

# PCA Newsletter

The Plantations Community Association, Inc.

Volume 5 - Issue 1

Celebrating 30 Years!

March 2010

## **Snow Removal Reminder**

We have finally seen some real winter weather (and hopefully the last of it)! Please keep in mind that both common courtesy and Montgomery County law require all property owners to keep their sidewalks clear of snow and ice, and safe for pedestrians. This applies to all sidewalks that border your property. The PCA will handle sidewalks that border common area property. The clearing must occur within 24 hours of the end of each storm.

## **County Restricts Vehicle Parking**

A Montgomery County parking law took effect on July 1, 2009. The law prohibits the street parking of recreational vehicles and large commercial vehicles in residential zones. For this law, "recreational vehicle" includes motor homes, travel trailers, and campers (trailered campers, truck inserts, and pop-up campers), and trailers used for boats, motorcycles, cars, or snowmobiles. These vehicles may not be parked on public streets in residential zones for more than 18 hours; in emergencies, 48 hours is allowed.

"Heavy commercial vehicles" may not be parked on residential streets at all, except when engaged in work, or for up to 48 hours in an emergency. Restricted commercial vehicles are those longer than 21 feet, having a gross vehicle weight over 10,000 pounds, a rated capacity over 1 ton, or a height over 8 feet (including racks, but not antennas).

## **Help Us to Stay in Touch**

The PCA sends out occasional e-mail notices to help keep you informed, and to announce volunteer opportunities. We will never share your e-mail address. Please send your e-mail address to:

[PCA4U@yahoo.com](mailto:PCA4U@yahoo.com)

## **Canine Courtesy**

Once again, the PCA is hearing complaints from residents about some of the dogs in our neighborhood. Please observe the following practices regarding your dog, as specified by County law:

- If your dog defecates on property other than your own, you must immediately pick up your dog's feces.
- Dogs should be on a leash at all times when off your property.
- Unwanted contact with dogs is prohibited. In other words, do not let your dog approach people without first checking that the contact is desired (when the child is very young, we suggest that the child's parents should be consulted first).
- Know where your dog is -- if you put your dog out unsupervised, make certain that your yard is adequately fenced to prevent your pet from leaving your property.

## **Re-Sale Process**

Please contact the PCA when you are placing your property on the market. We can provide a re-sale certificate and a copy of our home-owner's association (HOA) documents for you to present to your prospective buyer.

Maryland law requires that the seller provide the HOA documents to the buyer, and allows the buyer to cancel a sales contract up to 5 days after receiving the documents (unless the documents were delivered 5 days prior to entering into the contract). Having these documents allows the buyer to review the community's rules and assessment amounts prior to making a purchase.

The PCA charges a fee of \$35 for an HOA document set.

### **Architectural Change Control Application Process**

When making changes to your house or property, please remember to complete a PCA architectural change control (ACC) application. Applications are required whenever changes are made that affect the appearance of your property. To obtain an application, please call us, or send us an e-mail.

Please attach to your application any drawings or other information that will help to describe your project. If you are building a fence, addition, or other structure, you will need to include a copy of your Site Location Survey (SLS) drawing, with the new structure sketched in. This allows us to see the relationship of the new structure to other structures, and to property lines. You should have received an SLS when you purchased your property.

The ACC committee will review your application, and contact you if there are any questions. The PCA Covenants require us to process applications within 30 days, but we can usually complete the process within a couple of weeks.

Please be aware that a Montgomery County Building Permit is required for all additions, sheds, and new fences. The County also enforces set-back requirements, which define the minimum distance between property lines and additions or sheds. Call the County Permitting Department at 240-777-6300 to determine the set-back distances for your particular property and to apply for a construction permit.

### **Permit Required for Group Use of Park Facilities**

As spring approaches, please recall that a permit is required when an organized group uses our playing field or pavilion. This permitting system allows us to verify that the use is appropriate, to monitor the use, and to assure that the facilities will be available to you. A \$20 fee is charged for field use, to help defray the costs of field maintenance.

To obtain a park use application, you can call us, write to us, or send us an e-mail at: [PCA4U@yahoo.com](mailto:PCA4U@yahoo.com).

### **Plantations Two Pool Membership**

For those who are interested in becoming a member of the pool in Plantations Two, our neighbor to the south, now is the time to call them. Contact Zoe Rosenbaum at:

301-253-9718 or [Plantations2pool@verizon.net](mailto:Plantations2pool@verizon.net)

### **Tree Planting Programs**

Montgomery County is running two programs that reimburse for tree planting:

(1) DEP Rainscapes Program, Urban Tree Canopy Option. Goshen Enterprises (301-869-8544) will install trees for the \$200 reimbursement amount.

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/deptmpl.asp?url=/content/dep/rainscapes/applications1.asp>

(2) Park Commission's "Leaves for Neighborhoods" program, \$25 reimbursement for trees costing \$75 or more, ends May 31, 2010:

<http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/events/leaves/>

### **PCA Board Meeting Schedule**

The PCA Board of Directors meetings are held the second Thursday of the month, from 7:00 PM until 8:30 PM. All residents are welcome to attend these meetings.

We usually meet in the Staff Lounge at Woodfield Elementary School. The June meeting will be held in the pavilion at Club View Park.

#### **Next Board Meeting:**

Thursday April 8<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 PM

Woodfield Elementary School

### **Vandalism / Crime**

Please help your community to prevent criminal acts, and bad behavior. Keep your vehicles locked, and do not leave valuables in plain sight. Parents, please have a conversation with your children about the importance of respecting community property.

All residents can participate in monitoring our parks for problems. When you are walking or driving by the parks, keep an eye out for anyone who appears to be damaging the facilities. Try to get a description of those doing damage, and call the police; please also call the PCA. If you help us by providing information about vandalism, we will not reveal your identity.

