



GPCA

GREATER PATAPSCO COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, INC.

PO Box 31, Granite, MD 21163

Issue #374

GPCA Newsletter

January 2018

Next Meeting: Monday, January 8, 7:30 p.m.

Rashein Gibbs, Business Community Liaison Director, Woodstock Job Corps Center

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

Visit us on the Web at www.GPCA.net

2018 Election of Officers and Directors at January 8 Meeting

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 at least 6 months immediately preceding the election. Officers are elected for a 1-year term and directors for 3-year terms. The president may serve for 2 consecutive 1-year terms and may again become eligible after a 1-year lapse. There are no term limits for other officers. Nominations of candidates are being taken at this time and will continue up to the evening of the election when nominations will be taken from the floor. Please let me know if you're interested in serving or have any questions about the process. Please consider serving on the Nominating Committee, we need one more volunteer. Contact committee chair Murf Moorefield at caldron@verizon.net or 443-200-3353 for more information or to nominate a candidate.

Proposed slate of officers: President-Cathy Wolfson; Vice President-George Jones; Treasurer-Maribeth Diemer; Secretary-Denise Maranto; Directors: Vacant - for 3 year term expiring in January 2021

December's Meeting Focuses On Proposed Solar "Farms"

Our December 11 meeting was short and revolved around the new solar farms proposed for the GPCA area. BGE has a pilot program for the arrays, but a County Council resolution mandates the arrays be allowed only by special exception. These arrays are proposed to be located on Old Court Road across from Polly Hill, on Ridge Road, across from Diamond Ridge Golf Course, on Dogwood Road, and on Old Court Road between Dogwood and Granite Roads. Although the arrays involve impervious surfaces, they promote green energy. We learned at a hearing on December 4 that no residence will be allowed in addition to the solar arrays at the property across from Polly Hill. We do not know if residences will be allowed at the other locations.

At the hearing, we raised an objection based on visibility of the solar arrays from the road. A six-foot fence, topped with barbed wire, is planned to enclose the arrays. We asked for slatting in the fence to improve the lack of visibility from the road. At the December 11 meeting, there was a suggestion that we ask for native plants as part of the landscaping around the fence. Right now, a mix of evergreens and deciduous trees is planned. The Department of Natural Resources may have made planting recommendations. (Continued on page 2)

What's Inside?

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From the President:

Writing just before Christmas and wondering what 2018 will bring. Last year, we formed a Small Watershed Action Committee that organized the cleanup along Dogwood Run and continues to support its mission posting monthly articles in this newsletter and providing us with interesting speakers. Mark March 12 on your calendar when we host Bill Rees, recently retired from BGE who will speak on the environmental benefits of meadow management for open spaces vs. routine mowing. We also amended our By-Laws, which truly only required some minor tweaking since their adoption in 1985!

This is an election year that will bring a significant change in county leadership as two-term county executive Kevin Kamenetz's term expires. He turns his attention to Annapolis while District 2 Councilwoman Vicki Almond aspires to his vacancy along with fellow Democratic candidates Johnny Olszewski and Jim Brochin. Republican candidates Al Redmer, Jr. and Del. Pat McDonough have also joined the race. New for 2018 local elections will be a race for school board candidates for each of the seven councilmanic districts. The board will be composed of seven elected members: one from each district, four members appointed by the Governor, and 1 student member. With the exception of the student member all terms are for 4 years. A School Board Nominating Commission has been appointed to select nominees for appointment to the Governor. Their first meeting was held on December 4 and they must hold two public hearings on the selection of nominees to recommend to the Governor.

Speaking of schools, many of those that serve our area have been underperforming for far too long. If you are interested in forming a schools committee to better understand the challenges our schools endeavor to overcome and to lend our advocacy to improving them, please contact me. Our community is a fantastic place to raise children and there are far too few of them here.

I had the pleasure of representing GPCA at an event in December hosted by the Baltimore County Department of Planning to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Baltimore County's Urban Rural Demarcation Line (URDL).

Our county is distinguished nationwide for the effectiveness of this policy that preserves critical natural and agricultural resources while maximizing investments in infrastructure by concentrating development in urban areas.

The first of four hearings to permit by special exception "solar farms" in our area was held on December 6. The exception has been granted and the facility at 9155 Old Court Road will be developed. I am not sure of the construction schedule at this time, but will keep you posted. As of this writing, hearing dates for the remaining facilities have not been scheduled.

Last but not least, thanks to all of you who donated items to Night of Peace Family Shelter. Cleaning and laundry products, personal care items, and other things were delivered on December 14th and warmly received by the staff.

Looking forward to working for GPCA in 2018. There's no place like Granite!

Cathy Wolfson, President, 410-245-8708

December's Meeting Focuses on Proposed Solar "Farms" (Continued from front page)

We are in the Baltimore County Master Plan as a conservancy area and should have input about possible effects of the solar arrays. Legislation calls for review of the effect of the arrays. The Sierra Club, the solar industry, and Valley Planning have been assigned to do the reviews, but we will approach Julian Jones, our 4th District Councilman, with the request that solar array issues be evaluated by the communities where the arrays are located.

We also need clarification about variances in development requests. Granting of variances has been more and more frequent, while, legally, variances should be allowed infrequently. Most of the time, when there is a problem with land use in our area, it is because of variances.

The board and members of GPCA send our sincere condolences to the family of Mr. and Mrs. Lonnie Brown on the passing of their son, Michael.

State Parks Call for Teen Rangers

In 2018, Patapsco Valley State Park and Soldiers Delight Natural Environment Area are introducing a new program specifically designed for teen volunteers, ages 14-17.

The parks are looking for help on days when schools are closed. All hours worked will count toward both community service hours and volunteer ranger status. Teens may also participate in other events to earn more hours.

