

THE TETRAGON

Newsletter of the Montgomery Square Citizens Association

A Community Full of Enthusiasm & Pride

www.montgomerysquare.org

Winter 2008

MSCA Officers

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Message from the President

While the economy seems to be in a tailspin, thanks to the hard work of your Board members and generosity of many of the households in Montgomery Square, I am pleased to report that the financial condition of MSCA remains strong. According to our treasurer: "MSCA began the year with a balance of \$3,815. Dues in the amount of \$12,440 were collected from 249 families. Expenses for the Tetragon newsletter (\$750), the MSCA Directory before advertising revenue (\$1,035), and landscape maintenance (\$9,015) totaled \$10,800. The balance as of November 30 is \$5,455."

Thank you to the approximate 250 households who paid 2008 dues. MSCA is extremely grateful for your participation and continued support.

For 2009, we hope to accomplish the following: continue to lobby the County to make significant improvements to Seven Locks Road and lobby for street resurfacing needed as a result of the WSSC water main project on the South Side; hold a yard sale and block party; maintain our entranceways with plantings and flowerbeds, and partake in other improvements and activities as requested.

Please join me in welcoming former MSCA President Roger Hahn as the new MSCA Membership Committee Chairperson. Roger and his wife Tay are longstanding residents of our Community.

The neighborhood and MSCA would benefit from additional volunteers. If you are interested in helping in any way, please contact any board member.

Happy Holidays and New Year!

2008 MSCA Directory

The new directory is out. The Fall 2008 Directory has several changes from past formats:

As indicated on the information forms that were delivered to the neighborhood, we have only provided contact information for those households that returned forms. We regret that we didn't have 100% participation, and hope that we will have greater participation to make the directory even more useful.

This year you will notice a new format. The old directory didn't exist in database form. We now have a neighborhood database that will make many tasks easier. Creating annual instead of bi-annual directories, mailing out newsletters or dues letters, and the ability to create interim directories in PDF format are some of the benefits.

In addition, the new format allows us to give a nice street lookup that includes emails and phone numbers for the neighbors on your street.

Finally, please check out the youth services directory and support the kids.

– Steve Schuck

Directory Changes: Please accept our apologies for any directory errors. We will publish corrections in the newsletter until the next directory printing in 2009. After printing, these additions were discovered:

Hamid, Shaikh & Farhat
2513 Stratton Drive
301-340-6289

Sunshine, Doug & Rachel
11738 Devilwood Drive
301-294-0064
dougandrae@msn.com

If you haven't donated for 2008, please feel free to do so. Make checks payable to MSCA, Inc and mail to:

David Grossman
MSCA Treasurer
12006 Smoketree Rd
Potomac, MD 20854.

Leaf Collection Reminder

Montgomery County does not provide vacuum leaf collection for our Community. Therefore, please be a good neighbor and do not pile up leaves in the street.

Reporting Potholes and Other Road Issues

Please call the Montgomery County Customer Service Center at 240-777-6000 to report potholes or make any other transportation related request. A link to an online reporting form can be found on the MSCA website.

SAVE THE DATES - 2009!

GENERAL MEETING - TUESDAY,
January 6, 7:30 - 8:30 PM at 12013
Smoketree Road (All are welcome!)

ANNUAL COMMUNITY YARD SALE -
SUNDAY, MAY 3, 12:00 - 3:00 PM

ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION
OF BOARD MEMBERS – MONDAY,
MAY 4, 2009, 7:30-8:30 pm (location to
be determined)

Minutes of the MSCA Annual Meeting 5-19-08

(Please note that the MSCA secretary routinely posts the Minutes from General and Annual meetings on the MSCA website – montgomerysquare.org - but the following is included in the Tetragon for those who may not have access to the Internet or prefer reading from a paper copy.)

The annual meeting of MSCA was held at Beverly Farms Elementary School on May 19, 2008, as publicized in advance and in accordance with our bylaws.

Bob Gross, President, opened the meeting at 7:35. Bob introduced the board members present and highlighted existing vacancies on the board, asking for volunteers. He emphasized that all positions were open to new volunteers. Committee chairs for the Social Committee, Transportation, and the Improvements Committee are needed.

