



GREATER PATAPSCO COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, INC.

PO Box 31, Granite, MD 21163

Issue #354

GPCA Newsletter

March 2016

Next Meeting: Monday, March 14th, 7:30 p.m.

GPCA General Meetings are held the second Monday of each month, except July & August, at the Granite Presbyterian Church. Everyone is invited to attend.

Check us out on the web- www.gpcanet.net

**We Welcomed Our District 4
Planning Board Appointee**

At the February General meeting we welcomed Cathy Wolfson, our 4th District Planning Board appointee. Ms. Wolfson reviewed the requirements for filling the Planning Board position including her completion of a required Planning Board education course sponsored by the MD Dept. of Planning. Cathy explained how the Planning Board is responsible for the annual "review" of the capital budget and program. While the Planning Board's role is advisory in nature, it gives the Board substantial influence over the County's investments in capital facilities. County law specifies the procedural steps between the initiation of a proposal (the filing of an application or petition, or the passage of a County Council Resolution) and the ultimate approval decision by an entity in County government (County Executive, County Council, Zoning Commissioner, Hearing Officer or County Board of Appeals). Typically, in each of these procedures, one of the steps involves referral to the Planning Board to give the opportunity for the Board to make recommendations to the decision-making authority.

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Ms Wolfson explained that the "Rain Tax" was successfully removed as a tax on county property owners but may now become a bond issue because the county will still have to pay the federally mandated remediation fee. If it becomes a bond issue it will include interest payments. Cathy also mentioned that air conditioning has become a priority for the school budget and will include facility updates to those schools as well.

Ms. Wolfson also spoke about the 6 year plan budget which runs into the year 2022. This also includes the work going on at the Hernwood Landfill. This capping of the landfill is budgeted through 2022. As we have a Planning Board Comprehensive Zoning Map Process hearing on March 15th at New Town High School, Cathy gave some guidelines for participating in the meetings. These include a 2 minute limit on each speaker, sign in begins at 5 pm, provide 20 copies of your testimony for distribution to the planning board members and the planning dept. personnel. Also, limit the number of issues you address, be clear about the hows and whys of your position and most importantly that the best arguments are those that directly impact the issues.

Cathy closed by encouraging GPCA to continue to closely monitor the CZMP issues as zoning that increases density in the rural areas will have long term impacts on residents.

From the President:

Hello All! Well, we've had an interesting and eventful winter, with all of the extreme temperature fluctuations and the big snow storm. I hope everyone managed the snow situation with as few incidents as possible. Earlier this month, groundhog Punxsutawney Phil didn't see his shadow; hopefully signaling an early spring. Like me, many of you will be relieved to be able to gear up for spring projects, and plan to enjoy the pleasant weather. It also forges the way for our Annual Spring Clean-up in April. I hope to see our Community Pride again this year, and to see a large participation in trash clean-up to keep our community beautiful.

CZMP 2016 Planning Board Public Hearing is quickly coming up also. This allows citizens to express their interests, and concerns with issues that have been filed affiliated with up-zoning in our area. One issue effecting our GPCA area is issue #4-001 (9155 Old Court Rd.), is to up-zone to 17.63 acres from RC2 to RC5. This would allow for developing MORE housing on the 17.63 acres than originally planned. If you are interested in maintaining the rural beauty, and wildlife of this area that will be affected by the increase in development, you will want to oppose the up-zoning of this area. Keep in mind that any additional up-zoning in our already congested area

— (continued on page 2

Continued From the President on Page 1

-will affect traffic flow in the area. This will obviously affect accident occurrence, littering/dumping, road maintenance etc.

Patapsco Glen Development Update

Plans are under consideration for a townhouse community called Patapsco Glen on Johnnycake Road within the boundaries of the Patapsco Granite Area Community Plan which was adopted by the County Council in 1998 and became part of the county's Master Plan. Development within the Plan area is supposed to be consistent with the area's rural character and provide for conservation in the face of pressure from developers. This development would include 368 townhouses, an urban type of density. In addition, the developers have requested more than 1,400 variances, deviations from zoning and building regulations. Some variances applied to every unit!

GPCA members opposed the Patapsco Glen development and variances at an Administrative Hearing Officer's Hearing on January 22, 2016. A project with this kind of density (and the enormous number of variances) conflicts with the rural character of the contiguous properties zoned RC6 which are also within the Community Plan area.

Cathy Wolfson was appointed to represent the GPCA at the hearing in our opposition to Patapsco Glen. Cathy and Kathy Skullney testified on our behalf at the hearing. Cathy Wolfson submitted written comments, a copy of the Patapsco/Granite Area Community Plan map, and a schedule of the requested variances detailing the number of units impacted by each variance. At our Feb. 8 General Meeting the membership voted to concur with and join Kathy Skullney's Memorandum of Opposition she submitted to the hearing officer. The case should be decided on or about March 1.

