



View From the Hill

Reservoir Hill . . . A Community Blooming with Opportunity!

Reservoir Hill Improvement Council, 2001 Park Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21217; Tel: (410) 225-7547; Fax: (410) 225-7455; www.reservoirhill.net

Community Briefing April 2008

Greening Reservoir Hill: Tree Inventory Survey Training – 12 April

RHIC is launching a spring campaign to conduct a tree inventory of every street tree in Reservoir Hill using a specially designed urban forest database called i-Tree. Why do this? Because we want to increase the tree canopy in the neighborhood as part of the City's TreeBaltimore campaign. The information gathered will help us to quantify the dollar value of annual environmental and aesthetic benefits: energy conservation, air quality improvement, CO₂ reduction, stormwater control, and property value increase. The survey will also allow us to take a more comprehensive approach towards our future greening efforts and provide measurable benchmarks with which we can approach potential funders.

Project Contact: Michael Gaffney, 410.225.7547, mgaffney@reservoirhill.net

Greenlight Baltimore – 12 April

The Greenlight Baltimore tour & community fair at the Clarence Du Burns Arena, 1301 Elmwood Avenue, will highlight Baltimore's diverse and varied neighborhoods. Sponsored by Live Baltimore Home Center the tour and fair is designed to introduce Baltimore to individuals and families who will be moving to Maryland as a result of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process. Reservoir Hill will be represented among the booths. The event will happen on 12 April, 11:30 am – 1:30 pm.

Project Contact: Carl Cleary, (410) 225-7547, ccleary@reservoirhill.net

Beginners Bicycle Clinic – Druid Hill Park – 12 April

Join the Department of Recreation & Parks and friends for a free Beginner's Bicycle Clinic. The clinic will cover basic bicycle maintenance checks, selecting the right bike for you, proper body alignment, appropriate seat height, and riding safety. The clinic will be held Saturday, 12 April, 10:00 am to Noon, in Druid Hill Park at the reservoir near the basketball and tennis courts. Bring your own helmet and bike, or, for a \$2 donation, use a Recreation & Parks bike.

Project Contact: Anne Draddy, (443) 984-4058

Spring into Bach at First Unitarian Church – Free Concert – 13 April

On Sunday, 13 April at 1:00 p.m., award winning pianist, William Larsen, will perform an all-Bach recital as the final event of the 2007-2008 Cultural Series of the First Unitarian Church of Baltimore. The free performance (contributions accepted) will take place in the church's Parrish Hall, 514 N. Charles St. The program includes Bach's Italian Concerto in F major, BWV 971; Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue in D minor, BWV 903, and Overture in the French Style in B minor, BWV 831

Project Contact: Mickie, (410) 685-2330, office@firstunitarian.net

Next Reservoir Hill Peace Patrol Walk – 14 April

The Reservoir Hill Peace Patrol will hold its next walk on 14 April 2008 commencing at 7:00 pm from St. Francis Neighborhood Center at 2405 Linden Avenue. Come hear about the changes in the team and why the new name, and join in your neighbors as they walk. Peace Patrol members are volunteers who patrol their communities. Residents do not take enforcement action; they only observe. Peace Patrol volunteers do not carry weapons and are encouraged to avoid confrontation.

Project Contact: Joe Lazazzera, (410) 669-4060, grlazazzera@verizon.net

Clean Your Files Day – Special Recycling Pick-Up – Register by 15 April

On Monday, 21 April, the Department of Public Works (DPW) will organize a one-day collection of recyclables from Baltimore businesses and institutions. On "Clean Your Files Day," DPW will pick up office paper, mixed paper of all colors, mail, books, phone books, newsprint, folders, magazines, and cardboard. Because of Baltimore's new single stream program, DPW will also pick up aluminum, tin and steel food and beverage containers, glass bottles and jars and plastic bottles and jar. "Clean Your Files Day" is a nationwide event sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Mayors in observance of Earth Day, 22 April. To participate, groups must register on or before Tuesday, April 15 by calling (410) 396-4511. To make recycling a part of your daily routine, or to find out more information on recycling, check your 2008 DPW Calendar, go to www.baltimorecity.gov, or call 311.

