



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 2011

Remembering Father Tom Composto

In memory of Fr. Tom Composto, a memorial page has been created on St. Francis Neighborhood Center's website to honor his extraordinary life.

Please visit: <http://www.stfranciscenter.org/2011/03/in-loving-memory-of-fr-tom-composto/>

Come to the April Community Meeting!

Tuesday, 5 April 2011, 7:00 pm
John Eager Howard Recreation Center, 2100 Brookfield Avenue

What's Happening with Madison Park North?

Housing Commissioner Paul Graziano, and senior Baltimore Housing and Housing & Urban Development staff, will report on the status of any proposals to renovate the Madison Park North complex, and other actions the City is taking regarding conditions at the complex.

We encourage all residents to participate in this meeting as whatever actions are taken regarding the Madison Park North complex affects the community as a whole.

Councilwoman Belinda Conaway will be in attendance at the Community Meeting.



Reservoir Hill is a Healthy Neighborhoods community

New City Council Representation for Reservoir Hill

With the City Council's approval of the Mayor's Redistricting Plan, Reservoir Hill is moving from the 11th District, represented by Bill Cole, to the 7th District, represented by Belinda Conaway. Councilwoman Conaway recently toured the community. We stopped by St. Francis Neighborhood Center where the councilwoman met Sarah Tarighi Murphy and people involved in the POWER Project, German park, where Arthur Shulman joined the tour to discuss our vision for the park, Beth Am Synagogue, where Henry Feller and Arthur Shulman discussed the synagogue's history and work in the community, and John Eager Howard Recreation Center where the councilwoman met Center Director, Carolyn, "Cookie" Newton. The tour also allowed the councilwoman to see the community gardens and Whitelock Community Farm, John Eager Howard School, Reservoir Hill Mutual Homes, Madison Park North, the community's small parks, the challenges facing the community along parts of Callow Avenue, and potential development sites, such as the city-owned lots on Druid Park Lake Drive.

You can reach Councilwoman Belinda Conaway *by phone* at (410) 396-4810, *by mail* at 100 N. Holliday Street, Room 548, City Hall, Baltimore, MD 21202; or *by email* at Belinda.Conaway@baltimorecity.gov

Councilman Cole, who has served Reservoir Hill so remarkably well, will continue to be an ally in future community needs, and we look forward to continuing to work with him.

Preparing for the Mayor's Spring Clean-Up – 16 April

Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake will attend the Reservoir Hill Spring Clean-Up!

The Clean Up will focus on several sites around the community, including Whitelock Street between Linden Avenue and Brookfield Avenue, the vacant lot at the intersection of Druid Park Lake Drive and Linden Avenue, as well as various alleys. The Whitelock Community Farm, Reservoir Hill Community Garden, and Lennox Street Community Garden will all host volunteers. Need tools or help planning to clean up your block? Contact Teddy Krolik.

Project Contact: Teddy Krolik, (410) 225-7547, tkrolik@reservoirhill.net

Around the Community

Would You Like to Help Promote the Neighborhood?

There will be a Reservoir Hill booth at the Flower Mart in Mount Vernon on 6 and 7 May and at Live Baltimore's Buying Into Baltimore Homebuying Fair and Neighborhood Tours on 14 May. We need neighborhood volunteers who love where they live to speak with folks interested in the community. If you have some time to give, contact Rick Gwynallen

Project Contact: Rick Gwynallen, (443) 984-4058, rgwynallen@reservoirhill.net

Upper Park Avenue Residents Awarded Parks & People Grant

Last year group of residents who live on Park Avenue north of Whitelock Street began working with RHIC to plan a number of neighborhood improvements on their blocks. The group has been awarded its first grant from Parks and People Foundation to provide funds for improving the median strip on Park Avenue north of Whitlock Street.

