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GREATER PATAPSCO COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, INC

Issue # 433

GPCA Newsletter

January 2024



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

General Elections

(including nominations from the floor)

Setting 2024 Agenda & Priorities

(including those of Members)

Monday, January 8, 2024

7:00 PM

@

Social Hall, Granite Presbyterian Church

10637 Old Court Road

We look forward to seeing everyone on January 8!

.....

Upcoming Meetings:

February 12 - Liberty Road Volunteer Firefighters

March 11 – Spring!

From December General Meeting Holiday Party!

There was a brief business meeting to approve November Minutes and to present the slate of officers for 2024: President – vacant, Vice President – Butch Oakman, Treasurer – Cathy Wolfson, Secretary – vacant, Directors – Zulma Santiago, 3rd year, Ralph Wright, 2nd year, Chris Brock, 1st year. Nominations will be taken from the floor at the January meeting.

Night of Peace donations were noted and could still be donated.

The meeting was adjourned and all welcomed for a wonderful Holiday Party featuring a roasted turkey contributed (and carved!) by Senator Ben Brooks as well as lovely dishes and goodies shared by members. It was truly a wonderful evening of greeting and socializing by 45-50 neighbors and friends, and a great way to celebrate and share the holidays.

~ Kathy Skullney



President's Note



New Year Greetings!

Fellow Members, Friends and Neighbors,,

Here we are in the new 2024 year - ready to forge another good year! And a quick look back confirms we closed out 2023 as a pretty good one! We have been able to focus and emphasize our place in Baltimore County by sharing all of the remarkable and unique features we have – including our members! – with various important departments, while having fun with local bee keeping, wine making, special local activities, in particular the Maryland Wing Civil Air Patrol, and don't forget the fabulous picnic at the historic Nike site. In the coming year, we will again use our well known place and voice in the County to participate in the very important CZMP process, continue our efforts to improve traffic issues, focus on important existing land use issues, and always pursue issues brought forward by our

members and neighbors.

We remain committed to providing a good forum to address the larger community concerns of our members and neighbors. And we can never say it enough: our guiding belief is that we are all part of the same community and the more ways we can all get together, the more voices we have, the better! Staying informed and engaged is one of our greatest strengths.

Finally, it has been especially gratifying for me to serve GPCA once again as president for the past year. Since helping to form the association in 1985, I have seen this community grow and come together as a strong community voice, an effective advocate for the importance of what matters to the community, a voice known and respected in Baltimore County....with so much more to come! Greater Granite (the rock and the people!) is magnificent and everlasting!

~ Kathy Skullney, GPCA President

443-838-0861

ksskullney@verizon.net



January 8, 2024 Election of Officers and Directors

GPCA By-Laws direct us to hold annual elections at our January general meeting. To be eligible to serve on the Executive Board candidates must be members of GPCA for a minimum of 6 months immediately preceding the election.

Officers are elected for a one year term. The president may serve for 2 consecutive one year terms and may again become eligible after a one year lapse. Directors serve for 3 year terms and may again become eligible after a one year lapse.

Nominations for Officers and Directors

President – Vacant (this could be YOU)

Vice President – Butch Oakman

Secretary – Vacant (or this could be YOU)

Treasurer – Cathy Wolfson

Director – Zulma Santiago, 3 year term expires January 2025

Director – Ralph Wright, 3 year term expires January 2026

Director – Chris Brock, 3 year term expires January 2027

What's the commitment? In addition to attending GPCA's General Meetings on the 2nds Monday September to June the Board meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 7:00 pm via Zoom. All Officers and Directors shall contribute impartially to decisions of the board and support the objectives of GPCA which per our By-Laws are:

“To preserve and enhance the tranquility and beauty of our rural environment and to encourage orderly and positive growth of the community within the framework of prescribed regulations and laws. The Association shall provide a forum for all residents to express their concerns and interests and shall attempt to provide informative and interesting programs that will keep members informed and better able to address any of their concerns or problems. The Association's objective is also to foster a spirit of community among the residents.”