Project Contact: Christiana Usenza, 410.225.7547, cusenza@reservoirhill.net

Dr. Alonso to Speak at Mt. Royal Elementary/Middle School – 16 April

Mt. Royal Elementary/Middle School's P.T.A. proudly presents "An evening with Dr. Andres Alonso," CEO for the Baltimore City Public School System. All parents are encouraged to attend on 16 April at 6:00 pm in the school's auditorium for a conversation with Dr. Alonso. Dr. Alonso has made it clear that he wants parents to be active partners in the education of our children. This meeting will give participant the opportunity to speak directly wit the CEO of our school system.

Project Contact: Darryl Smith, (410) 225-7547, dsmith@reservoirhill.net

Hearing on Renewal of Linden Liquors Liquor Permit – 17 April

The protest of the renewal of the liquor license for Linden Bar and Liquors will be held at the renewal hearing on Thursday, 17 April at 2:30 pm in Room 215 of City Hall, 100 North Holiday Street. Proper identification is required upon entering the building. If you would like to attend, contact Adam Meister. Transportation to the hearing can be arranged if needed.

Project Contact: Adam Meister, (410) 225-9128, orioles76@yahoo.com

Spring Clean Up – 19 April

Reservoir Hill residents will be participating in the Mayor's Spring Clean Up on Saturday, 19 April. RHIC will be supporting neighbors who will be cleaning up the area where they live. We will be providing tools and bags as supplies last. People may pick up supplies at the RHIC offices at 2001 Park Avenue as of 9:00 am on 19 April. Our understanding from the Department of Public Works is that one truck will be assigned to Reservoir Hill. RHIC plans to host a cook out after the clean up for those individuals that participate in the clean up.

Project Contact: Darryl Smith, (410) 225-7547, dsmith@reservoirhill.net

Charm City Bike & Brunch – 19 April – Druid Hill Park Bike Tour

On the 3rd Saturday of every month, April through October, the Department of Recreation & Parks and friends will sponsor guided tours of Baltimore parks, trails, and surrounding neighborhoods, including Druid Hill Parks and the Jones Falls Trail, Herring run Park, Federal Hill, Stony Run, and Patterson Park, as well as a canoe ride on the Middle Branch. All tours will be followed by lunch at a nearby local restaurant. Each tour is \$15. On 19 April, the tour will be of Druid Hill Park and the Jones Falls Trail. Riders will meet at the Druid Hill reservoir at 10:00 am.

Project Contact: Anne Draddy, (443) 984-4058

St. Francis Neighborhood Center Community Hour –21 April

St. Francis Neighborhood Center hosts a safe place where Reservoir Hill residents can have open discussion on the challenges that they encounter. This session continues concludes work on the survey of traffic needs initiated at a previous Community Hour. These monthly informal discussions take place every third Monday from 7pm- 8pm at the St. Francis Neighborhood Center, 2405 Linden Avenue (Corner of Linden Avenue & Whitelock Street). Residents take active roles in planning and leading community initiatives, topics and projects.

Project Contact: Sarah Taylor, (410) 669-2612, staylo@mac.com

Next Homebuyer Workshop – 23 April 2008

The next homebuyer workshop is scheduled for 23 April 2008 from 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm at St. Francis Community Center, 2405 Linden Avenue. The workshops provide a broad overview of each step of the home buying process, from budgeting and affordability to contracts and mortgage process. The workshops are free, but pre-registration is required.

Project Contact: Carl Cleary, (410) 225-7547, ccleary@reservoirhill.net

Order Recycling Bins Through RHIC – 24 April Deadline

In response to a resident inquiry RHIC consulted the City regarding the bulk purchase of Recycling bins. As a result, RHIC will take orders for the bins and have them delivered to our office for distribution at our Green Fair on May 4. The deadline for you order is April 24, 2008. The 18 Gallon bins are \$5.00 and the 25 gallon bins are \$12.00. Please make your checks or money orders payable to RHIC. Any questions can be directed to Darryl Smith,

Project Contact: Darryl Smith, (410) 225-7547, dsmith@reservoirhill.net

Opening of the Jones Falls Trail bike Ride – 3 May

In celebration of the opening of the Jones Falls Trail and National Bike, join people from across the city in a bike ride of the new trail. The event will be held on 3 May from 11:00 am – 12:30 pm, starting in historic Druid Hill Park near the statue of Christopher Columbus. Enter the raffle to win a FREE Specialized RockHopper mountain bike. Participate in the mini ride or take on the entire Trail. A limited number of bikes will be available to rent for the Trail ride. This event is FREE and open to the public. For more information, please visit: www.baltimorecity.gov/recnparks or call 410.396.7900.