Project Contact: Andrea Robinson, andrea.robinson@dc.gov

Donation Secured to Help Build a New Playground in German Park

RHIC has received a \$10,000 donation to help build a new playground at German Park north of Whitelock Street. The German Park Working Group has been approaching funders and designing a plan for community engagement in what such a park would look like. Baltimore Housing has been very supportive of the effort, agreeing to retain ownership of the site, maintain general liability for the playground, and tear up the concrete and remove the old play equipment. On the 20th of March the German Park Working Group held an event in German Park to build community momentum for a new playground. Check out pictures of the event:

<https://picasaweb.google.com/HowardfFnkPhotography/HELPTOBUILDAPLAYGROUND?feat=email#>

Project Contact: Ellis Brown, egbrownjr@hotmail.com, or Miriam Burg, miriamburg@yahoo.com

St. Francis Hiring Power Project Program Manager

LeVar Jones, St. Francis neighborhood Center's (SFNC) Program Manager for the Power Project, has been with the Center since the launch of the Power Project in 2009. He has been instrumental in the program's growth and success and has advanced the Power Project's vision beyond any of our expectations. SFNC announced that LeVar is leaving his position as the Program Manager but will be serving SFNC and the Reservoir Hill community through a different avenue, continuing to work towards the empowerment of so many Baltimore City youth in his new role.

SFNC is hiring a new Program Manager for the Power Project as well as a Program Assistant. For a job description contact Sarah Tarighi Murphy.

Project Contact: Sarah Tarighi Murphy, (410) 669-2612, sarah.tarighi@stfranciscenter.org

University of Baltimore Reservoir Hill History Project Update

Last semester, two University of Baltimore classes were devoted to Reservoir Hill history. One class took oral histories in the community, and the other studied the history of blocks in Reservoir Hill. Material from both classes has now been assembled in presentation form, and will be available online later in April. Watch for announcements!

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

The Future of Reservoir Hill's Peace Patrol

As most of you know, the Peace Patrol Walks were headed by Father Tom. This program meant a lot to him and St. Francis Neighborhood Center and the Peace Patrol participants are hoping to continue to advance his vision. Joe Lazazzera has taken the initiative to open a conversation and process on this matter. He would like to schedule a meeting for the interested parties in April to discuss and plan for the renewal of the Peace Patrol. If you are interested in taking part in the Peace Patrol, contact Joe at grlazazzera@verizon.net.

Project Contact: Joe Lazazzera, grlazazzera@verizon.net

Planning Committee Starting for St. Francis' Reservoir Hill Festival

St. Francis Neighborhood Center's annual Resource Fair is being renamed as the Reservoir Hill Festival, a Baltimore Block Party dedicated to the Legacy of Fr. Tom Composto. The addition of the festival component to honor Father Tom expands the Fair's mission to • Cultivate community identity and solidarity among residents • Increase neighborhood visibility • Provide space for community engagement through the arts, recreation, and culture The Festival will take place on September 10th from 11:00 am to 7:00 pm. Anyone interested in joining the planning committee please contact Sarah Tarighi Murphy.

Project Contact: Sarah Tarighi Murphy, (410) 669-2612, sarah.tarighi@stfranciscenter.org

School News

The Greening of John Eager Howard School

There's lots of wonderful news to report from John Eager Howard School this month!

John Eager Howard School has been selected as one of the four sites in the city for the Healthy Food in Motion Campaign. As part of the campaign, the Baltimore City Department of Planning and University of Maryland Extension will work with elementary schools, including John Eager Howard, to create fruit and vegetable advertisements to be displayed in city buses.

Baltimore Community Foundation will provide John Eager Howard School's Green Keepers \$850 to support future activities and field trips. The group is currently working with RHIC on a school rain garden proposal to be funded by Chesapeake Bay Trust.

Cathy Frazier of the **Judy Center hosted a farmer's market demonstration** at the John Eager Howard Recreation Center in which students selected and sampled from a variety of fresh produce. Ms. Frazier also presented exhibits on the history of African American farmers. This spring, RHIC will work with Ms. Cookie at the John Eager Recreation Center on a series of healthy cooking classes.

Green Week is Coming! 11 – 15 April 2011 is Green Week at John Eager Howard School. The weeklong focus on the environment will include a Recycling Day, Walk to School Day, Clean-Up Day, and a visit to the Whitelock Community Farm.

After students return from Spring Break, there will be a **school-wide tree planting day on 28 April 2011**. Interested in knowing more? Contact Teddy Krolik.

Project Contact: Teddy Krolik, (410) 225-7547, tkrolik@reservoirhill.net

Greening Reservoir Hill

So Much Happening at the Whitelock Community Farm!

