

PCA Newsletter

The Plantations Community Association, Inc.

Volume 7 - Issue 1

May 2011

A Message from the PCA President

Hi everyone,

Please allow me to address an on-going concern.

We have a very nice community with the majority of residents concerned about their property and about their community. While we have completed several projects in recent years, there are several more opportunities that still remain to be planned and/or completed. We also continue to welcome your feedback and also thank those who have volunteered their time in many assignments.

We have received many questions as to why certain projects have not been completed. The answer is simple. The PCA does not have enough support to complete them, and those projects that need to be completed cannot be handled by just a few. We have 406 households in our community. With that said, once again we are asking YOU to consider stepping up for your community and help the PCA address some important and pending projects. Please consider a board position, chair a project or just volunteer to help with a particular project. You can also help by attending our board meetings which take place on the second Thursday of each month, and providing your input. Remember, the board meetings are open to residents of our community.

Thank you,

Tony Durso, PCA President

Help Us Stay in Touch

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

info@plantations1.org

Annual Community Yard Sale

This year our community yard sale is scheduled for Saturday May 21 from 8 AM to 12 PM. The rain date is the next day, Sunday May 22, from 12 PM to 4 PM.

We encourage those who can to sell from Club View Park so we can attract buyers to a central location. The PCA will advertise the sale in The Gazette, and will post road signs to lead buyers to the event.

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, but our July and August meetings will be at Rockwell E.S, 24555 Cutsail Drive, off of Sweepstakes Road.

Future Board Meetings:

Thursday May 12 – Woodfield E.S.

Thursday June 09 – Club View Park Pavilion

Thursday July 14 – Rockwell E.S.

Thursday August 11 – Rockwell E.S.

Crosswalks Planned for Log House Road

Thanks to a suggestion from Log House Road resident Misty Ruffner, and a formal request by the PCA, the County Department of Transportation plans this spring to install two crosswalks on Log House Road.

The PCA requested a crosswalk where the new Log House Road sidewalk crosses Club View Drive. The County approved this request, and in addition plans to install a crosswalk across Log House Road at Flamingo Terrace, including school crosswalk warning signs.

We hope that these new crosswalks and signs increase pedestrian safety, and perhaps they will also help to slow traffic speeds.

Crime and Vandalism Report

The PCA has received the following reports:

- March 23, items stolen from unlocked vehicle on the 24100 block of Log House Road.
- Friday night/Saturday morning April 01/02, a mailbox was damaged in the 24100 block of Sugar Cane Lane.
- On the same night, five solar globes / lights located near the front of a house in the 24100 block of Newbury Road were damaged; the remains of one was found smashed at the intersection of Newbury and Log House Roads.
- The PCA has heard that items were stolen from two vehicles on Sugar Cane Lane one night in March.
- In February we had more graffiti spray-painted on the pavilion floor in Club View Park.

Please help your community to prevent criminal acts, and bad behavior. Keep your vehicles locked, and do not leave valuables in plain sight. Please lock the interior door between your house and your garage. 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.

Please report all crime and acts of vandalism:

- If you believe that an immediate threat to public safety exists, please call the police using **911**; for non-emergencies, use **301-279-8000**.

- For problems on County park land, call the Maryland-National Capital Park Police at

301-949-3010 – Emergency

301-949-8010 – Non-Emergency

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

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, send us an e-mail, or download the form from:

www.plantations1.org/PCA_Files_Forms.html

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.

Appearance of Our Community

One of the responsibilities of a home-owner's association is to enforce regulations that are aimed at protecting the appearance of the community. Spring is a good time for all of us to take a look at our properties and to plan repair projects. The PCA is currently inspecting for gutter, downspout, and siding problems, and other obvious appearance problems.

Town-House Court Issues

The PCA has had several comments from residents about problems on our town-house (T-H) courts, so we would like to provide residents with information about these problems, and ask for your cooperation in resolving them.