Treasurer David Grossman reported that over 175 households had already paid dues for 2008, and that the treasury of the Association was adequate for projected expenses. The largest expense is, as always, landscaping and maintenance of the landscaped areas.

Bob Gross went over many items of local interest dealing with development issues. First, he gave a review of the Seven Locks Road Sidewalk and Bikeway Project. We had asked the MSCA membership for input on this project to gauge whether the Board should represent the community as being generally in favor of the concept or not. Almost 100 participating members responded favorably to the idea, subject to some concerns that will have to be addressed when more detailed plans are available. A very few negative responses were also received, but the consensus was to

support the County's project at this time and watch for impacts to the homeowners along Seven Locks Road as special cases.

Second, the membership discussed the water main replacement project on the southern side of Montgomery Square. Homeowners are concerned about the overall condition of the road surface already and what it will look like after Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) finishes its project. Information from the County to date is that WSSC will only repave the disturbed area in a strip along the road, not the whole road. The President has inquired about whether the County and WSSC can partner and do the whole road, but County funds are very limited for any repaving work and we have not found a way to convince the County to act as of yet. There may be recourse if the work done by WSSC is not done well enough for the County inspectors. The Board will continue to look for opportunities here, but could use some help in staying on top of this issue. A member noted that with more dues collected, MSCA could afford more legal and lobbying support to pressure the County and WSSC, but not with current resources. If a goal of 85% participation could be met consistently, a material difference would be possible.

The Board agreed to press for a higher participation goal and attendees discussed how to go about increasing dues collection, and the relationship between paying dues and receipt of the MSCA Directory, and/or inclusion as a listing in the directory. All combinations of the options were considered, with pros and cons debated with the membership at large. The consensus of the meeting was to continue thanking those who had paid, publicly in the Tetragon, and to target those who had not with a specific letter from the Board in the mail asking for their directory information and the dues payment. The Board was persuaded by the

argument that if households do not respond with their desired directory listing names and telephone numbers, the Board cannot justify listing them in the 2008-2009 directory that is being prepared for printing. Absent knowledge of who the homeowners are and absent their permission to list them, the Board should discontinue listing the names of non-responsive homeowners. This will be explained in the mailing. The Board apologizes to anyone who may have paid and not been recorded properly. On the question of whom to give directories, the Board found that the consensus was for giving it to all households as a neighborhood resource and to maintain the value of advertising space in the publication, which helps offset printing costs. While some members did not initially like the idea of giving the directory to non-paying households, the overall benefit of doing so, along with the change to not list non-participating members, was accepted as a package by the Board.

Board members discussed the upcoming directory printing. Advertisements will be solicited, and any members who wish to have ads run for their businesses can contact the Vice President, Steve Schuck.

Bob reported that the annual Yard Sale was a success, with about the same number of households participating as in prior years. Efforts to get the advertising out and signs put up were appreciated. Thanks are due to Steve Schuck for the effort. Another large banner sign will be procured for next year.

Another local development issue discussed was the Montrose Road and Route 355 area. Plans for improvement to Montrose east from Rockville Pike to Georgia Avenue are on hold, and the State is holding up money for the Rockville Pike and Montrose Road overpass. However, a meeting on the overpass/intersection scheduled for June

appeared to indicate that construction would start. No further information was available at the time of the meeting, however.

The Secretary, Tom Hall, reported that no new nominations had been received for the Officers of MSCA. All current officers, however, agreed to continue to serve if selected. A vote of those present was unanimous for retaining the current Officers.

In closing, the President noted that he wished to thank the Officers and volunteers. He thanked everyone for coming.

Meeting was adjourned.

Updates on The Seven Locks Rd Sidewalk/Bikeway Project

From: John Hutchings - Project Manager
[As of May 19, 2008 – via e-mail]

Mr. Gross - I received your phone message regarding this project. We are between Phase I and Phase II Facility Planning stages. I can tell you: We have completed Phase I Facility Planning.

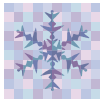
The County Council's Transportation and Environment Committee has recommended moving forward with the project based on an alternative that includes 5' bike lanes on both sides on Seven Locks Road, an 8' shared use path on the west side and a 5' sidewalk on the east side (and other improvements).

Funding has been allocated for Facility Planning Phase II which should Fall/Winter '08. The topographical survey of the area is should be complete summer '08.