Project Contact: Michael Gaffney, 410.225.7547, mgaffney@reservoirhill.net

Friends of Druid Hill Park Relay Race – 3 May

The Friends of Druid Hill Park are organizing a relay race around the lake to precede the Mayor's Jones Falls Trail Opening on 3 May. The event should start around 10:00 am at the Columbus statue. They want neighborhood associations like RHIC to field a team of 3-4 community residents to "compete" in the relay. The idea is to bring neighborhoods together for a fun and goofy event. The winning team may receive a prize. It should be a fun, if not comical event. Please let RHIC know if you are interested in representing the Reservoir Hill Riders. Contact Darryl Smith to sign up for the event.

Project Contact: Darryl Smith, (410) 225-7547, dsmith@reservoirhill.net

Greening Reservoir Hill: Third Annual Green Fair in Reservoir Hill – 4 May

On Sunday, 4 May RHIC will host its Green Fair from 10:00 am -1:00 pm. Projects include: a Tree survey to take inventory on Res Hill's trees to help double the tree canopy, German Park clean up and pruning, Drain stenciling (with signs that say, "don't dump, drains to bay" to bring awareness about runoff into the Chesapeake), Planting flowers in and painting the flower pots on Chauncey Avenue, Tree planting in the Whitelock green lot, Cleaning up and planting in the community gardens on Whitelock and on Lennox. We are asking each area of the community to contribute volunteers. If there is a project that you would like to participate in please contact Christiana Usenza. We will also have tables from local environmental organizations at the corner of Whitelock & Linden avenues. There will be recycling bins for those of you that order them from Darryl Smith. There will be presentations on Greening your Home in the Recreation Center. Following this event, at 2:00 pm, is the Kids on the Hill Sounds of Hope and Change music concert at Beth Am. Exciting day--come out and join us!

Project Contact: Darryl Smith, (410) 225-7547, dsmith@reservoirhill.net

Sounds of Hope and Change – A Multi-Cultural Celebration – 4 May

Kids on the Hill is sponsoring a multi-cultural celebration of diversity through music on Sunday 4 May 2008. Come hear the fabulous sounds of the soulful Lea Gilmore, croon to Charm City Klezmer, jam to Korean drumming and experience the flow and funk of beat box performer Shodekeh. The show will also feature the charismatic Joyce J. Scott as our queen of inspiration and mistress of ceremonies. The Celebration concert starts at 2:00 pm at Beth Am Synagogue, 2501 Eutaw Place. Cost: \$25/adults \$10/students \$5/children under 14. Make a day of it and join us for a Fundraiser Brunch before the concert! The brunch is 11:00 am – 1:30 pm at 2412 Madison Ave. (2 blocks from Beth Am). The cost of the brunch and priority seating at the concert is \$100. To register, send checks to Kids on the Hill, 2117 Brookfield Avenue, Baltimore MD 21217. For more information call (410) 383-7200, ext. 1.

Project Contact: Rebecca Yenawine, (410) 383-7200, ext. 1, rebeccayenawine@kidsonthehill.org

2nd Annual Greater Coppin Heights/Rosemont Community Housing Fair – 7 June

This FREE event is designed to meet the information and service needs of current renters, prospective homebuyers, and current homeowners. There's something for everyone! The Honorable Mayor Sheila Dixon has already confirmed her attendance! The event will include vendors and workshops: · Home Buying Made Simple · Getting a Mortgage - Budgeting and Credit · The Tenant/Landlord Relationship - Rights and Responsibilities · Myths of Home Ownership - Tips to Avoid Foreclosure. A continental breakfast and lunch will be provided. Plus Door Prizes and Giveaways!

Project Contact: Michelle Nusum McEachern, (410) 951-3622, chcdc@coppin.edu

Closing in to Garden Tour Time! – 7 & 8 June

Summer's coming and so is the 14th Annual Garden and Home Tour. This celebration of modern urban living, sponsored by Bolton-Park Neighbors and Historic Mount Royal Terrace, showcases the very best city life has to offer and features old and new urban lifestyles, ranging from the traditional to the whimsical.. Much of Reservoir Hill was built in the 1890's, and the area still contains numerous Victorian architectural treasures and has been featured in publications such as Victorian Homes, Baltimore Magazine, and Urbanite Magazine. Tours are from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm on 7 June and 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm on 8 June. Tickets are \$10, including refreshments and live acoustic music, and can be purchased the day of the tour at the corner of Park Avenue and Reservoir Street.

