

Brookdale Citizens' Association Annual Meeting
May 17, 2006
Minutes

Dave Montgomery, the President, convened the meeting at a little past 7:30. The minutes from the 2005 annual meeting were distributed and accepted.

Dave presented the Treasurer's report on behalf of Suzanne Richman, who was unable to make the meeting. The Association has a balance of \$13,224 compared to \$11,171 last year. A more detailed account is reported on the Association's website.

Dave summarized the Executive Committee's work over the past year, highlighting its focus on better communication with the membership and its concern with traffic. With respect to the former, Dave pointed to the continued publication of *The Bugle* as a primary source of information for the community, noted that the Brookdale website is now receiving more hits, and pointed to the Brookdale Citizen Association listserve which is now up. He also noted that summaries of the Executive Committee's meetings are now placed on the website after each meeting. For those who want to communicate via e-mail about community affairs in a secure manner, a system has been set up through Yahoo, but Dave noted only a small number of residents have made use of this. Finally, with respect to communications, a page introducing Brookdale to newcomers is now available on the web site and can be downloaded and printed. With respect to traffic, Dave noted that a stripe will shortly be painted on River Road at Baltimore to discourage River Road traffic from blocking traffic exiting from Baltimore.

Marie Moylan moved an amendment to the Association bylaws that would permit one of the four members of the Nominating Committee to be serving as a member of the Executive Committee (currently no member of the Nominating Committee may be serving on the Executive Committee). The amendment was seconded and passed unanimously.

Dave then called upon Mike Makuch, the Chair of the Nominating Committee to present the slate of officers for next year. Mike thanked the other members of the Nominating Committee (Pat Kitchen, Mike Becnel, and Elsa Skaggs) and presented the proposed slate:

President: Steve Heyman
VP Brookdale N Marie Moylan
VP Brookdale S. Barbara Ingersoll
VP Orcharddale: Marina Bowsler
VP Wohlshire Eric Wallgren
Treasurer Suzanne Richman
Secretary: Sara Jessup

The slate was elected unanimously.

Bob Olins then gave an update of the development planning for the Westbard shopping area. He urged Brookdale residents to make their views known on a survey from the Citizens Coordinating Committee for Friendship Heights (CCCFH) about preferences for development in Westbard. The survey can be accessed at www.westbard.org. Bob noted that there is currently no proposal on the table from the developer but that responses to the survey will help CCCFH in future negotiations with the developer.

Bob Cope, one of Brookdale's two representatives on CCCFH then gave a report on progress of development in the community. He noted that people will begin moving into the condo building on the old Washington Medical Center site in January, 2007; that stores will begin moving into the new Wisconsin Circle development and opening during this summer (including a large Giant with a pharmacy); that Hechts' will close at the end of July

and digging on the Hechts' site will begin in early 2007; that the current Metro entrance on the NW corner of Wisconsin and Western will be closed for the construction; and that Bloomingdales will open on the new site (Western and Friendship) around Easter of next year. In response to questions, he said that the drop-off on Wisconsin Avenue next to Hechts' will disappear, although an additional lane will be added to Wisconsin there at which drop-offs could occur.

Bob also noted that the County will start developing a new sector plan for the Westbard area in 2007 and that the plan will be for both sides of River Road, not solely the side on which the current large shopping center is located. He also observed that the Lord and Taylors store is likely to close in the not too distant future. There is no apparent movement on the GEICO site, and Bob said it may be that they will decide not to move and engage in the development for which they have permission. Finally, Bob said that the new community center, which will be on the Hechts' site as a concession to the community, will be exactly like the Leland community center in terms of size and facilities.

Larry Howe then discussed capital improvement activity occurring in Brookdale. The County will be replacing existing curbs under the "Renew Montgomery" program. In addition, it is possible for neighborhoods that do not have curbs to petition for curbs to be installed. Such a petition will activate a study to determine whether new curbs are technically feasible on the streets. If they are, the County will put them in.

Gwen Lewis reported that the long effort, led by Fiona Carson and herself, to install new playground equipment in Brookdale Park, appears about to come to fruition. The County has now begun a process that should result in the new equipment being installed by this September.

Dave then discussed proposals that will be made to the County Council that would set up Neighborhood Conservation Districts for neighborhoods in the County in which the majority of houses were more than 50 years old. Dave noted that under the proposals being discussed, Brookdale would qualify. In such districts "floating zones" would be superimposed over existing zoning. Dave noted that, although legislation had not yet been even introduced, much less passed, Neighborhood Conservation Districts might be a means for the community to address the McMansionization problem.

Dave then introduced Steve Heyman to lead a discussion of the pros and cons of the Brookdale neighborhood incorporating as a municipality as a means of gaining greater control of land use within the area. Steve said that the Executive Committee had been discussing the possibility of incorporation but had not reached any conclusions nor was it making any recommendations. Instead it wanted to introduce the idea to the broader community and begin discussion about it. Steve then reviewed the pros and cons of incorporation and led a vigorous discussion. Potential advantages discussed included control over land use and other local services (to the extent the community wished to substitute for County services) and noted that a portion of the County share of the income tax would automatically pass through to a municipality. Concerns were expressed about adding another layer of government, the possibility of additional taxation, and the time commitment of members of the community that incorporation would require in terms of actually governing a municipality. Steve observed that there was currently a similar debate, albeit at a more advanced stage, occurring in the Rollingwood area and that those interested should look at the Rollingwood website for a good discussion of the pros and cons. He also urged people to look at the website of the Maryland Municipal League for information about the process of incorporation and what incorporation implies.

Dave thanked the many people who had worked on Brookdale Community Association affairs over the past year.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:07.

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