[As of December 8, 2008 – via e-mail]

Bob - The topographical survey is complete. We are waiting on the new basic ordering agreement to be finalized prior to signing our engineering consultant (Wilson T. Ballard). I did meet with the consultant at Seven Locks Road the week before Thanksgiving and look forward to starting work for Phase 2 Facility Planning soon. The way things are moving I don't expect to get started until after the holidays. I do intend to send out newsletters once we have something to report. I plan to send 2 during this phase. We will also have a public meeting and a hearing. If you and/or someone from Montgomery Square Citizen's Association would like to meet with me at Seven Locks Road we could go over your concerns.

Questions from the Neighborhood



Snow Removal

Q - Who clears sidewalks of snow?

A - Property owners are responsible for clearing their public sidewalks, driveways and entrances within 24 hours of the end of a snowstorm. All residents are strongly encouraged to clear the sidewalks in front of their homes, as well as assisting those who may not be physically able to do so.

Need help clearing a sidewalk?

Start with our neighborhood Youth Services Directory advertisers:

Ethan & Jonah Dwares	301-279-9258
Jayson Hirschman	301-424-0123
Avi Kurlantzick	301-294-4806



Animal Etiquette

Q – We love Montgomery Square and are happy that people are active and walking around the community. On occasion, dog walkers do not clean up after their pet. Can the neighborhood association do anything about this?

A – In that we are simply a Citizen's Association, we have no rules or regulations that are binding on the neighborhood. The County laws and regulations guide the actions of the neighbors. In this case, if you don't want to approach the individual, feel free to contact the County.

By the way – if other readers are having this problem, let us know.

For the Dog issue, the below information was excerpted from:

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov>
search Animal Services

Selected County Animal Control Laws

For further information, or to report an animal bite or a violation of animal control laws, call the Animal Services Division at 240-773-5960. For after-hours emergencies, call 240-773-5900.

Unwanted Contact

The pet owner must prevent unwelcome or unsolicited threatening physical contact or close proximity to a person or a domestic animal that occurs outside the owner's property that may cause alarm in a reasonable person, such as biting, chasing, tracking, inhibiting movement, or jumping. **Penalty for Violation: \$500**

Animal Defecation (pooper scooper law)

An owner must not allow an animal to damage or defecate on property outside of the owner's property. An animal may defecate on public property or the common area of property in which the owner shares an interest if the owner immediately removes and disposes of the feces by a sanitary method approved by the Director. Feces may be picked up in a plastic bag. If this bag is placed inside another plastic bag, it may be put out for disposal in your normal household trash. **Penalty for Violation - \$100**



Road Improvements

Q – We would like to see Road improvements, specifically:

- *A right turn lane from East bound Montrose onto Seven Locks*
- *A left turn lane from West bound Montrose onto Whites Ford*
- *Make Devilwood Drive and Whites Ford a four-way stop or figure out how to get people coming from Montrose on Whites Ford to stop as required.*

A – The Association will carry more weight with the appropriate County and State offices for these issues, but nothing gets done easily. We can use anyone who has expertise or wants to learn about these issues to help us.



Neighborhood Rules

Q – We have a neighbor who keeps a lot of trash and unused items in the yard. What are the rules and who do we contact?

A – As with the pet issue, the County is the place to go. The below information was excerpted from:

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov>
search Housing Code

Code enforcement in DHCA and DPS is generally initiated through complaints. This means that both agencies rely on citizens to identify and report possible code violations.

One of the Department of Housing and Community Affairs' most important responsibilities is the preservation and improvement of housing and property standards through the enforcement of the Montgomery County Code. Chapter 26, Housing and Building Maintenance Standards, Chapter 48, Solid Waste and Chapter 58, Weeds.

To report any of the following conditions, call (240) 777-3785.

UNLICENSED ACCESSORY APARTMENTS - An accessory apartment is a private self-contained living area within an existing dwelling or within a subordinate building on the property. A Special Exception from the Montgomery County Board of Appeals is required before an accessory apartment can be constructed in a residential area. Accessory apartments are inspected annually for continued compliance with the requirements for the Special Exception and for life safety and health issues.

