

Greater Wilton Woods Citizens Association Meeting – November 16, 2010

Larry opened the meeting at 7:34.

Larry presented a bouquet of flowers to Marion Moon for her generous installation of the split rail fence at Florence Lane and Telegraph Road. It looks lovely! Thank you!

Grace McCabe from the Edison All Night Grad Party came to the meeting to present a brief description of the party and what it is about. GWWCA donates \$100 to the cause each year. The party provides a safe alternative to on seniors on graduation night to other parties that might involve unsafe activities such as alcohol consumption.

Mt. Vernon Crime Prevention Officer Greg Kotteman came to speak to the group. A summary of his updates and answers to questions:

- Rose Hill homicide—two people have been arrested
- Mt. Vernon district has not seen a significant escalation of crime in the past year.
- Reminders to lock cars, doors to homes, etc. Most break-ins are in unlocked cars and homes at night!!
- Report all suspicious activity *when* you see it happen.
- Officer Kotteman confirmed that all FCPD districts will send a crime prevention officer to private homes upon request to provide a free security survey. They will give advice on locks, lighting, placement of bushes, etc. Please contact the FCPD to make an appointment.
- When away from home, tell a trusted neighbor so they can keep an eye out; leave pets at home and hire trusted sitters. This increases traffic to and from home. Stopping mail and paper is not recommended because it requires that you inform strangers of your plans to be away. Place exterior lights on light-sensitive detectors so that lights go on at night. Exterior lights should be used every night—they can help alert neighbors to suspicious activity. Use alarm systems when possible.
- There is some gang activity in the county, but FCPD has a full-time, aggressive gang unit that has made a big difference. Each station has a dedicated gang coordinator.
- Non-emergency number is 703-691-2131.
- Are car thefts off Florence Lane related to others nearby, such as on Franconia Rd? No; this type of crime is a *crime of opportunity* and it happens everywhere. Again, locking doors and not keeping valuables in sight are the best deterrents.
- How frequently do cruisers go through neighborhoods? At any given time, there are 10-12 officers in Mt Vernon on duty. They go through communities as often as possible, but receiving calls from concerned citizens is essential to having the patrols if residents feel they are needed.
- My Neighborhood site—keep in mind that the information is not always complete and can result in misleading conclusions.

Larry presented the amended by-laws for GWWCA for approval by vote. He asked if there were any questions, and there were none. Sam confirmed that a quorum was present. Motion was made to adopt the new by-laws, votes were counted, and the by-laws were approved.

Larry presented results of the survey from last summer. One concern expressed was not enough time at meetings for members to express issues of importance. This led to several issues of discussion. Catherine Foltz, GWWCA Land Use rep, helped Larry with the details related to her work on the Land Use Committee.

- One of the members asked about the bus traffic on Telegraph Road if the new facility on Cinderbed Road is built. (The agenda emailed to the community had included a link to a press release about this.) Larry noted that in the Lee District Land Use Committee the night before, the applicant WMATA had agreed to proffer that no buses would be using Telegraph Road to get to starting or finishing points for the day. Catherine Foltz explained that she and Larry as land use representatives had protested the addition of more bus traffic on Telegraph Road. In the intervening week, WMATA determined to distribute bus traffic from Route 1 rather than Telegraph Road except for those buses which are local to Telegraph Rd.
- Costco at old Multiplex theatres: going to the Planning Commission in late Feb. 2011. The project is still in FYI status; no formal application is filed. There is currently no expressed opposition.
- Telegraph Rd widening? There are currently no plans or funding for widening to occur north of Kings Highway—no funds for a complicated project.
- Penn Daw task force: first meeting on December 2. This group will provide input to the county on plans for the shopping center.
- Ken Clare brought up several issues of concern. Melissa Lakey (Chair, Neighborhood Liaison and Welfare) recorded them for follow-up.
- Larry explained the Community Parking District law to the membership. No commercial vehicles are permitted to park overnight on the street.
- Someone asked about the fence at Browne Academy. Browne does allow residents to walk through the gate.
- Someone asked whether the sidewalk in progress on Florence Lane will be extended further down to Shaffer Dr. Unfortunately, the county doesn't currently have the funding to bring the sidewalk down that far, but Jeff McKay's office is aware of the community's desire for this when funding becomes available.

Larry discussed last summer's GWWCA survey to members.

- Some people don't attend because they don't drive at night. Larry asked for volunteers willing to give rides to meetings. Several people are willing to help—contact Larry if interested!
- People provided input on their interest level of specific meeting topics and speakers.
- Members are invited to offer specific items and topics for discussion at meetings. Some already suggested are real estate trends in our area, personal stories about our area; crime and traffic issues; clean-up and landscaping of median strips; discussions on marine clay; police helicopters at night; aggregate housing maintenance needs across GWWCA homes to acquire discounts from vendors. All of this either has or will be discussed and considered.
- Some suggestions include: community bulletin board for lost pets, etc.; current GWWCA efforts; contact information for key people; contractors and service providers

recommended by residents; link to police website; FC; links to proposed/ongoing development activities in our area.

- Some social activities suggested include social night/afternoons once or twice a year; building community within the neighborhoods; planting more trees on some streets; neighborhood watch; meetings should include a question and answer period.
- Additional concerns: speeding on neighborhood streets; helping people maintain their properties (help shovel snow, cutting grass, etc.); discuss area foreclosures.
- Members: keep in mind that all of this requires help! The GWWCA Executive Board always welcomes additional volunteers to make things happen. "Many hands make light work." ☺

Officer Jim Reed, the crime prevention officer for Franconia District, joined the meeting to give a presentation. He said that car break-ins are one of the primary problems in the district. Approximately 50% are unlocked cars, and often there is some sort of valuable visible, such as a GPS on the windshield or purse on the seat. Again, ***lock your cars and doors are night, and don't leave valuables in sight!***

Officer Reed stated that often people are hesitant to call because they don't want to overreact or be a bother, but the police prefer that you call if something doesn't feel or look right.

Someone asked about the homicide at Rose Hill. The victim was nineteen and the arrested suspect was fifteen. Apparently there had been an ongoing dispute over drugs that led to the murder.

The Treasurer's Report was presented. The GWWCA account balance is currently \$6,086.01. Bonnie held the 50/50 raffle for the memorial garden.

Next meeting is Tuesday, February 15, 2011.

Larry closed the meeting at 9:13.