



NEWSLETTER

WWW.HARWOODCIVIC.ORG

OCTOBER 2012

Membership

Support the work of the Harwood Civic Association by renewing your membership or becoming a new member. There may be some confusion as to the membership year. Previously the membership year began with the Annual meeting, which had been conducted in January but was changed to May due to weather problems. We will soon be sending reminders out to those members who have not yet paid for the year May 2012 to May 2013. If you have not paid Please send in your membership dues as soon as possible.

Flu Shots

Flu season runs from November to April and is just around the corner.

Influenza symptoms present quickly and are worse than the common cold. Symptoms of influenza are

- Body aches
- High fever lasting 3-4 days
- Sore throat
- Stuffy nose
- Extreme fatigue

The best way to prevent influenza in your community is good hand washing and getting influenza vaccine.

Owensville Primary Care at 134 Owensville Road (Rt255) will be holding free flu clinics on Tuesdays from 2-5pm starting October 2. Donations accepted.

Annual Meeting

The Harwood Civic Association (HCA) Annual Meeting was held on May 22, 2012 at the Galesville memorial Hall. The meeting began with the introduction of the HCA Board by Tony Gamboa, President HCA, and a summary of the HCA activities for this past year. Mrs. Harmon from Southern High School presented HCA with a plaque for HCA support of the SHS Career/College Center, which Tony Gamboa accepted on behalf of HCA.

Mr. Gamboa then introduced the first speaker of the evening, Dr. Tuck Hines, the Director of the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center (SERC). Dr. Hines described the mission of the center as a large scale, long-term environmental assessment of both land and sea. SERC includes 2,650 acres in the Muddy Creek - Rhode river area and 16 miles of shoreline. The program receives \$7M annually for research grants and programs, has an operating budget of \$65M for the next 5 years, and is open to visitors, some approximately 20,000 a year, at the Phillip D. Reed Educational Center on Monday-Saturday. Among the investigations that SERC is involved with include UV solar radiation, mercury levels, nutrient pollution from land to the bay, introduction of invasive species including the snakehead fish and levels of blue crab and oysters.

The second speaker of the evening was Mr. Larry R. Tom head of AAC Planning and Zoning. Mr. Tom brought with him charts regarding current zoning regulations in South County for everything South of route 214. He explained and took questions regarding changes in the zoning maps brought about by Amendments to Bill 44-11. There were numerous questions regarding the zoning process and reforms to the process.

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The third speaker was Mr. Russ Stevenson who is the pro-bono lawyer representing several South County Citizens groups who were opposed to Amendments to Bill 44-11 which were not in keeping with the rural nature of South County. Of the 30 amendments to the Bill proposed by Mr. Jerry Walker, County Executive John Leopold vetoed 18, of which 10 were overruled by the County Council. Not all affected parties wanted to join litigation so it has been revised to 7 plaintiffs and that litigation is making its way slowly through the court system.

The slate of officers for HCA was approved for another year, however, questions were raised regarding how others may become involved and the current Board will endeavor to seek more community involvement at the Board level.

Other discussion involved the new floating dock at Wooton's landing, Southern HS theme of design and innovation, the problems with Route 2 turn lanes and redistricting. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:30 PM.

Passing Lanes on Route 2

At the Annual Meeting during the Question and Answer session, Bob Riley who lives adjacent to Maryland Route 2 near the Owensville Sudley intersection discussed the plans of the State Highway Administration (SHA) to install a left turn lane in the southern direction off Route 2 onto Owensville Sudley Road. Mr. Riley objected to, among other things, the vast length of the left turn lane and also that SHA would be condemning a portion of his property, which would adversely effect his property. A lengthy discussion ensued on the subject.

Mr. Riley earlier met with the HCA Board to discuss his concerns about the proposed left turn lane at Owensville Sudley Road. Thereafter, the HCA Board members looked into the matter and spoke to and met with personnel at the SHA District 5 office on the program. One meeting with SHA included Senator Reilly and Delegate Costa. The Owensville Sudley project is one of six left turn lanes proposed for Route 2, three of which are in our area at Harwood Drive, Owensville Sudley Road, and Owensville Road.

HCA sent a letter to the Maryland Secretary of Transportation and the State Highway

administration expressing concern about the scale of left turn lane at the Owensville Sudley Route 2 intersection. SHA was firm in its position that the left turn lanes were necessary for safety. They stressed that the project was not one to increase traffic capacity but one to increase safety.

A left turn lane is one that moves left turning traffic out of the through traffic lane onto a left turn lane. Examples can be seen on Route 2 at Southern High School. A bypass lane is one where left turn traffic turns from the through lane and through traffic is routed around the turning vehicle. An example of a bypass lane can be seen on Route 2 at Owensville Road.