#### **Please report all crime and acts of vandalism:**

**For emergencies, call 911.**

For non-emergency police response, call 301-279-8000. For calls that do not require a police response, use this number, and you will later receive a call-back from the police reporting unit.

Please also report incidents to the PCA at 301-330-8560.

## Property Sales – New PCA Members

The following properties in The Plantations were purchased between June and November of 2009:

- Jordan, Catherine & Peter, of 9720 Ambergate Court.
- Nazhat, Rami & Aliyan, Nora, of 9736 Ambergate Court.
- Smith, Eric & Kathryn, of 24001 Bush Hill Road.
- Melendez, Stacey L. & Melendez Cintron, Rafael, of 24104 Log House Road.
- Hiltbrand, Craig & Francine, of 24305 Log House Road.
- Chopas, Scott, of 24015 Newbury Road.
- Noland, Richard & Diane, of 24040 Newbury Road.
- Phillips, Mark A. & Erickson, Elizabeth, 10140 Peanut Mill Drive.
- Gottesman, Seth & Marcia, 10141 Peanut Mill Drive.
- Burke, Robert N. & Elizabeth, of 24001 Sugar Cane Lane.
- Pak, Linder & Gerner, Jeffrey, of 24032 Sugar Cane Lane.
- Hughes, Ryan, of 04 Tobacco Leaf Court.
- Madden, Phuong Do & Philip, Stephen, of 24200 Welsh Road.
- Myers, Eric & Youngdale-Myers, Elizabeth, of 24221 Welsh Road.

## Recycling Notes

In 2008 Montgomery County expanded their plastics recycling program to include more items. Please remember to recycle the following items in your blue bin:

- Narrow-neck bottles from food, drink, and household products, such as water, milk, soda, shampoo, cleaners, pill bottles (resin #'s 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, & 7).
- Tubs, containers, and lids from margarine, yogurt, deli, ice cream, mayo, peanut butter (#'s 2, 3, 4, & 5).
- Nursery and flower pots (resin #'s 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, & 7).

**NOT** accepted are: Containers from motor oil, antifreeze, or pesticides; clamshell containers, even if #1 (salad bar, berries); Styrofoam or polystyrene (marked #6); screw caps from water, soda, pill bottles, etc.

## PCA Financial Status Report

The PCA ended 2009 in a healthy financial state. We had no long-term debt, we made the planned contributions to our General Reserve Fund and our Town-House Reserve Fund, we paid all of our bills, and generally we spent within the limits of our 2009 operating budget. We overspent our \$3,500 snow removal budget by \$1,000 due to the large December storm, and we overspent our “Montgomery County Tax/Fee” budget by \$360 because the County changed rates in the middle of the year.

In several of our operating budget categories we underspent slightly. In the categories of “Legal Fees” and “Community Events”, we significantly underspent. Some of the unspent 2009 monies were designated by the Board to be spent in 2010 on new playground equipment for Wesley Foreman Memorial Park. A complete financial report for 2009 will be available in the near future.

The Board decided to keep the 2010 assessment levels at the 2009 levels. The assessment amounts are \$143 for single-family detached properties, and \$198 for town-house (T-H) properties. The additional \$55 of T-H assessment goes directly to a reserve account for maintenance of the T-H parking areas.

As of March 11, the PCA had received 326 assessment payments from our 406 property owners. This provides us with adequate funds to function for now, but also leaves us with the task of chasing down the remaining payments, which is an unfortunate waste of volunteer time and effort.

The Board understands that times are difficult for some residents, but we also have a duty to collect the yearly assessment, and to keep the Association on a sound financial footing. The Board will be forced to make the decision to refer some of our resident accounts to our attorney for collections activity.

In March the PCA will send a second invoice to those accounts that are delinquent. If you have not submitted your 2010 assessment payment, please do so now. If you cannot pay the entire amount now, please contact us to establish a payment plan.

## **Town-House Parking and Trash Issues**

Recently we have seen an increase in problems related to trash and parking in some of our town-house areas. For the benefit of your community, please adhere to the following rules.

- All trash must be placed in cans with lids. No trash may be placed out for pickup unless it is canned.
- Residents are responsible for hiring their own trash removal service.
- Trash and recycling containers may not be placed out sooner than the evening before the pickup day.
- Trash and recycling containers must be taken in from the curb the same day as the pickup. Additionally, containers may not be stored at the front of the property.
- The town-house parking spaces are owned by the PCA. Two spaces are assigned to each property. Do not use spaces that are not assigned to your property.
- Ambergate Court and Bush Hill Court are County-maintained roadways. Double-parking on these streets is a violation of County law. If you have more than two vehicles, please find a legal place to park additional vehicles.
- If your court has parking spaces marked "Visitor", these spaces are to be used for visitor parking only. Residents may not park in these spaces.

## **Jobs for Teenagers**

Some residents have asked the PCA whether we have a list of young people who cut lawns, shovel snow, or babysit. We don't currently have such lists, but we would be willing to print the names of young people willing to do these jobs. Contact the PCA by phone or by e-mail if you would like your name to be included in PCA newsletters and e-mails.

## **The PCA Board of Directors**

<b>Tony Durso</b>	- <u>President</u>
<b>Larry Miller</b>	- <u>Vice-President</u> : Communications Committee
<b>David Keim</b>	- <u>Treasurer</u> ; Grounds and Communications Committees
<b>Anne Clark</b>	- Communications Committee
<b>Nathan Krause</b>	- Communications Committee
<b>Greg Sartor</b>	- ACC Committee
<b>Mary Schwartzbeck</b>	- Board Member
<b>Roy Stacey</b>	- Board Member

### **The Plantations Community Association, Inc.**

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Web: <http://www.plantations1.org>

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