The Whitelock Community Farm Fundraiser was a great success! At last count the Whitelock Community Farm raised \$1,100 at the recent fundraiser. If you haven't visited this "groundbreaking" project, stop by the Farm at the corner of Whitelock & Brookfield. For more details visit <http://whitelockfarm.org/>

Maryland Institute College of Art professors and students enrolled in a course on Baltimore urban farming accepted Whitelock Community Farm as a work site for students interested in hands-on farming experience. Every Friday for the rest of the Spring semester, a group of students will work on the farm for a half-day.

The Beth Am Social Action Committee and Beth Am Hebrew School have connected Beth Am youth with the Whitelock Community Farm. Members of the Farm have given presentations, both at Beth Am as well as at the Farm, on several occasions.

Two new grant proposals are being submitted by RHIC behalf of the Farm, one to Constellation Energy to install a rainwater collection irrigation system and another to PNC Bank to support a second annual Harvest Festival in the Autumn.

Project Contact: Thor Nelson, thor.nelson@gmail.com or Elisa Lane, elisa.lane@gmail.com

Come Help Plan our Next Step on Whitelock Street! Greening the Southern Side of the 900 Block

You may have noticed that in the last week new trees were planted along the south side of Whitelock Street between Linden and Brookfield. The trees represent just the beginning of what we hope will be a Spring and Summer dedicated to making Whitelock Street a community gathering space with opportunities for everyone to play, recreate, and simply enjoy a beautiful green and active place.

One major component of the new Whitelock Street will be transforming the vacant lots on the south side of the street into community parks and gardens. The great news is we have a \$25,000 grant from Healthy Neighborhoods to create a resident designed and built open space. One idea that has already been talked about by many neighbors is making places for intercommunity-wide activities, such as flea markets, movie presentations, concerts, and picnics.

To make sure we build a space where all feel comfortable and welcome, we invite you to join us for a visioning session on Sunday 10 April at 2:00 pm. At the meeting, we'd like to find out everyone's ideas for how the community could use the space, and discuss how the site design can reflect the neighborhood's interests. This will also be an opportunity to learn and talk more about greening activities on the other portions of the corridor that are being planned such as the Whitelock Community Farm or renovations to German Park

Site to be announced! For more information contact Teddy Krolik

Project Contact: Teddy Krolik, (410) 225-7547, tkrolik@reservoirhill.net

A Farmers' Market is Coming to Druid Hill Park

Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks held the first open session to establish a working group to a farmer's market located at the Rawlings Conservatory at Druid Hill Park on Wednesday, 1 June 2011. Friends of Druid Hill Park has been working with the City to get this project up and going. Two members of the Whitelock Community Farm and two staff from RHIC attended. Other attendees included representatives from other Westside communities, including Auchentoroly Terrace, Greater Mondawmin, and Park Heights. There will be weekly planning meetings throughout the Spring to coordinate transportation access, vendor commitments, and community outreach. If you are interested in helping get a farmers' market in the park, contact the RHIC office.

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

Recycling Bins Available at RHIC

Recycling bins are available at the RHIC office at 2001 Park Avenue. The large 25 gallon bins are \$6. The 18 gallon bins are \$2.50. Lids for the 25 gallon bins are \$1.50. These prices are half the cost the City charges. We are able to offer low-cost bins courtesy of a Baltimore Community Foundation Recycle More! Grant. The office is usually staffed 9:00 am – 5:00 pm, but it is best to call first to schedule a time to pick up a bin.

Project Contact: Teddy Krolik, (410) 225-7547, tkrolik@reservoirhill.net

RHIC Tool Shed

Available tools include: hoes, rakes, metal rakes, brooms, shovels, pick axes, trowels, wheelbarrows, and cultivators. Large lawn & leaf bags are also available. Residents may check out tools for no more than two weeks at a time. The tools can be signed out and picked up at the RHIC office on the "Hill" at 2001 Park Avenue from 9:00 am – 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. You will be responsible for returning the tools to the office in good condition so other people can use them, too.

