

Minutes of the October 16, 2018 Meeting of the Greater Wilton Woods Citizens Association

GWCA President Larry Dempsey brought the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m., welcomed all and began the voting process.

Officers for 2019 were elected:

- President: Larry Dempsey
- Vice President: Shayla Tait
- Treasurer: Paula Sutherland
- Secretary: Vacant

Terms being January 1, 2019. The position of Secretary does not have an active volunteer and as the present secretary is not continuing in that position, the President noted that he was able to appoint someone if there were to be a volunteer.

The Treasury report is available upon request.

Larry encouraged all to join NEXTDOOR.COM if they had not already done so. 66% of households within the Greater Wilton Woods boundaries have now joined.

The guest speakers this evening were Officer Jim Reid, Community Liaison Officer from the Franconia District Police Station and Detective Daryl Davis from the Mt. Vernon District Police Station. Their topic was frauds and scams.

They first talked about the fraudulent salespeople who show up at your front door. They would most likely be offering services such as driveway resurfacing, home repair, and tree trimming. Det. Davis said that the biggest scam is the tree trimmers. They don't need a license to trim trees and are most likely to demand money up front (legitimate workers will not ask for money up front) and not finish the work and/or do unnecessary work. He encouraged everyone to call the tree companies directly to ensure you employ a reputable company.

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Each individual who comes to your door to sell goods or services must have a Fairfax County solicitor's license. It will have their picture on it and their fingerprints. (Exemptions are those selling fresh farm products, political workers and students collecting for the school band, etc.) You may put a "no solicitors" sign on your property to keep door to door salesmen away. Very few door to door salesmen are legitimate.

If they do not have a license that they can show you, call the non-emergency number and report them. They will keep knocking on doors until they find a victim, usually an elderly neighbor. In addition, if no one answers the door they will think no one is home and will target the house for a break-in. Most break-ins occur during the day when many people are at work.

Other major scams:

- The “gypsies” who offer to seal your driveway. They will charge a large amount and only use a small amount of materials, often only partially sealing the driveway. They do need a license for such work, so be sure to ask to see it.
- Locksmiths who you find on google who specialize in emergency work. They will often install cheap locks and charge you a large amount. They may also intentionally damage a lock. Do your research ahead of time so you know which locksmith to call.
- IRS phone calls. The IRS will only send notifications by mail.
- Calls claiming a family member has been arrested and they need bail money immediately. These scammers often ask for Visa Green Dot cards, a Western Union money order, or an iTunes card.
- Calls claiming you have a virus on your computer. If you let them, they will get into your computer which will enable them to have access to your personal information.

Most scammers are overseas, therefore impossible to track down.

Some scammers are trying to get your personal information, so will claim to be from your bank or from a credit reporting agency such as Equifax or from the Census Bureau. There are many charity scams around, especially at times like this when there has been a large natural disaster such as a hurricane.

Some people have received counterfeit checks that they will deposit, and then will receive a call from the scammer saying they were overpaid, so they need to send back a certain amount of money. After they’ve sent the “overpayment” back, their bank discovers the check is counterfeit and the victim has lost money.

Craig’s List is another opportunity for people to get scammed. If you sell anything by this method, ask for cash and meet them at your local police station. Never give them your home address.

Det. Davis advised that to avoid many of the scam phone calls we all receive is to get on the National Do Not Call Registry. Also, use the automatically generated outgoing message on your voice mail. If the caller asks “Can you hear me?” do not answer. They are just trying to get you to say yes so they can use it as assent for an unwanted service.

Another scam to be aware of is the RFID readers. Using one of these, someone can read your RFID-enabled credit card while it’s in your pocket or purse. To prevent such things, call your bank and ask about their security services.

Many cases have been solved thanks to nextdoor.com.

Useful websites:

- <https://www.usa.gov/common-scams-frauds>
- <https://www.ftc.gov/>

You can also contact the Virginia Department of Professional and Occupational Regulations (<http://www.dpor.virginia.gov/LicenseLookup>) to check a contractor's license. You may also contact the Fairfax County Department of Code Compliance (<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/code>).

Officer Reid encouraged attendees to contact him with any questions or concerns. He can be reached at james.reid@fairfaxcounty.gov. The Community Liaison Office at the Mt. Vernon Station, Officer Robert Urps, may also be contacted: robert.urps@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Officer Reid and Det. Davis provided handouts for the attendees and were thanked for their presentation.

The next topic was the Pike Branch stream project. On October 11, there was a meeting at Mark Twain School about the three different projects involving Pike Branch.

The benefits of the Pike Branch tributary project will be:

- Restore ecological function,
- Improve water quality,
- Protect private property and public infrastructure
- Improve instream and riparian wildlife habitats

The goals of this project are:

- Reduce sediment and nutrient inputs into stream system
- Control velocity to reduce erosion, protect infrastructure, and protect vegetation
- Improve habitat for better ecology
- Maintain close coordination with property owners

Construction access and deliveries will enter the site from access points at the end of Ridge View Drive and Duvawn Street. Residents should expect periodic deliveries of materials using dump trucks on weekdays starting at 7 a.m. Some periods of construction may occur on weekends with deliveries on those days occurring after 9 a.m. It is scheduled to begin in November 2018 and will take 14 months.

The benefits of the second project, Pike Branch along Old Telegraph Road, will be:

- Reduce erosion and mass degeneration of the stream banks through re-channeling
- Connect the channel to a flood plain
- Remove fish passage blockages
- Reduce sediment and nutrient loading to the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay
- Stabilize 16 stormwater outfalls
- Remove invasive vegetation

During the vegetation restoration, the state will attempt to keep 65 trees with a 24-inch or greater diameter. They will plant 500-600 bare root smooth alder seedlings, 1,600-1,700 live stakes including silky dogwood, buttonbush, black willow, and sycamore. There will be 600 bare root seedlings per acre which will be a mixture of American beech, red maple, tulip poplar, chestnut oak, white oak, northern red oak, eastern redbud, ironwood, and American witch hazel.

The emergency repairs along Old Telegraph, including repaving, are scheduled to be completed in November 2018. Final design plans for the original project (approximately 5,500 feet) are expected to be ready in November 2018. Another "Pardon Our Dust" community meeting will take place in December 2018 or January 2019. Construction will start in early 2019 and will last 12-18 months. The property owner of this area is the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The third project, Pike Branch from Pike Road to Wilton Road, has several issues:

- Despite repeated stabilization efforts, the stream continued to erode and portions of the retaining walls have failed
- Sections of the retaining walls were undercut and other channelized bank areas there were armored with grouted riprap were eroded or dismantled by erosive stream flows.

Benefits of this phase of the project will be:

- Repair and/or replacement of failing retaining walls along the stream
- Installation of in-stream natural channel design measures to improve stream stability and habitat
- To provide a safe and sustainable stream valley
- Protection of property and public utility infrastructure
- Creation of in-stream and riparian habitat for wildlife
- Improvement of water quality through the removal of phosphorus, nitrogen, and total suspended solids.

Construction will begin Spring/Summer 2019. The property owners are several private individuals and one parcel owned by the Board of Supervisors. Access will be from the existing maintenance access road from Pike Road and from the 6015 Telegraph Road lot.

A lively discussion followed and all agreed that the community needs to continue to be active and pursue having inputs into the developments to preserve property values and improve the environment.

Finally it was noted that there needed to be an audit of the Association financial records in January before the February kick-off meeting for 2019. Topics were solicited for the next meeting with solar panels being considered and the attendees were encouraged to do their civic duty and vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.