Nominations of candidates are being taken at this time and will continue until the election when nominations will be taken from the floor (even the virtual floor). If you're interested in serving on the board, would like to nominate a candidate or have any questions about the process please contact me, Cathy Wolfson, Nominating Committee Chair at 410-245-8708 or oakknob@comcast.net. Not ready to make the commitment but want to be involved? Consider serving on the Nominating Committee, we need 2 volunteers!

~ Cathy Wolfson
Chair, Nominating Committee
Treasurer



2024 Comprehensive Zoning Map Process (CZMP)

Every 4 years Baltimore County accepts petitions for zoning changes by anyone on any property within the county regardless of ownership. Nov. 30 marks the end of the filing period for petitions for the 2024 cycle. A single application has been filed within GPCA's boundaries. Issue 4-011 located at 10519 Marriottsville the Braglio Farms event venue and farm store is requesting upzoning of 3.6 acres from RC 2 to BL. In plain terms that's upzoning from Rural Conservation permitting one dwelling per 50 acres to Business Local. Typical uses permitted by right in a BL zone are Retail Sales, Personal Services, Restaurant, Bank, Office, Tavern, Food Store, And Medical Clinic. Other uses are permitted by special exception which requires a hearing by an Administrative Law Judge for approval.

There are a total of 24 issues filed in our district which may be viewed by vising the county's CZMP Hub at <https://comprehensive-zoning-map-process-bc-gis.hub.arcgis.com/> County agencies are reviewing the requests through January and will submit their comments to the Department of Planning for review, whose staff will create a report for each issue. If you have questions regarding specific issues contact our district planner, Daphne Daly at ddaly@baltimorecountymd.gov or 410-887-3480.

Throughout the month of February the Planning Board will hold hearings in each of the 7 Council Districts where citizens may comment on the issues. The hearing for our District 4 issues will be held:

New Town High School
4931 New Town Boulevard
Owings Mills, MD 21117
Tuesday February 20, 2024
6 PM to 9 PM

An online speaker registration will open on the CZMP Hub at 8:30 a.m. two business days prior to the hearing. A confirmation email will be sent after registration with your speaker number and hearing details. Speakers will

speak in the order they have registered on the online signup sheet. Each speaker will be given a total of 2 minutes to speak. The Planning Board requires 20 copies of any materials submitted at the time of the hearing.

Dept. of Planning Staff will submit their recommendations to the Planning Board in March and the Board will submit theirs to the County Council in April. The Council will hold their Public Hearings in June, dates TBD. They must make their decisions by September 16, 2024.

~ Cathy Wolfson

4th District Planning Board Appointee

2023 in Our Community



Special Gratitude to Odd Fellows Lodge #57

Thanks to Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Baltimore City Lodge #57 for your generous donation of **\$250.00** to GPCA. Located at 10613 Old Court Road in Granite, Lodge #57 our Odd Fellows fulfill their mission of Friendship, Love and Truth by donating to organizations like GPCA which

perpetuate their ideals. We endeavor to meet those standards by our actions and activities. We appreciate their support!

~ **Cathy Wolfson**
Treasurer



Newsletter Note

A little over a year ago GPCA decided to part its way with the paper route of the newsletter and go digital. We hope that our readers have enjoyed the new format and we look forward to continuing our newsletter in the upcoming year. We always strive to reach out to the community by obtaining addresses of others who would like to receive our monthly digital letter.

Switching to the new method, using Mailchimp, has certainly had its challenges and involved a number of changes in how the newsletter is produced. Most recently the Board has realized that the method by which we deal with the ads in our newsletter is outdated. This involves not only the pricing but size and format guidelines. GPCA Advertisement Policies and Fees are currently under revision and will be updated for 2024. In advance of this update we feel it is important to highlight some of the details involved in how the newsletter is produced in Mailchimp.

