

**GPCA General Meeting
October 13, 2008**

Ralph Wright brought the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Secretary Elaine Rasheed did not attend the meeting. Cathy Wolfson recorded the minutes. Ralph notified those present that a digital voice recorder has been purchased by GPCA. He asked the group if there were any objections to recording the meeting to aid in the recording of the minutes. Hearing none, the meeting was recorded.

A motion was made to dispense with the reading of the minutes. It was seconded and passed.

Treasury Report

Marty submitted the following:

Balance As of August 25, 2008	\$6,010.74	
Receipts		140.00
Disbursements*	(1,136.18)	

Balance as of October 13, 2008 \$5,014.56

*disbursements included newsletter, annual insurance of \$350 and GPCA picnic expenses of \$442.94

There is a balance of \$5,524.20 in savings.

A motion was made to accept the treasurer's report. It was seconded and passed.

Anne Libis –

Anne gave the League of Women Voters' summary, pro's and con's of three amendments which will be voted on during the November General Election.

1. Question 1 – Amendment to the state Constitution which would allow voters to vote outside of their districts and vote up to two weeks prior to the election
2. Question 2 – Amendment to the state Constitution which would issue up to five video lottery (ie slots) licenses to raise money for education and education based capitol projects
3. Question A – Amendment to the Baltimore County Charter to allow a state employee to serve on the County Council.

**James W. Roesner, Supervisor of Assessments,
Baltimore County Assessment Office**

Mr. Roesner provided copies of sample Assessment Notices to the group (see attached). He explained that for assessment purposes Baltimore County is divided into thirds. Group 1 is western Baltimore County which would include the GPCA membership area, Group 2 is central and northern Baltimore County and finally Group 3 includes eastern Baltimore County. Assessments are performed on a three year rotation. This year they have been assessing Group 3. Group 1 will be assessed in 2009.

Assessment of property value is based on recent real estate sales in an given area. It is expected that if current economic trends continue, the market value of more costly homes will decrease and be reassessed at those lower values.

The reassessed value is phased incrementally by thirds over a three year period.

When you receive your annual Annual Assessment notice in late December each year note if there is a difference in your "Taxable Assessments" (boxes 1 and 2) and your total "New Market Value" (box 7). If you qualify for The Homestead Tax Credit, there may be a substantial difference between these amounts. This Credit is like a "reward" for residing on the property you own..

If you do live on the property you own you will likely qualify for The Homestead Credit. This credit does not limit the assessed market value of the property but is actually a credit calculated on any assessment increase exceeding 10% for the state portion of the tax and 4% for the County portion in one year. So, homeowners pay property tax on the value of their property as declared in their previous tax assessment plus any increase in value up to 10% and 4% respectively but nothing more. If the homeowner qualifies, their taxable assessment will be reduced by the amounts of the state and county credits.

To receive the credit, property owners must submit a one-time application certifying that the property is used as their principal residence. Taxpayers are not entitled to the Homestead Tax Credit on rental properties or vacation homes.

Currently 47 people work in the Baltimore County Assessment Office. Of these 3 are dedicated to assessing the value of newly constructed properties, and they are in the field 4 times per year. Again, the majority of assessments of existing homes are based on market values established by home sales in the area and very few on site assessments are performed.

When a homeowner receives the annual assessment, he or she has 45 days to file an appeal. The appeal procedure and application is provided on the reverse side of the annual Assessment Notice. They may choose to appeal by writing to the assessor's office, by telephone, or they may request an in person interview. Mr. Roesner advises against a written appeal unless you can substantiate with evidence the lower value of comparable properties in your neighborhood. The most effective appeals are those heard during an in person interview. The Baltimore County Property Tax Appeals Board consists of 3 people appointed by the County Executive. The property owner may appeal the County Board's decision to the Maryland Tax Court.

If a homeowner feels that the value of their property has decreased after the 45 day deadline for appeal they may a Petition for Reevaluation file "out of cycle" and will have to substantiate their claim.

Mr. Roesner encouraged anyone looking for more information to contact his office by phone at **410-512-4905** or go online. The agency website is:

<http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/budfin/index.html>

Anyone may look up their property tax assessment by logging onto

<http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/budfin/taxsearch/index.html>

More information and brochures pertaining to property taxes may be found on the website for the Baltimore County Office of Finance at: **<http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/Agencies/budfin/finance/taxpayerbrochure.html>**

Old Business

Picnic to be held on October 18, 2008 at Pahl's farm. More cakes would be appreciated.

New Business

On Monday October 6, Cathy Wolfson witnessed a crew subcontracted by BG&E spraying herbicide directly over the stream flowing through the electrical tower right of way in the 3100 block of Granite Road. Subsequently she spoke to Tom Young of BG&E who stated that defoliation maintenance of the power lines was routine and that herbicides were applied on an approximate 5 year rotation. He referred her to Mr. Lynkowski, a forester with Lewis Tree Service (the subcontractor) who advised that the herbicide, a DOW® product called ACCORD™ was approved for use in and around streams by the EPA. The defoliant used in areas outside of streams and wetlands is ROUNDUP™.

Adjourn

Dr. Ramsey moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded and passed. The meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.