Project Contact: Dave Horn, (410) 902-8252, dwhornii@aol.com

National Healthy Homes Festival – 12-14 September

The National Healthy Homes Festival will be held at Druid Hill Park 12-14 September. The festival will bring together national and local community partners; lead and asthma prevention programs; Healthy Homes organizations, health, housing, and environmental agencies; local universities; federal, state, and city agencies; and the citizens of Baltimore in an effort to promote the benefits of Healthy Homes. The purpose of the festival is to inform and educate the public about what actions to take in their homes to prevent harmful diseases and illnesses caused by toxins such as lead, mold and other home base environmental hazards while reinforcing Mayor Dixon's "Cleaner Greener Baltimore" initiative. The festival is expected to attract more than 10,000 people. Hold the date and stay tuned for updates.

Project Contact: Michelle LeDonne, (410) 534-6447, mledonne@leadsafe.org

"Agent of Positive Change" Awards Luncheon & Silent Auction – 20 September

Coppin Heights Community Development Corporation (CHCDC) recognizes individuals and organizations for their work to bring about positive social and economic change in Baltimore City and their work on behalf of the Greater Coppin Heights/Rosemont Community. CHCDC presents the "Agent of Positive Change" Awards at an annual luncheon and silent auction event as a salute to those exemplifying leadership in positive change. The event will be held on Saturday, 20 September 2008, 11:00 am - 2:00 pm at Coppin State University, 2500 West North Avenue, in the Dining & Meeting Hall. Costs: Members \$20 | Future Members \$25 | Students \$15. All proceeds from this event will benefit CHCDC's neighborhood improvement and youth development initiatives. To purchase tickets or inquire about sponsorship opportunities, call (410) 951-3622.

Project Contact: Michelle Nusum McEachern, (410) 951-3622, chcdc@coppin.edu

RHIC Supports a Homeownership Project for Druid Park Lake Drive

RHIC conducted a series of focus group meetings and a presentation at the April Community Meeting to allow residents the opportunity to hear from and discuss the proposal by CIMG to build a high-end rental development on Druid Park Lake Drive, constructed to provide for future sale of the units as condos. At the conclusion of these public presentations, Reservoir Hill Improvement Council communicated to Mayor Dixon by way of letter to Housing Commissioner Paul Graziano, that RHIC cannot support the proposed development as it does not give the community the homeownership project that it has requested for years. RHIC has requested a meeting with Commissioner Graziano and others to discuss the organization's position and options for the project.

Project Contact: Carl Cleary, (410) 225-7547, ccleary@reservoirhill.net

Education Team – Reaching Out to Reservoir Hill Schools – Volunteers Needed

The new Baltimore City Public Schools System (BCPSS) budget dramatically increases the amount of discretionary funds allocated to each school principal. When all is said and done, it seems that principals will have around \$1,000 more per child to spend in discretionary funds. Under the new system the school itself can determine priority needs for the discretionary funds, and act more strategically and rapidly. How effective community and parent involvement will be in a school's use of these discretionary funds remains unclear, which is where we come in. We have an opportunity during April and May to create relationships with the schools that serve Reservoir Hill youth, learn how the principals plan to spend the new discretionary funds, and stimulate parent involvement in the process.

We are looking for volunteers who can help with outreach to the schools that serve Reservoir Hill youth, including John Eager Howard Elementary, Mt. Royal Elementary and Middle, Westside Elementary, Frederick Douglass High, Carver Vocational-Technical High, and Maritime Industries Academy. Volunteers will visit with the principal, introducing themselves and RHIC, discussing the principal's views and ideas around the discretionary funds, and asking for PTA contacts. Afterward, we will work to create parent discussions at the schools to build input into the funding process, and engage more parents around education issues. To help, please contact Richard Gwynallen.

Project Contact: Richard Gwynallen, (410) 225-7547, rgwynallen@reservoirhill.net

New Mission Statement for RHIC

As a result of several strategic discussions about its work and purpose, RHIC has changed the wording of its mission statement to make it more action oriented. Readers can see the new mission statement at the close of this Community Briefing. The changes are intended to reflect the reality of what RHIC is: a dynamic, action-oriented organization.

Project Contact: John Ruffin, (410) 225-7547, jruffin@reservoirhill.net

Receivership Stepping Up Again?

