

## **Minutes of the September 17, 2013 Meeting of the Greater Wilton Woods Citizens Association**

GWCA President Larry Dempsey brought the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Information for membership phone books is in the process of being verified.

Mr. Dempsey encouraged attendees to join Nextdoor.com if they haven't already. There are now 220 members on Nextdoor, up by 45 since the May meeting.

Treasurer's report: The balance of the GWCA checking account is over \$7,300, an increase of \$100 since May. Some funds will be used in upcoming months to print the new directory, pay the mailbox rental, etc.

School Street sidewalk: according to Jeff McKay's office, construction is scheduled to start any day now. The first phase will be on the north side of the street from N. King's Highway to Pine Grove Circle. The second phase will be next year and will be in conjunction with the new development being built between School and Poag Streets.

Browne Academy path: the path along the school's field to Edgehill Drive is being scoped out now. It is estimated that it will cost between \$325K – 400K. Funding is not yet in place. It most likely won't happen until next year.

School Street traffic calming: The task force has had two meetings. To get on their mailing list, e-mail [schoolstreetinfo@gmail.com](mailto:schoolstreetinfo@gmail.com).

The Lee District Resources Fair will take place at the Franconia Government Center on Saturday, September 21<sup>st</sup> from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

The first speaker of the evening was Preston Barbash, an investigator in the Consumer Protection Division of the County's Department of Cable Communications and Consumer Protection. His office provides advice on business-related transactions and are mediators, not law enforcement.

His spoke on how to select a contractor. Consumer Affairs can provide tips on hiring a contractor, information on home improvement laws, complaint histories on contractors, and mediation and arbitration services regarding consumer-contractor disputes.

He stressed that, before hiring a contractor, you: get recommendations and references, verify the contractor is licensed by the state, and ask friends and neighbors for referrals. He recommended that the you get at least three written estimates and find out if they will be using subcontractors, verify the contractor has insurance and, after you have selected a contractor, make sure to get a written contract. He encouraged the attendees to assume nothing when hiring a contractor and ask plenty of questions.

There are three types of licenses: Class A (for projects whose total value is over \$120,000), Class B (for projects between \$7,500 and \$120,000), and Class C (for projects between \$1,000 and \$7,500). Contractors have to take a test and pay a fee to get a license.

The contractor must get all permits. If you get the permit, you are responsible for the project and therefore any problems that may arise.

Call Code Compliance for any zoning requirements before you start your project.

Be wary of door to door salesmen as Consumer Affairs receives many complaints about them. Some have been known to accept your payment and then not show up to do the work. If this happens to you, you should call the Police Department's Financial Crimes Division.

Mr. Barbash said that the *Washington Consumer Checkbook* is a good resource for finding a reputable contractor. Angie's List is acceptable, but may require a fee from contractors.

The next speaker was Randy Kenna of Combined Properties, the developer of the 10-acre Penn Daw site.

In April of 2012, changes were made to their original comprehensive plan, reducing the number of housing units (apartments and townhouses) to 735 and increasing the commercial space to 45k sf.

One option of the new plan features a parking deck in the center of the property for both tenants and shoppers, with "teaser" parking spaces in front of the retail section. There will be a plaza with some outdoor dining space. The major retail space in this scenario would be taken by a drug store (CVS) and would feature a drive-thru. There would also possibly be a bakery/café, a restaurant and several smaller retail businesses.

Another option features Fresh Market, a branch of a chain from North Carolina. This option would have more surface parking (30 additional spaces), reducing the size of the plaza. The parking area could be used once or twice a year for festivals and on Saturdays for a farmers' market, run by Fresh Market.

The attendees seemed to prefer the option with the grocery store.

There would be one entrance to the development from Kings Highway and that entrance would be realigned with the entrance from Route 1. This would be a one-way road, with an exit onto Poag Street. There would be a traffic light at Poag and Kings Highway.

Mr. Kenna was very interested in getting feedback on their new plan and offered to come and speak with any HOA groups in the area that may be interested. The next step in the process is to take it to the Lee District Planning Commission in October (preliminary hearing) and November. Those meetings are open to the public. It is anticipated that construction will start in mid 2015.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.