- 1) Advertisements must be received by the **25th of the month** to be published in the following month.
- 2) Ads should be submitted in JPEG or PNG format. Please DO NOT submit your ads in pdf format as this format is not readily used in Mailchimp. Additionally, it is recommended the advertisers limit the wording in the ads as sometimes multi-worded ads are difficult to read. We encourage advertisers to take advantage of the [GPCA local business page](#) on the GPCA website to convey more detailed business information.
- 3) The previous concept of '1/8 page, 1/4 page, 1/2 page, and full page' does not really apply for how the ads are currently produced. In Mailchimp format the ad sizes are better defined as 'half width' or 'whole width'. Half width ad sizing is 3.75 in. wide x 5 inch height; full width ad sizing is 7.5 in. wide x 5 in. height. This sizing will be used to determine the new fee structure for 2024.
- 4) Questions regarding the newsletter or submission of articles or ads should be addressed to editorgpcanewsletter@gmail.com to ensure they are properly received and captured.

We thank all for their patience in the somewhat recent transition of the newsletter to the digital format and hope you will continue to enjoy our upcoming issues. Comments are certainly always welcome and should you like to help out with the digital production of the newsletter we will gladly accept whatever you may be able to do. Feel free to [contact the editor](#) or any of the GPCA Board members with your comments or interests. Thanks and Happy Holidays!

~ Ru-ching Hsia

~ Bill Skullney

What's happening in your HOA, along your roads or near you?

Let your community know!



You are What You Drink – Well Water in Maryland

In 1974 the Safe Drinking Water Act was passed to improve drinking water quality and set a limit for acceptable contaminant levels as provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). However, the EPA does not regulate or monitor the drinking water quality of private wells.

Groundwater sampling across the state suggests that for Marylanders who get their water from individual wells, many are getting a dose of bacteria with each sip.

Supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program, **Andrew Lazur**, University of Maryland Extension (UME) water quality specialist, collected water samples from 75 farm wells statewide in 2022 to analyze for various contamination parameters.

They found that 39% of the wells tested positive for the presence of coliform bacteria, and 10% had evidence of E. coli. The testing illustrates that residents on well water often don't know exactly what's in the water they're drinking, and they are given little guidance on maintenance as they alone are responsible for the quality of their wells, said Lazur. "The well cap could

be cracked, or the casing could have a hole in it where bugs can get in; and bugs can die and fall into the water, causing the bacteria,” he said. “It doesn’t necessarily mean that the septic, or the neighbor’s septic, is contaminating the well, but it is an indicator of a potential problem.”

In addition, about 30% of the tested wells had sodium levels higher than the Environmental Protection Agency’s drinking water advisory levels, 5% had high levels of nitrates, and samples from three wells indicated the presence of arsenic. They found elevated sodium when the home had a water softener system in use. In general, the sodium level was not high enough to affect health but could affect those who are on a low-salt diet. “Most of these things are easy fixes. Sodium can be caused by water softeners used to reduce calcium and scaling in that water, but a homeowner can put in a reverse osmosis filter under their sink for drinking and cooking. If there’s arsenic, there’s a filter for that,” Lazur said. “There’s a filter for everything.”

The presence of bacteria or heavy metals cannot be detected by taste or even odor, so Lazur doesn’t recommend indiscriminately installing filters on the water systems. Instead, he recommends annual water testing by [a certified state lab](#) to determine any potential contaminants and solutions, he said.

“You are what you drink, just as much as you are what you eat,” said Lazur.

You can request information on your well and your septic system by going online to the Baltimore County site at [Request Well and Septic Records - Baltimore County \(baltimorecountymd.gov\)](https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov). They will send you a full report on your well, including its depth and flow rate, and on the location and date your septic system was installed. The report also includes results of any water sample testing done by Baltimore County on your well water.

Reference: *MarylandToday, University of Maryland, Nov 25, 2023. [Maryland Today | New UMD Well Water Data Suggests Contamination...](#)*

~ **Laurie Donnelly**
GPCA Small Watershed Conservation Committee

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