ACCUMULATIONS OF SOLID WASTE - Examples of solid waste are: garbage, medical waste, debris from building construction, ashes, junk, dead animals, dead or felled trees, uprooted tree stumps, tree limbs, bushes, plants, leaves, grass, garden trimmings, abandoned vehicles, machinery, bottles, cans, waste paper, cardboard, boxes, containers, tires, appliances, furniture, automobiles, trucks and recreational equipment, any or all of which is in a state of disrepair or are not operational.

GRASS AND WEEDS IN EXCESS OF 12" - Generalized growth of any weed or any generalized plant growth more than 12" high within 15' of any property boundary is not permitted. Generalized plant growth does not include trees, ornamental shrubs, flowers or garden vegetables.

DETERIORATED STRUCTURES - Examples of deterioration are; gutters and downspouts that are loose or leaking; flaking and/or peeling paint on exterior wood trim; missing or dilapidated roof shingles, missing or damaged siding, cracked and chipped concrete walkways or steps.

PUBLIC NUISANCE - Examples of public nuisances are: Vacant and unsecured buildings, unprotected or abandoned wells, open shafts.



A bit of history, as written by Rob Doherty, MSCA resident and former editor of the Tetragon

based on an interview with Shirley Seymour, an original resident.

This article appeared in the Tetragon of Fall 2003 and we thought we'd reprint it for the enjoyment of our many new residents.

THE WAY WE WERE: AN ORIGINAL OWNER REMEMBERS

Imagine this: No Cabin John Shopping Center. No Montgomery Mall. No Beverly Farms Elementary School. No Metro.

That's how things were when the original owners of homes in Montgomery Square moved in some 40 years ago.

At that time, Montgomery Square was considered a far suburb of Washington, recalls Shirley Seymour, who moved to her home at 11907 Henry Fleet Drive on April 4, 1964. "It was way out," says Shirley, who moved from an apartment on upper Connecticut Avenue in Washington. "People thought we had moved to the other side of the world."

Drawn to Montgomery Square initially by the neighborhood's wooded environment, Shirley says she and her neighbors came to appreciate it as a great place to raise their growing families.

"We had about 15 kids in about five houses," she says of her immediate neighbors. "It was like a pack. They would swarm from house to house."

Summers meant days at the Copenhaver pool. Winters meant afternoons at the Cabin John ice rink. Fourth of July meant fireworks at a field near Montgomery Mall that is now home to Jim Coleman Toyota and Home Depot's Expo store.

For the most part, Montgomery Square mothers stayed at home with their children.

"No Metro. No buses. No nothing," Shirley says. "When your husband left in the morning with the car, that was it."

Second cars soon became the norm and the area began to grow into the community that we know today. Shopping for clothes was now done at Montgomery Mall, not at Wheaton Plaza or in Chevy Chase. Food shopping was now done at Cabin John, not on Rockville Pike. Post Oak Road from Seven Locks was extended westward beyond the Pepco lines.

And, after awhile, the neighborhood no longer seemed very remote at all.

"Now, of course, you feel close to everything," says Shirley. "'Way out' is West Virginia now."



The Schuck Group

301-215-4716

TheSchucks@longandfoster.com

www.TheSchucks.com



 <p>Atwell Road Close Date 3/31/08 \$635,600</p>	 <p>Atwell Road Close Date 3/19/08 \$605,000</p>	 <p>Atwell Road Close Date 4/30/08 \$675,000</p>
 <p>Captain Smith Court Close Date 5/29/08 \$620,000</p>	<p>2008 Year To Date Sales Report (from MRIS Reports)</p> <p>Montgomery Square & Regent Park</p>	 <p>Chilham Place Close Date 6/27/08 \$668,000</p>
 <p>Devilwood Drive Close Date 10/9/08 \$675,500</p>	 <p>Jubal Early Court Close Date 11/21/08 \$650,000</p>	 <p>Postoak Road Close Date 8/29/08 \$650,000</p>
 <p>Seven Locks Road Close Date 8/22/08 \$1,050,000</p>	 <p>Smoketree Road Close Date 7/28/08 \$740,000</p> <p>Information deemed reliable but not guaranteed</p>	 <p>Stratton Drive Close Date 11/4/08 \$565,000</p>

Since 1978, we've been helping people move into, out of, and around the area.

Our Success Starts With Your Success!

Steve Schuck - Montgomery Square Resident - 301-580-0177c