The wealth of issues that conflict with the community plan were presented at the hearing by Cathy Wolfson and Kathy Skullney. We thank them for their days of hard work, and we thank the other GPCA members who attended the Hearing Officer's Hearing on the day of The Blizzard of a Generation. Our objections have true merit and construction of Patapsco Glen should not move forward as proposed. We are prepared to file an appeal, if necessary. A copy of the Patapsco/Granite Area Community Plan is on our website at www.gpca.net. Denise Maranto

Membership Report

Thanks for the support of your membership dues received from January 27, 2016 through February 20, 2016. We appreciate the renewals and we welcome new members. Members renewing include: Bonnie Kahler, Ernest and Dorothy Farmer, Doug and Stacy Wolinski, Howard and Jacquelyn Cornish, Scott Osbourne and Margaret McCann-Osbourne, John and Marie Cignatta, Barbara McKnight, Bob and Winona Hocutt, Roberta Stansfield and Michael Kahn. Thanks to the members who included an additional donation. Memberships received after the 20th of February will be posted in the April newsletter. You can also use the form on the back of this newsletter to join. Membership questions? Contact me, Maribeth Diemer at 410-461-4988 or Maribeth-13@att.net. Mail your membership payments to GPCA c/o Maribeth Diemer, 10625 St. Paul Avenue, Woodstock, MD 21163 or GPCA, PO Box 31, Woodstock, MD 2116.

If you're outside of our bulk mail delivery area and wish to receive the newsletter please mail your name, address and payment of \$6 to cover postage for an annual subscription of 11 issues (no July issue) to GPCA, PO Box 31, Woodstock, MD 21163. THANKS! Maribeth Diemer, Treasurer.

Pink Geraniums

A potted geranium sitting on the plant shelves in the sunroom has quietly put out a few blooms. I did not think much about it at first. When I brought the plant into the house in October I was skeptical about its survival. I am usually able to kill off most of my potted plants through the winter because I fail to water them with any consistency. But since they are potted, I feel bad when I let them get frosted and I think, "I should have moved that last night." There is only so much room in the house, even with the wide windowsills of an old house; I cannot even reach some of the plants once I put them there.

Little by little pots dry out and plants cannot be revived with a dripping flood of water when I finally notice the desiccated and dropping leaves. I think the pink geranium put out a bloom almost immediately upon coming into the house. It had been in a shady spot on the front porch all summer. The sudden bath of light in the sunroom all day in late fall encouraged it. And I thought that was that.

Skipping forward, the blizzard came. The plant had been in the house for three months and had not died from my lack of care yet. Still holding the faded petals of its last two blossoms, a fresh one opened up. There it is in my sunroom, freshly pink and blooming and its sister plant in a smaller pot in the kitchen window with one of those wide sills made the same decision to put out a flower in the face of the glare from the snow covered side yard. Flowers are blooming in windows with snow covering the world outside for the next two weeks. Yes, two weeks later there are splotches of grass appearing here and there. But I see this contrast of a fresh flower against a white backdrop. I think that might be the definition of "juxtaposition." And the snow came again, and again, and the geraniums held.

Blooming flowers remind me that spring will come again during the bleak cold days of a snow covered world. The mud will dry, the grass will grow. I would like to feel a little more inspired about the coming year, the change of seasons and the return of kids to the farm. I think about setting eggs in the incubator, I wonder about ordering a new breed of chicks. It is just mid-February as I write this and I am not quite ready to put the key in the ignition, so to speak, to get started. I think we call this hibernation.

Sometimes I think we make so many plans for so long, handle decision making, solve problems, generate ideas, and overcome obstacles that we just get used up. The river runs dry. Yet, by being that way, the person who 'handles things' the people around you get used to you doing all that. They have a habit of waiting for you to tell them, when really you would like to hear from them. How do you reverse the flow? Habits of being wear tracks in our lives and sometimes those tracks become ruts; scars on our internal landscape and calluses from overuse. Spring is on the horizon. I want new growth, fresh flowers; time to dig a new garden and follow a fresh trail. If change is a constant, it should not be that hard to be slightly different this year.

Brenda Creighton

GPCA's Annual Community Clean-Up

Saturday April 9th, 2016

8 am to 12 noon

Meet at St. Alphonsus Church parking lot

Be part of this positive Community Event

Join friends and neighbors for our annual clean-up!

Your community association provides the necessary safety vests and trash bags for each team. Dumpsters are provided by the county for general refuse only.

