation is maintained upon which future development can occur.
2. **To control change.** People in an historic district can be educated in the proper methods to fix up their buildings; therefore, buildings remain compatible with one another and help to maintain the character in a given area and increase its value.
3. **To channel progress.** When old buildings must be torn down and new ones erected in their place, how successful this progress is depends upon the compatibility of the new buildings. An historic district can establish standards for new construction in order for it to be compatible with older buildings that may surround it.

4. **To foster community pride.** Community pride evolves from a group effort toward historic preservation. This contribution from many property owners is vital in developing an appreciation for the heritage of a community.
5. **To preserve environmental beauty.** A sense of beauty is created from appropriate remodeling. Historic district regulations can help to maintain a consistency in the treatment of such buildings, thus creating a sense of aesthetic satisfaction for all those who live and visit the community.
6. **To increase real estate values.** Preservation of buildings can bring financial benefits to a community by making individual structures and property more valuable and subsequently by increasing the tax base.
7. **To improve the business community.** Visitors are brought to a community to experience and appreciate its aesthetic qualities. The business community also benefits from an increase in trade. This incentive encourages businesses to stay in downtowns rather than leaving for outside shopping malls.
8. **To pull together community.** Making preservation work in your community takes a group effort from the local government, service clubs, the historical society, and the citizens. To establish a working historic district and ordinance requires cooperation and can unify all forces in the community.

In the next issue, we will address some specifics of what a local historic designation does and does not require.

Copies of the *Cambridge Historic Preservation Guidelines* are now available for review at the Dorchester County Public Library and at the Department of Public Works, as well as City Hall. Historic district tax credit information is also available at DPW. When you apply for zoning permits, DPW will advise you whether your project needs to be approved by the CHPC.

Website Update

by Doug Kyle

Calling all West Enders! WECA's web site is up and running, and now it is time to make it interesting. What we need from our members is to send your pictures, stories, and ideas of your favorite things about Cambridge, so that we can display them for all the world to see. All items will be scanned and returned. We want the web site to showcase all the positive things Cambridge, and particularly the West End, has to offer.

For all of the businesses in Cambridge that do not yet have a web presence, we are offering "your_business@cambridgemd.org". We will design a basic information page and display it from our main site. E-mail or call us for pricing. If you have a web site already, we can link it to our business directory.

Commissioners' Corner

1st Ward Report by Larry Bohlen

The first of the year has gotten off to a running start; things have been busy with city government. As everyone probably knows by now the Historic Preservation Commission is still alive and was not scuttled. There was a tremendous outpouring of support for this commission and its intended work in the preservation of the City's architectural and historic legacy from all areas of the community. Feel good about your accomplishments, the people who care about what this city will be in the years to come and for our children's children made their views known in a forceful and positive way. However the battle is not yet won and your continued support and advocacy is needed to see this through.

What has happened is the City Council under a motion by Commissioner Travers voted to table the decision on any action on the CHPC for a period of time of three to six months so he, Commissioner Travers, could learn more about what it does and how it operates. Although both Commissioner Weldon and myself voted against the motion I do support Commissioner Travers and other members of the City Council in their desire to learn more about the CHPC and how important it is for the City. To help facilitate this as liaison to the CHPC for the City Council I am reporting to the Council every month on its actions and decisions much like the other commissions of the City. I believe this is a good thing as it shows the on going work of the commission and how and why its decisions are made. Also, the Department of Public Works has assigned someone to attend CHPC meetings and take minutes which will provide a formal record of the decisions. A letter confirming the decision will be sent by the CHPC to each applicant for the Certificate of Appropriateness.

Also preservation related, Commissioner Weldon and I attended the Restoration and Renovation Expo in Washington D.C. on January 15th. This is hosted by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and there were hundreds of exhibitors in attendance showing off their wares and services for preservation

of historic structures. Everything from windows and shutters to roofing and plumbing was there and all the new high tech things to save old structures. We left with bags of information, copies of which were given to the CHPC and to the Dorchester County Library, as well as DPW as resource guides. For anyone thinking about doing work on their historic building and looking for the appropriate materials and or services this is an excellent source of information. All you need to do is look it up.

In closing I do ask that everyone continue their support for the CHPC and the work which it was formed to do; it is so very important for the future character of this city that we all care so much about. If anyone has any questions or concerns on this or other matters please let me know at 410-228-4020 at City Hall or 410-221-0098 at home.

3rd Ward Report by Lee Weldon

Greetings from the Third Ward! Your council has undertaken quite a bit in our first half year, much of it affecting the West End. According to Dave Pritchett at DPW, the sewer separation project is moving on schedule. There have been a few sporadic incidents with school buses and so forth, but no major problems. If you have any questions or problems you'd like to report, call Dave at 410-228-1955.

Housing inspectors are back on the street, looking out for infractions to the livability and building codes. This includes addressing things like shrubs and trees that block walkways, improperly stored vehicles, broken sidewalks and so forth. If you have a concern, or would like to address one of these issues, contact Jim Michael, your Planning and Zoning director.

The city has applied to the state for a Community Development Block Grant, with specific projects targeted to increase home ownership and remove blight. We are also looking to revise our approach to sidewalk replacement, identifying whole streets that can be upgraded. The cost will still ultimately fall to the

Cut Here

WECA MEMBERSHIP / RENEWAL FORM

April 1, 2001 – April 1, 2002

Please complete the information below and return with your dues payment:

\$6 per year for individual; \$12 per year for household of more than 1 person.