T-H Parking Issues:

- All T-H parking spaces are owned, managed, and assigned by the PCA;
- Each T-H is assigned two spaces, which are numbered for identification;
- The PCA understands that the numbers need to be repainted, and that will occur this summer. Please contact us if you are not certain which spaces are assigned to your property.
- Residents may not park in a space that is not assigned to them, unless they have explicit permission from the resident to whom the space is assigned. The PCA has the authority to tow violators.
- If your court has visitor spaces, they are to be used for visitor's vehicles only, and not by resident's vehicles. These spaces are for short-term use, meaning from a few minutes to a few days.
- Overflow parking should take place on a nearby street. The PCA parking areas can only accommodate two vehicles per T-H.
- All parked vehicles must display a current state registration tag (license plate).
- The main roadways on Ambergate Court and Bush Hill Court are County roads. Double-parked vehicles are subject to ticketing or towing by the County.

T-H Common Area Issues:

Another issue we would like to address is the use of common areas that are close to houses or to vehicles. A common area is one that is owned by the PCA, and is available for use by all residents. As with all shared areas, we all must try to consider how our use of the area may affect others.

We all appreciate the benefits of having areas for children to play that are close to home, and within sight of their parents. However, certain sorts of play in

confined areas run a significant risk of damage to property.

For example, two years ago the area behind the Newbury Road T-Hs was regularly used for soccer games, which was causing damage to fences, and resulting in balls landing inside fenced yards. The PCA spoke with parents and children there, asking them to restrict play to ball handling and passing, without using goal posts and playing team against team.

A current area where problems are occurring is the small rectangle of grass and trees in front of #s 01, 03, 05, and 07 Bush Hill Court, which lies very close to houses and vehicles. Balls are being kicked and batted in ways that are causing vehicles to be hit.

We ask parents to help to eliminate this problem by observing the following guidelines:

- Please ask children to respect the property of others. Care should be taken to avoid balls hitting houses or vehicles.
- Kicking and batting should not be done toward a house or vehicle; orient the game in another direction.
- Use balls that are soft, and are less likely to cause damage if they do hit something.

We appreciate your cooperation. Please understand that some of our neighbors may be more sensitive to these issues than are others, but we all need to find ways to get along and share our common areas.

Local Baby-Sitters

(have your name listed here for free)

- Madeline Autry, age 14, 301-253-6773

Advertise Here

Business Card or same size ad - \$5.00

Quarter Page - \$9.00

Half Page - \$16.00

Full Page - \$28.00

Property Sales – New PCA Members

The following properties in The Plantations were purchased between September 2010 and February of 2011:

- Reed, Justin & Kate, of 9707 Ambergate Court.
- Jenkins, David & Marci, of 24300 Club View Drive.
- Nightingale, Jeffrey & Gina, of 24325 Log House Road.
- Patel, Jahanvi & Suryakant, of 24128 Newbury Road.

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.
- When your dogs are outside, barking should be kept to a minimum. Excessive barking is a nuisance and disruptive to your neighbors, especially when it is occurring in the middle of the night.

Effective March 1, 2011, the Montgomery County Council passed new regulations regarding tethering of animals. The complete regulations are too comprehensive for us to include in their entirety in this newsletter, but basically they include:

- Dogs must be tethered by use of a harness with a swivel on each end that will not unreasonably limit their movement or cause them to become tangled.
- Dogs must have access to food, water and shelter.
- Cats cannot be tethered outside.
- Dogs cannot be tethered longer than two hours in any consecutive twenty-four hour period.
- For more information please visit the Montgomery County Council Website, Resolution 17-66.

Re-Sale Process

Please contact the PCA when you are placing your property on the market. For \$35 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. Having these documents allows the buyer to review the community's rules and assessment amounts prior to making a purchase.

New County Rules for Home Occupation and Off-Street Parking

On April 24 new County laws went into effect regarding home businesses, and off-street parking. Two notable parts of the new law:

- Only one recreational vehicle/trailer may be parked on a residential property.
- Only one "light commercial vehicle" may be parked on a property.

For details, see:

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/goodneighbors

The PCA Board of Directors

Tony Durso	- <u>President</u>
Larry Miller	- <u>Vice-President</u> ;
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Sharon Clarke	- Board Member
Nathan Krause	- Web site development
Roy Stacey	- Board Member
Mike Stultz	- Grounds Committee Chair
[open seat]	- Board Member

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