Remember

- no hazardous stuff
- no flammable material, no paints or oil
- metal items in designated container (no fridges or air conditioners)
- tires found on roadsides will be collected separately

New Law Prohibits

- electronics (computer equipment, TVs, VCRs, phones, stereos etc.)

Put together a team of friends from your HOA or neighborhood and donate a couple hours to keeping our hills and valleys beautiful.

Call or email me if you have any questions. Thanks for your community support,

Carol Link, GPCA Clean Up coordinator

(410) 465-4369 or email linkgang87@gmail.com

DONATIONS NEEDED- basic sandwiches, chips and cookies- contact Carol Link at linkgang87@gmail.com

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What's Happening in the Area**At the Howard County Conservancy:**

Mar. 11 The Art of Stewardship- presentation and art sale,
Friday 7 PM \$

Mar. 12 Nature-Inspired Writing: Family Hike Sat. 10 AM FREE

April 9 Powerful Pollinators and People: Build Bee Boxes
Sat. 10 AM FREE

More information? Phone: 410-465-8877

www.hcconservancy.org

At the Carrie Murray Nature Center:

Mar. 12 Creative Creatures Sat. 11AM- 2PM

Mar. 19 An Equinox Gathering Sat. 6PM - 9PM

Apr. 8 Basket Bingo Fri. 6PM- 9PM

Apr. 9 Microscopes and Mini-beasts Sat. 12PM - 2PM

More information? Phone: 410-396-0808

www.carriemurraynaturecenter.org

A Venerable Old Friend

It's been a strange winter; a little too snappy and unpredictable. Sitting at the fireside looking out apprehensively at my hives, I remember that nearby in the silent, frozen wetlands of our neighborhood, a flower is pushing up the pollen. It is the Eastern Skunk Cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*), our earliest blooming native wildflower. It is a venerable old friend.

Through ice and snow it pushes up and flowers allowing winter starved honeybees to find pollen on that rare warm day! As early as February, the flower structures are visible above the wetland floor. Strange looking blooms with leathery, mottled purple hoods surround a stubby stalk covered with tiny pollen producing flowers.

Eastern Skunk Cabbage is one of a few crazy heat generating plants beating the cold to be first in line for pollinator services. Thermogenesis is routine for us mammals, birds and honeybees, but insane for a plant! When it fires up the metabolism, the flower temperatures can exceed surrounding air temperatures by 80°F.

Plant heat not only breaks through the snow, it also diffuses pollinator-attracting aroma chemicals into the air. The wide dispersal of this *eau de skunk* brilliantly attracts pollinators while simultaneously sending larger critters (like you and me) running away from the fragile spring wetlands.

The soil it loves is wet in spring and remains moist year round. It is difficult to propagate because it has contractile roots that pull the plant deeper into the soft soil. Yes, it grows downward not upward! It's not difficult to imagine the devastation of a bulldozer on the land where the skunk cabbages grow.

Now you know why I call this old honeybee friend, venerable!

Carol Link, Master Gardner and Beekeeper

Gun Regulations for Baltimore County (continued from 2015 Presidents' article):

I stated that one of the topics for November's General Meeting was target shooting on private property in Baltimore County. Some GPCA residents over the years have had concerns about residents discharging firearms in their neighborhood. I did some research and found the county code that will clear up some questions as to what is allowed. There are also Maryland Hunting regulations which can be viewed thru the Department of Natural Resources web site. You can obtain a printed copy where hunting licenses are sold, Titled 'Maryland Guide to Hunting & Trapping'.

Here are some prohibited actions but not all. 1) Hunting any game bird or mammal while under the influence of alcohol or narcotic drug 2) Hunting or Trapping on private land without written permission of the land owner 3) Hunting on Sundays w/ exceptions 4) Having a loaded firearm in, or leaning against any vehicle. This includes ammunition in the magazine or muzzleloader ready to fire 5) Shooting on, from or across any public road 6) Hunting, trapping or shooting at wildlife within 150 yards of an occupied building or camp without the permission of the owner or occupant. 7) Discharging a firearm within 300 yards of a public or nonpublic school while hunting. This prohibition only applies during school hours or when the building is occupied. This safety zone does not apply to colleges, universities, or home schools.

§ 17-2-101. Discharging Firearm or weapon in Metropolitan District.

(a) *Prohibition.* Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, a person may not fire or discharge a crossbow, pistol, air pistol, gas-propelled pistol, rifle, air rifle, gas-propelled rifle, or shotgun within:

- (1) The limits of the metropolitan district of the county;
- (2) A no district enclave within the metropolitan district; or
- (3) An appendage attached to the metropolitan district.

(b) *Duty to post metropolitan district.* The Police Department shall post in the county courthouse and in every police station and substation throughout the county, accurate maps designating the locations of the boundary lines of the metropolitan district established according to the Code.