As a result of its inquiries and analysis, on June 25, 2012, the HCA Board sent a letter to the Maryland Secretary of Transportation and the SHA stating concern about the scale of the project at Owensville Sudley Road due to its length and possible negative impact on the character of our area. The letter further stated that HCA took seriously SHA safety concern and pointed out that HCA has long been an advocate for safety improvements on Route 2. HCA also pointed out the concerns of adjacent residents about the impact on their properties due to the taking of land for the project, possible safety concerns of exiting their property into the high speed through lanes, and possible increase of traffic on Owensville Sudley Road. HCA concluded by asking SHA to consider a more conservative solutions possibly using a bypass lane such exists at Owensville Road as well as reduction of the speed limit between Harwood Road and Lothian Circle.

SHA responded to HCA letter on July 6, 2012. SHA stated that over the years they have been approached by commuters, residents, police, bus drivers and others requesting an analysis of operational and safety issues on this section of Route 2. SHA restated that a left turn lane is the safest alternative and that a bypass lane posed danger of rear end collisions by distracted drivers. With a technical discussion of speed studies, SHA stated that they believed 50 miles per hour is the appropriate speed for the corridor.

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On July 19th, 2012 the State Highway Administration (SHA) held a public forum at the request of several South County Interest Groups to provide updates on the "left-turn projects proposed and in construction along MD 2 in southern Anne Arundel and northern Calvert Counties." HCA had previously met with homeowners in Harwood who were impacted by the SHA projects and were well represented at the meeting along with 120 interested parties.

The following project updates were given: Md 2 at MD 423 (Fairhaven/Jewell Roads)-this project is in construction. The following are funded for design, utilities and right of way only. MD 2 at Harwood Dr., MD 2 at Owensville Sudley Rd., Md 2 at MD 255, MD 2 at 256, MD 2 at Mt. Harmony Rd. The current status of the Owensville Sudley project is that money has been appropriated for design and land acquisition, but not yet for construction.

Reportedly, the SHA continues to evaluate specific suggestions and requests from the July 19 meeting. "Responses will be provided as soon as practical" states Bob Rager, Community Liason. For questions or comments contact Bob at 410 841 1020.

Most recently, HCA Board members met with County Planning and Zoning and Transportation officials to discuss these projects. County officials stated that they would meet with SHA to discuss the scope of these projects, which was not envisioned by the County when they asked SHA to address the safety issues on Route 2 in a letter from the County Executive. HCA is awaiting the results of these discussions.

Additionally, we would appreciate your views on this important issue. Please email them to Tony Gamboa, itgamboa@me.com.

There's a Turtle in my Pond!

The weather has been so hot that this male Box Turtle decide to cool off in my backyard pond. You know it's a Box Turtle by the colorful yellow markings on the shell as compared to a jug-bay painted turtle (middle) seen during the same month. And here is a friend of theirs outfitted by Park Police with a tracking device.



The friend was used in Rockville Park to track down a marijuana farm. So I guess besides eating lettuce and eggshells, they also have recreational habits. No wonder they look happy.

Open Space

There have been changes made by the County Council to the zoning classification of Open Space. A new law (Bill #15-12), introduced by Councilman Benoit, broadens the uses that can be made of property zoned Open Space (OS). The bill went into effect September 1, 2012.

Active uses have been added as a category of Open Space by bill #15-12, in contrast to more traditional "passive uses". New active uses include, other than golf courses, "... recreational activities that require special facilities, fields, or equipment, such as playgrounds, ice skating rinks, running tracks, and athletic facilities, including playing fields, for athletic events, tennis courts, basketball courts to the site and swimming pools." Permanent structures for these active uses include bleachers, equipment storage, locker rooms, concession stands and stables.

As part of this bill there were 2 categories of such "active recreation"—those with up to 100 bleacher seats and those with up to 250 seats. The uses with up to 100 seats were made "conditional uses", but those with up to 250 seats were required to obtain a Special Exception through a hearing before the Administrative Hearing Officer.

Planning and Zoning testified that there are a number of larger parcels of OS located throughout the County that may be converted or used for such active uses. Many have argued that all adjacent communities that have these new recreational uses proposed near them should have an opportunity for a hearing on a Special Exception.

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If the above uses continue as conditional uses (currently in the law) no such hearing will take place. If the conditions in the code for conditional use are met, the Planning and Zoning Office will approve the project. If these uses are made “Special Exceptions” then a full hearing will be required. An impartial hearing officer would weigh the pros and cons of the proposal and protect the property rights of residents as well as the property owner. Is there a real need for the activity proposed? What will the impact be on the residents nearby?

The current law requires only a community meeting for active recreational uses with bleachers up to 100 and permanent structures and many feel that this is not enough protection.