RHIC received word that a vacant house on Bolton Street is entering the receivership process. In response to RHIC's drive for increased code enforcement activity in 2006 several houses ended up in receivership and being sold at auction. However, in 2007, the receivership process ground to a halt. We need code enforcement to prosecute a sustained campaign against the owners of vacant houses, and hope this indicates a trend in their return to action. A house ends up in receivership when the city has exhausted the legal process to enforce compliance by a property owner with building code violations.

Project Contact: Carl Cleary, (410) 225-7547, ccleary@reservoirhill.net

Funding Our Recreation Centers Better

RHIC and Greater Homewood Community Corporation hosted a meeting in March to explore ways of better and more equitably funding recreation centers. Ten organizations from around Baltimore participated, and a coalition is emerging to develop a proposal to address funding and structural needs for Baltimore's recreation centers. The meeting participants want to work with the City to improve funding, staffing, and volunteerism at the centers, and to create better working relations between the centers and community associations that could help support recreation center programs.

Project Contact: Richard Gwynallen, (410) 225-7547, rgwynallen@reservoirhill.net

Linden Avenue Block Club Members Initiate Listserve for Residents

Members of the Linden Avenue Block Club have started a listserv to facilitate more dialogue between residents on a variety of topics. If you would like to join in on the email dialogues, go to: <http://groups.google.com/group/reshill>

Project Contact: Brian Morrison, (443) 253-7757, william.morrison@ngc.com

Changes to the RHIC Website

If you have not recently visited the RHIC website, you will find a few additions. There is now a Calendar of Events on the home page, a 4 May Kids on the Hill event announced, and recent testimony and statements on key issues. You can visit the site at www.reservoirhill.net If you have an event or meeting that you think would be of interest to visitors of the website, please send in the basic info for the Calendar of Events, plus any website or flier that could be linked to the listing.

Project Contact: Richard Gwynallen, (410) 225-7547, rgwynallen@reservoirhill.net

4 ½% Loans for Remodeling Your Home! Lowest Rate in 4 Years

Get a low-interest Healthy Neighborhoods loan to remodel your home! Free architectural advice and low-interest rehab loans are available through Healthy Neighborhoods. Other exceptional loan features are: an ability to borrow more than the after-rehab value of the home, as well as no mortgage insurance requirement. Contact Carl Cleary to learn more, or to take the first step in applying for a Healthy Neighborhoods loan.

Project Contact: Carl Cleary, (410) 225-7547, ccleary@reservoirhill.net

End of General Assembly Update on School Construction Funding

RHIC staff and Reservoir Hill residents advocated in Annapolis in cooperation with the ACLU, the Maryland PTA, League of Women Voters, and parents to prevent deep cuts in school construction funds. Our main objectives were to: (1) prevent cuts to the Aging Schools Program (ASP); and (2) support the governor's proposal of \$333 million dollars for the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), known as school construction funds. The ASP will be fully funded for FY09. Also, the capital improvement program for school construction has allocated the full \$333 million proposed by the governor; second only to last year's amount of \$400 million. Reservoir Hill advocates played a major role in education advocacy this year through letter writing and testifying at hearings. Still, there is much more work to be done in our Better Schools Initiative. If any reader would like to work more on RHIC's school improvement activities, please join the Education Team.

Project Contact: Richard Gwynallen, (410) 225-7547, rgwynallen@reservoirhill.net

Use This Link to Make a Donation to RHIC Online! Thank You!

<http://www.reservoirhill.net/donate.htm>

Any questions relative to the policies or programs of RHIC should be directed to Executive Director John Henry Ruffin at 410.225.7547, or by email to jruffin@reservoirhill.net.

Mission

RHIC unites, empowers, and mobilizes residents and organizations as a vehicle by which to define and take action on issues common to the Reservoir Hill Community.

Goal

To revitalize the physical and human infrastructure of Reservoir Hill without resulting in full-scale gentrification and significant displacement, including rehabilitation of deteriorating buildings; alleviating poverty and its attendant problems, including, sanitation, public safety, education, low homeownership, and unemployment; and making the organized, informed voice of residents influential and effective.

Strategy

As an umbrella organization, the foundation of RHIC's approach is to aggregate the power of local associations and institutions through a community-wide infrastructure for educating residents, training leaders, promoting mutual support among community associations, developing common perspectives and strategy, and implementing collective projects and campaigns. The underlying principles of this strategic approach are that organized people and economic development lead to community empowerment; empowerment achieved as a result of networking, combining talents and resources, and wielding the power of an educated, united citizenry in a program grounded in economic and social equity.