Type of Membership

Individual

Household

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Mail to West End Citizens Association, P. O. Box 13, Cambridge, MD 21613 by April 1, 2001.

homeowner, but by doing large sections at one time, each homeowner's cost will be less than if they do the work themselves. I would appreciate hearing from you if you have any thoughts on this.

Speaking of sidewalks, Council has tabled action on the amendment to our bike, scooter and skate ban, which is unenforceable as written. I will suggest that the ordinance be re-written to be in effect only where an appropriate sign is posted. That way the downtown areas of concern can be posted and directly enforced, and if a neighborhood decides they'd like to be included, they could apply to have signs posted there. I think this is a common sense approach.

On February 26, the City Commissioners voted 4-1 in favor of the Main Street Application for 2001, which was submitted to the State on March 1. The process was at times difficult, but the result has been a very unified approach that attempts to represent our whole city. The Steering Committee has done an excellent job, and is to be commended. We should hear by April 21 whether Cambridge has been selected.

Our waterfront committee continues to meet, and will soon be submitting its recommendations to the zoning consultant. Peter Johnston has met with residents and heard concerns from the 1st, 2nd and 3rd wards. He will shortly receive the PWCD recommendations for around Cambridge Creek. The 4th and 5th wards have not yet had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Johnston, but as soon as they do, a working draft of the new proposed ordinance will be circulated for further comment and final action by council. A draft text of the ordinance is available on the city's website, at <http://www.intercom.net/npo/cambridge/>

Our town is moving forward, and it is very encouraging to see WECA continue to be represented at our meetings. Other neighborhoods are beginning to organize, which is good for the whole city. If I can help you with anything, call me at 410-228-5775, or e-mail me at weldon@fastol.com.

Historic Tours – Desperately Seeking Docents

by Jackie Vickers

An exciting opportunity may be on the horizon, with the docking of the Delta Queen in Cambridge (14 trips between April and October). WECA is coordinating with the Chamber for a 30-40 minute bus tour of the Cambridge Historic District before the busloads of visitors from the Delta Queen leave to spend the day in St. Michaels. There will be anywhere from three to five busloads of people coming in each time and it is unthinkable that these groups would go right from the ship to St. Michaels without seeing any of our beloved Cambridge.

If we do this tour, it should lead to more tours in the future, as well as generating additional tourist trade from those who might come back to see more of the area. Eventually an itinerary which makes Cambridge and Dorchester County the destination, not just the port of entry could be developed.

The Historic Tour route is set and WECA has a prepared script. We need one person per bus to be a docent for each tour. This may be a good money-maker for us with possibly a stipend for the docents. Regardless, it is an opportunity not to be missed. WECA's Board has committed to provide docents for all 14 of the Delta Queen trips.

Now, here's where you come in. It will take around 30 docents to cover all the trips. Obviously, we need to train some more people to help with these trips. If you are interested in becoming a docent and can help with the tours, please contact me as soon as possible, by phone at 410-228-5563 or e-mail jackiej@intercom.net. I will arrange for your training so that you will be comfortable with the script and the route. I have the schedule of trips. Most begin at 7:00 or 8:00 a.m. and at the most would take about an hour of your time. This is a project that can be a lot of fun, plus provide a great opportunity to show off the West End with very little effort on our part.

Heritage Resource Group, Inc.

Stephen G. Del Sordo, AICP
Architectural Historian

305 Oakley Street
Cambridge, MD 21613

410-228-8934 voice
410-221-8061 fax

Consultations and Assistance with Historic District Permit Applications and Historic Property Renovations

410-228-4313
410-228-4980

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***IMPORTANT: THIS ISSUE OF WEST END NEWS CONTAINS
YOUR ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION
OR RENEWAL FORM.***

The President's Last Word

by Edgar Williams

It occurred to me just before this newsletter deadline that this will be my final opportunity to officially express my appreciation to all our members for supporting WECA programs and initiatives in the past year, and to especially thank those individuals who gave their time, skill, and enthusiasm to all of you in the West End.

Their efforts on your behalf have given you all, whether you know it or not, the opportunity to live in a better neighborhood with enhanced property values, and the assurance that "somebody out there" is looking after your interests.

I especially want to thank:

- Marge Hull, our past president, for her dedication to the WECA goals, her almost daily efforts in every aspect of our work load, and keeping the whole thing on track;
- Herm Kramer, our vice president, for cheerfully carrying out most of my work, as well as the special tasks he was asked to do;
- Jackie Vickers, our secretary, for her timely, accurate and concise minutes and her invaluable work on our West End Historic tours;

- Andy Madera, Treasurer, for uncomplainingly providing accurate financial records under sometimes difficult circumstances;
- Doug Kyle, Membership Chairman, who has single-handedly put WECA in cyberspace by developing the WECA website (www.cambridgemd.org), in addition to keeping our membership rolls up to date;
- Donna Casarotti, Community Pride Chairman, for running our neighborhood yard sales and Christmas decorating contest;
- Carroll Dail, our indefatigable Data and Oversight Chairman, for his tremendously valuable database produced and kept current through unstinting effort and time spent; and
- Brenda Hayward, Publicity Chairman, who has done yeoman's work producing newsletters and news articles under usually trying circumstances.

Ed Stewart, Special Projects Chairman, was appointed late last year and already has some major initiatives under way. We will be hearing a lot more from him.

I'm sure I have missed some individuals and failed to recognize some major workloads. For those I apologize and express my appreciation. It's been a fruitful year and I hope I can continue to help as past president. Thanks again to you all.