On September 4, 2012, the County Council amended Open Space legislation discussed above to set up conservation overlay zones to protect habitats or environmental features located in an Open Space District. This amendment was drafted and supported by the Office of Planning and Zoning. The amendment contains a more limited list of uses within the Open Space Conservation Overlay.

The change does not address the conditional use issue discussed above. The Growth Action Network members, of which HCA is one, are working with Council members and hope to change the law so that both active recreation categories will require special exceptions.

Rude Ranch

Rude Ranch Animal Rescue, a no kill animal sanctuary located in Harwood, MD

Rude Ranch Animal Rescue is a volunteer based organization, founded in 1997. It is a Maryland registered *not for profit*, and received IRS non-profit recognition in 2001. Rude Ranch is a cage less, no-kill animal shelter and sanctuary, which receives no government funding. It provides shelter to animals that have no place else to go: special needs, sick and abused, the critically injured. The animals who’s family’s have lost their homes and have no where to go. The ones that have run out of time at county and state run animal control agencies. At any given time, there are between 120 - 180 animals under our care. As such, Rude Ranch has many animals looking for homes. Those that would not do well in homes are looking for

sponsors.

Rude Ranch also provides emergency/disaster aid, rescue and transportation services in both natural and man made disasters. They have a response team formed as a result of three trips to the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. They have been called up in response to the disasters across the country over the last few years. They were on standby last fall to receive evacuated animals from Southern Anne Arundel County during Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee.

In addition to the animal sanctuary, Rude Ranch has embarked on a new endeavor: The Spay Spa & Neuter Nook, which will be located at 1251 West Central Ave, Davidsonville, MD.

The Spay Spa & Neuter Nook is a High Quality, Low Cost Spay/Neuter clinic to serve Anne Arundel County and surrounding areas. The clinic is currently under construction with a planned opening date of November 12. Once up and running they plan to perform 6,000 or more spay/neuter surgeries on cats, dogs, puppies, kittens, rabbits, and pocket pets. Our vet’s motto is: she’ll spay or neuter anything that doesn’t move too fast”.

In addition to reducing the pet overpopulation problem in general, there will be numerous benefits to communities, animals and local governments. It will reduce the instances of unwanted screeching and fighting of animals in neighborhoods. By spaying/neutering we will prevent the birth of unwanted and homeless puppies and kittens that would be turned into local animal controls, which adds costs to the government.

Rude Ranch is still looking to partner with businesses, families and individuals to accomplish their goal of a time when we no longer need to euthanize healthy companion animals because of pet overpopulation.

Rude Ranch is a registered not for profit that receives no government funding. They rely on cash and in-kind gifts to support their mission. Rude Ranch receives funding through the Combined Federal Campaign (45379), Maryland Charity Campaign (4650), and National Capital United Way (9664). To learn more about them, check out their websites: www.ruderanch.org and www.spayspa.org.

This Fall: Add beauty to your land, while saving money and helping our local wildlife and our natural heritage.

Do you enjoy bluebirds, monarch and swallowtail butterflies? How about goldfinches and Maryland's State Flower, the Black Eyed Susan? If so, planting a native garden may be for you.

After European settlement in Maryland, people planted gardens with plants brought from their home country. They were tiny, comfortable garden plots set in a huge wilderness. Today, however, the reverse is true. Agricultural and garden plants introduced from all over the world dominate the landscape, while native plants are managed in small preserves. This has had negative effects on our native songbirds, butterflies and other wildlife. By removing the plants that, for example, Monarch butterflies need for their eggs, we have removed their ability to survive in their native range.

What is a Native Plant?

Native plants (also called indigenous plants) are plants that have evolved over thousands of years in a particular region. They have adapted to the geography, hydrology, and climate of that region. Native plants occur in communities, that is, they have evolved together with other plants and animals. As a result, a community of native plants provides habitat for a variety of native wildlife species such as songbirds and butterflies. A good example in Harwood: Goldfinches eating the seeds from Black Eyed Susans. The plant and the bird match perfectly, and the sameness in coloring helps give the Goldfinch "camouflage" (from hawks and other predators) while eating.

What is a Non-Native Plant?

Non-native plants (also called non-indigenous plants, invasive plants, exotic species, or weeds) are plants that have been introduced into an environment in which they did not evolve. Introduction of non-native plants into our landscape has been both accidental and deliberate. Purple loosestrife, for example, was introduced from Europe in the 1800's in ship ballast and as a

medicinal herb and ornamental plant. It quickly spread and can now be found in 42 states.