Project Contact: Teddy Krolik, (410) 225-7547, tkrolik@reservoirhill.net

Around the City and State

Faith & Financial Fitness Workshop – 7 April

Associated Black Charities, in association with Mount Lebanon Baptist Church, Baltimore Homeownership Preservation Coalition, Housing & Urban Development, and Garwyn Oaks Northwest Housing Resource Center. is holding financial workshops aimed at providing people with the information and resources needed to make it during tough times. The first workshop scheduled for Thursday, 7 April 2011, at 6:00 pm (for more information, go to: <http://www.faithandfinancialfitness.com/about/>).

This forum will conduct workshops such as: • Cleaning Up Your Credit in Tough Economic Times • The ABC's of Budget Management • Homeownership Readiness: Are YOU Ready? • Mortgage Matters

The workshop will be held at Gwynns Falls Elementary School, 2700 Gwynns Falls Parkway, 21216 on Thursday, April 7, 2011, at 6:00 pm

Project Contact: Associated Black Charities, (410)659-0000. ext. 1208

Public Allies Maryland is Hiring

Public Allies Maryland is accepting applications for the 2011-2012 program year! Through the AmeriCorps program, Public Allies identifies talented young adults, ages 18-30, from diverse backgrounds who have a passion to make a difference and helps them turn that passion into a viable career path working for community and social change. They seek diverse, dedicated, service-minded individuals to serve in full-time, ten-month, paid leadership positions. The program has the goal of helping to develop the next generation of civic leaders through nonprofit apprenticeships, leadership development training, and team service projects. The next class will serve from October 2011-July 2012. Applications are accepted online at www.publicallies.org now through 15 May 2011. Applicants must have at least a GED or High School Diploma and be a US Citizen or Permanent Resident. For more information, go to the website at www.publicallies.org. An open Meet & Greet is being held on Wednesday, 13 April from 4:00 pm – 7:00 pm at the University of Maryland School of Social Work (525 W. Redwood Street Baltimore MD 21201).

Project Contact: Laura Bumiller, Senior Program Manager, (410) 706-2574

Baltimore Energy Challenge Website

Visit the Baltimore Energy Challenge (BNEC) at their website:

<http://baltimoreenergychallenge.org/systems/energy>

The BNEC website is loaded with features that can help you learn about conserving energy in the home, plan home energy retrofit projects, and find contractors and resources to keep your home healthy and energy efficient. You can even take the pledge and sign up to participate in the Challenge directly from the website! Other features are still in the works. Eventually, for example, you will be able to access and analyze your energy usage data from BGE directly from the BNEC website. BNEC is excited about continuing to make its website as useful as possible for Baltimore residents.

Project Contact: Alice Kennedy, (410) 305-9124, akennedy@baltimoreenergychallenge.org

Call 311 to Remove Abandoned Vehicles

Call 311 if you have abandoned vehicles on your block. The City will aggressively look for and remove vehicles abandoned on public or private property. Vehicles left in alleys, empty lots and on our streets by irresponsible car-owners will be addressed through this program. Most commonly, an abandoned vehicle is an unlicensed vehicle on public or private property. The city encourages residents to call 3-1-1 to report abandoned vehicles in their community. On a weekly basis code enforcement officers identify abandoned vehicles. For vehicles on public property, the City will complete the legal process and tow the vehicle within five days. For vehicles on private property, it will take up to 15 days to complete the process and tow the derelict vehicle.

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

Housing Resources

Healthy Neighborhoods Offers Forgivable Loans

Through its NSP2 Direct Purchase Program, Healthy Neighborhoods, Inc. has a \$25,000 forgivable loan available for homebuyers to help defray the cost of the purchase and renovation of a foreclosed or abandoned home in certain census tracts in the following areas: Reservoir Hill, Better Waverly, Ednor Gardens, Coldstream Homestead Montebello, Belair-Edison and Patterson Park/McElderry Park. Eligible borrowers can earn no more than 120 % of 2010 Adjusted Area Median Income, approximately \$98,640 for a family of four. The Direct Purchase Program relies on the commitment of home buyers who love city life and believe in the future of active and engaged urban communities. Healthy Neighborhoods has hired Rahn Barnes as a consultant to assist buyers in the Direct Purchase Program. For information contact Rahn Barnes at 410-332-0387 x 154 or rbarnes@healthyneighborhoods.org.