After completing 40 hours, volunteers will receive a teen ranger shirt; 100 hours earns free entry into **all** state parks!

Please call 410-461-5005 or email to volunteerpatapsco.dnr@maryland.gov for additional information or to register.

January 15: Teen Rangers First Meeting

8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at Park Headquarters
(*Rain or shine*)

To start things off, volunteers will meet in the Hollofield Area for introductions and to talk about the program. Then, we will start repairs on a rainwater run-off area and install a new border.

In the Parks

Program Calendar

Jan. 10: Winter Wonderland Walk

2-3:30 p.m. at Soldiers Delight (*Shine only*)

Bundle up and experience a winter wonderland! Wear sturdy shoes and join a ranger on a leisurely 2.5-mile hike along the Serpentine Trail. We'll discuss wildlife, history and more! Don't forget to bring water.

Jan. 13: Stargazing

8-10 p.m. at Soldiers Delight (*Rain or shine*)

Once again it is time to join us in our journey through the night sky. Join the Westminster Astronomical Society while we look at the universe around us, including the winter Milky Way, Orion and Uranus. Telescopes will be provided.

Jan. 15: Teen Ranger Work Day

8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (*Rain or shine*)

This is a full-day volunteer opportunity designed for teenagers 14-18 looking for service hours. After completing 40 hours of service working outdoors, volunteers will receive a shirt. Those who complete 100 hours within a year are eligible for a free entry to all Maryland state parks.

Jan. 15: Winter Wonders

10-11 a.m. at Soldiers Delight (*Rain or shine*) Let it snow! Cozy up for a story and songs of nature's wonders this winter. We'll make a sparkly winter scene and dance to snowflake music. Ages 7 and up. \$2/person.

Jan. 16: MLK Service Project

10 a.m.-noon at Buzzards Rocks Trailhead (*Shine only*) Want to give back to the park? Come and join the Maryland Conservation Corps for a cleanup of a popular attraction in the park. We will pick up trash and remove graffiti. Volunteers should bring work gloves, sturdy shoes, warm clothes and water. Tools will be provided.

Jan. 20: Winter Birding

8-10 a.m. at Soldiers Delight (*Shine only*)

Join a local ornithologist for a 2.5-mile hike through grasslands and woods searching for wintering birds. We'll practice sight and sound identification, and learn how birds survive the winter outside. No experience necessary; all skill levels are welcome. Bring binoculars and wear good hiking shoes.

Jan. 21: Squirrel Appreciation Day

11 a.m.-1p.m. at Hilton Nature Center (*Rain or shine*)

It's Squirrel Appreciation Day! Celebrate by learning about squirrels and how they help the park. We'll have activities and go on a short hike to observe squirrels in the wild. This program is eligible for the Junior Rangers Model B Program.

Jan. 24: Wildlife in Winter

11 a.m.-1 p.m. at Hilton Nature Center (*Rain or shine*)

Discover how birds, foxes and other wildlife spend their winter in the park and how they are adapted to the cold. Includes activities, crafts and a short walk to look for signs of wildlife. \$2/craft.

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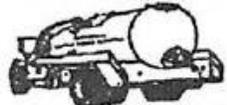
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Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Small Watershed Community Committee (SWCC) Doo Good!

While our dogs are full of unconditional love, their feces are full of nutrients, pathogens, bacteria, and viruses. A single gram of dog poo *can* contain 23 million fecal coliform bacteria that *can* cause diarrhea, cramps, intestinal illnesses, and kidney issues. Dog waste also contains the nutrients phosphorus and nitrogen. When it rains or the snow melts, dog waste sitting in the yard or along the trail gets carried to storm drains, streams, and ultimately the rivers and Chesapeake Bay. Dog feces have a higher phosphorous concentration than cow and swine manure. Phosphorus and nitrogen act as fertilizer in our waterways causing algae to grow and limiting the oxygen available to fish.

So what can you do?

- Always pick up your dog's waste in the yard and throw it away.
- Take extra poop bags with you on walks so that you are prepared and can share with others.
- Do NOT leave used poop bags along your walking route.
- Inform your friends, family, and neighbors about properly disposing pet waste.

Tips:

- Keep poop bags near the door or leash to help you remember to take them on walks and potty trips.
- Keep a trash can with a lid and foot press outside to make disposing of poop bags convenient. Line it with grocery bags or trash bags to make emptying easier.

There are also services for hire that will pick up the doggie doo doo in your yard or community.

Sources: <http://www.keepitcleanpartnership.org/pollution-prevention/scoop-the-poop/>
<http://www.stormwater.allianceforthebay.org/ta-ke-action/habits-to-help/pet-waste>

Please look for this column each month to learn how you can help reduce stormwater runoff. Everyone is welcome to join SWCC.

Anna Schrad, SWCC Member

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YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

UPCOMING DATES TO NOTE:

GPCA General Meeting – January 8, 2018
Martin Luther King Jr. Day – January 15

GPCA Membership Application

Please Print Name

Address

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Yearly membership dues:
Joint - \$30 Individual - \$20

I'm new in the community.

Mail completed application and check to:
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GPCA Officers and Board of Directors

President: Cathy Wolfson 410-245-8708, oakknob@comcast.net

Vice President: George Jones 410-655-8307

tessier100@hotmail.com

Secretary: Denise Maranto 443-695-5409

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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 attachment where possible 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 GPCA, P.O. Box 31, Woodstock, MD 21163 **prior to publication deadline.** Checks should indicate ad size and months to be published. **No payment received = no ad placement.**

Rates and ad sizes: 1/8 page = \$15; 1/4 page = \$30; 1/2 page = \$50. 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.