In general, aggressive, non-native plants have no enemies or controls to limit their spread. As they move in, complex native plant communities, with hundreds of different plant species supporting wildlife, will be converted to a monoculture. This means the community of plants and animals is simplified, with most plant species disappearing, leaving only the non-native plant population intact.

For example, purple loosestrife colonizes wetland areas, replacing native plants unable to compete for available sunlight, water, and nutrients. Wetlands infested with purple loosestrife lose as much as 50% of their original native plant populations. This limits the variety of food and cover available to birds and may cause the birds to move or disappear from a region altogether.

Why Should I Use Native Plants?

Native plants provide a beautiful, hardy, drought resistant, low maintenance landscape while benefiting the environment. Native plants, once established, save time and money by eliminating or significantly reducing the need for fertilizers, pesticides, water and lawn maintenance equipment.

Native plants do not require fertilizers. Vast amounts of fertilizers are applied to lawns. Excess phosphorus and nitrogen (the main components of fertilizers) run off into our rivers and the Bay causing excess algae growth. This depletes oxygen in our waters, harms aquatic life and interferes with recreational uses.

Native plants require fewer pesticides than lawns. Nationally, over 70 million pounds of pesticides are applied to lawns each year. Pesticides run off lawns and can contaminate streams, rivers and lakes. People and pets in contact with chemically treated lawns can be exposed to pesticides.

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Native plants require less water than lawns. The modern lawn requires significant amounts of water to thrive. In urban areas, lawn irrigation uses as much as 30% of the water consumption on the East Coast and up to 60% on the West Coast. The deep root systems of many native plants increase the soil's capacity to store water. Native plants can significantly reduce water runoff and, consequently, flooding.

Native plants help reduce air pollution. Natural landscapes do not require mowing. Lawns, however, must be mowed regularly. Gas powered garden tools emit 5% of the nation's air pollution. Forty million lawnmowers consume 200 million gallons of gasoline per year. One gas-powered lawnmower emits 11 times the air pollution of a new car for each hour of operation. Excessive carbon from the burning of fossil fuels contributes to global warming. Native plants sequester, or remove, carbon from the air.

Native plants provide shelter and food for wildlife. Native plants attract a variety of birds, butterflies, and other wildlife by providing diverse habitats and food sources. Closely mowed lawns are of little use to most wildlife.

Native plants promote biodiversity and stewardship of our natural heritage. In the U.S., approximately 20 million acres of lawn are cultivated, covering more land than any single crop. Native plants are a part of our natural heritage. Natural landscaping is an opportunity to reestablish diverse native plants, thereby inviting the birds and butterflies back home.

Native plants save money. A study by Applied Ecological Services of larger properties estimates that over a 20 year period, the cumulative cost of maintaining a prairie or a wetland totals \$3,000 per acre versus \$20,000 per acre for non-native turf grasses.

WOOTON'S LANDING DOCK INSTALLED

Attention owners of car top boats! At long last the floating dock at Wooton's Landing will provide additional access to the Patuxent River to those of us in the Harwood area. A crew of county employees and volunteers assisted in the installation. Jug Bay

director Chris Swarth has indicated that kayak and canoe owners who would like to access the site need to contact the office to get the combination for the gate at the upper parking lot. Cars can be driven down to the lower lot for unloading but then must be returned to the upper lot along Sands Road. The number to call is 410-741-9330. This project took nearly two years to complete and HCA was very involved as an advocate and contributor to the effort. Hopefully there will be many who will take advantage of this lovely natural park at 4550 Sands Road. **Photo on page 8**

Third Quarter real Estate Report

The Harwood real estate market for the third quarter has yielded some encouraging results. Nine homes went to settlement with only one settling for less than 90% of the asking price. They ranged in price from \$59,900 for a manufactured home to \$837,500 for a custom brick colonial on 4.62 acres. The remaining seven homes fell between \$382,000 and \$725,000. Only two of the lots were less than 2 acres. The others ranged from 3.28 to 16.09 acres. Seller subsidies seemed to occur less frequently. Only three reflected the need for seller assistance. The average number of days on the market was 68 with only three of the properties needing more than three months to achieve a ratified contract.

There are currently two homes under contract and sixteen active listings. Three are manufactured homes ranging in price from \$52,000 to \$80,000. Two homes are listed for more than \$1,000,000. They are on lots ranging in size from seventeen to twenty-four acres. Two homes have asking prices of less than \$300,000. The remaining nine homes include a fifty-five acre farm for \$899,900 and an eclectic variety ranging from \$965,500 for a five bedroom colonial on just under five acres to \$393,500 for a refurbished split foyer with a lot size of over twelve acres. Six of the active listings have been on the market for over 200 days.

While the fourth quarter often does not echo the results of the third, recent results seem to indicate an improvement in the real estate outlook.

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The new floating dock at Wooton's Landing