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

Current Permit Fees

To view the current fees go to: http://static.baltimorehousing.org/pdf/permits_fees.pdf The Office of Permits & Building Inspections enforces the Baltimore City Building Code, as well as state laws pertaining to construction and occupancy. This office issues building permits and provides subsequent inspections for: construction, alteration, electrical, mechanical and plumbing work in both commercial and residential structures. File your completed application in person at: The One- Stop Shop, 417 E. Fayette Street, Room 100. Not sure if your project requires a permit? Call 410-396-3360,

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

Some Advice for First Time Homebuyers and Tips on Refinancing

Buying your first house is exciting and filled with details. RHIC prepared some simple guidelines for those involved in their first purchase of a home, suggestions that will help provide a basis for sound decision making as you enter the home buying process. The paper is called "Buying Your First House." RHIC also offers some tips for those considering refinancing in "The Dos and Don'ts of Refinancing." You can both of these informational sheets from the RHIC website at <http://www.reservoirhill.net/>

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

CDBG'S First-Time Homebuyer Program

The Office of Homeownership has established the Community Block Grant Program to give qualified first time homebuyers \$5,000 toward down payment and settlement expenses. Upon receiving a counseling certificate, the borrower can then find a property and sign a contract to purchase. The property must be inspected utilizing an HQS inspection. Active City employees may qualify to receive \$3,000 in home buying incentive funds. The CDBG program has income limitations to qualify for this program. For information contact Carl Cleary.

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

"Hope for Homeowners" Program to Help Struggling Families Keep Their Homes

The *HOPE for Homeowners* program will refinance mortgages for borrowers having difficulty making their payments, but who can afford a new loan by HUD's Federal Housing Administration (FHA). The program is available only to owner occupants and offers 30-year fixed rate mortgages. The program ends 30 September 2011. For more information, go to: <http://www.hud.gov/hopeforhomeowners/>

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

Resources

Looking for Carpenters, Electricians, Painters, etc.?

The Mount Royal Improvement Association maintains a very good directory of contractors and other workers recommended by Bolton Hill residents. You can view the directory at http://www.boltonhill.org/resources/r_hird_listings.html

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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Next Community Yoga Class – 7 April

St. Francis Neighborhood Center offers free and open to the community yoga classes every Thursday, 7:30 pm – 8:30 pm at 2405 Linden Avenue in Reservoir Hill. The next session is scheduled for February 2011.

Project Contact: Sarah Tarighi Murphy, (410) 669-2612, sarah.tarighi@stfranciscenter.org

Faith & Financial Fitness Workshop – 7 April

See announcement on page 6.

Planning for the Renovation Whitelock Lots – 10 April

See Announcement on page 5.

Power Project Anniversary Celebration – 15 & 16 April

The Power Project 2nd Anniversary Event – *A Night of Dreams* will be held on Friday 15 April from 6:00 -8:00 pm at the John Eager Howard Recreation Center, 2100 Brookfield Avenue. The Power Project is a free youth development program that empowers and provides opportunities for disadvantaged youth in Reservoir Hill. The program is based on three vital pillars: education, mentoring, and the arts. For more information, please visit www.stfranciscenter.org

Project Contact: Sarah Tarighi Murphy, (410) 669-2612, sarah.tarighi@stfranciscenter.org

Next St. Francis Movie Screening – 26 April

St. Francis Neighborhood Center is screening the movie *Waiting for Superman*, followed by a brief discussion, on Tuesday, 26 April at 7:00 pm at St. Francis Neighborhood Center, 2405 Linden Avenue.

Project Contact: Sarah Tarighi Murphy, (410) 669-2612, sarah.tarighi@stfranciscenter.org

Next Homebuyer Workshop – 28 April

The next homebuyer workshop is scheduled for 28 April 2011 from 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm at the RHIC offices at 2001 Park Avenue. The workshops provide a broad overview of each step of the home buying process, including budgeting and affordability, working with realtors, purchase and sale agreements, credit and credit reports, mortgages and the mortgage process, home inspections, settlement and closing costs, and post purchase counseling. The workshops are free, but pre-registration is required.

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

Reservoir Hill is a



Community