(c) *Exception.* This section does not prohibit:

- (1) A licensed hunter from discharging a shotgun, properly hunting in season using a shotgun that contains no heavier than No. 2 shot; or

- (2) A person from discharging or firing a crossbow, pistol, air pistol, gas-propelled pistol, rifle, air rifle, gas-propelled rifle, or shotgun:

(i) On a permanently located, properly posted, and bona fide target range, the location of which has been filed with the Police Department;

(ii) When reasonably necessary for the defense of life or property;

(iii) As part of a military occasion when the discharge is done under the orders of a commanding officer; or

(iv) As part of a deer cooperator program under the authority granted to the Department of Natural Resources, in cooperation with the county, to reduce the wildlife population of protected wildlife determined to be overpopulated.

(d) *Automatic weapons.*

- 1) In this subsection "automatic weapon" means any weapon

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capable of firing multiple shots with one depression of the trigger(2)

Except as provided in subsection (c) of this section, a person may not fire or discharge an automatic weapon in the county.

(1988 Code, § 20-41) (Bill No. 169-93, § 1, 1-27-1994; Bill No. 114-99, § 3, 7-1-2004; Bill No. 13-00, § 1, 3-10-2000; Bill No. 73-03, § 22, 7-1-2004; Bill No. 21-11, § 1, 6-20-2011)

Editor's Corner

I felt there is one issue I should address this month. There is the unusual amount of construction-type activity in and around the Hernwood landfill off of Hernwood Road. More than a few GPCA members have expressed concern and alarm, many remembering the battle over ten years ago to close the landfill due to violations related to improper materials being placed in the Hernwood landfill, concerns with runoff and contamination of the watershed.


I don't have a detailed report but here is the information I have been able to learn. The Hernwood landfill was never capped. The state of MD is requiring that Baltimore County do ongoing site remediation in compliance with MD Dept. of the Environment consent order which includes upgrading the leachate treatment facility and ongoing engineering services. Baltimore Co. has budgeted for the capping of Hernwood landfill over a period of 6 years ending in 2022. GPCA will continue to monitor the project and keep our GPCA area residents informed as we learn of new developments related to the project.

Special thanks to Paul Dorsey for printing the newsletter and to Marty Kelley, Marcia Brown, Eileen Ciechanowski and Jackie Webster for folding.

CALLING ALL GPCA AREA ENTREPRENEURS

The GPCA Board has designated the April 11, 2016 meeting as an Entrepreneur's Night. Six businesses will have a chance to pitch their products or services to those in attendance. Presenters will be allotted 10 minutes.

If interested, call Marty Kelley at 410-461-5605 to sign up. Preference will be given to businesses that are new to the area or have not presented at a previous GPCA meeting. A list of the presenters will be in the April issue. Please respond by March 20th.



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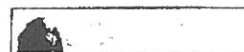
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P.O. Box 31
Granite, MD 21163

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

UPCOMING DATES TO NOTE:
Meeting - MONDAY, March 14th;
Director of the Dept. of the Environment
Spring Cleanup- SATURDAY April 9th

Please print	GPCA
	Membership Application
Name	_____
Address	_____ _____ _____
Phone	_____
Email	_____
Yearly membership dues: Joint - \$30 Individual - \$20	
____ I'm new in the community.	
Mail completed application and check to: GPCA, PO Box 31, Granite, MD 21163	

GPCA Officers and Board of Directors

President: Butch Oakman 443-314-6415 oakelectric@comcast.net
Vice President: George Jones 410-655-8307 jessier100@hotmail.com
Secretary: Denise Maranto 443-695-5409 denise.maranto@gmail.com
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Barbara Warnock 443-200-3353 barbarawarnock@comcast.net
Editor: Marie Cignatta 443-717-0208 mcig123@yahoo.com

GPCA ADVERTISING/ARTICLE/LETTER POLICY

GPCA reserves the right to accept or refuse advertising.

To place an ad: Send the ad copy by email as a pdf. or a jpeg. attachment to the Editor by the 20th of the month prior to publishing. Include information on the size desired.

Payments for ads: Make check payable to GPCA and send to PO Box 31, Woodstock, MD 21163 prior to publication deadline. Checks should indicate **ad size and months to be published**.

Rates and ad sizes: 1/8 page = \$15; 1/4 page = \$30; 1/2 page = \$50; full page = \$80. Personal ads up to one column inch: \$3 for GPCA members and \$5 for non-members. Ads should avoid excessive dark areas that do not copy well.

For articles and letters: These submissions to the newsletter become the property of GPCA unless otherwise agreed upon. Deadline for these is the 20th of the month previous to publication. GPCA reserves the right to accept, reject, edit, or hold for a subsequent newsletter any submission.