



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 January 2012

Congratulations to

James Malo and family for their recent purchase of a home on Brookfield Avenue

Happy Birthday

Juanita Garrison Harold Garrison Velma Bailey

Get Well Soon

LeClaire Bunke

New resident? Birthdays? Births? Any reason to honor a neighbor?
Send it in to Rick Gwynallen and we'll publish the notice: rgwynallen@reservoirhil.net

Come to the February Reservoir Hill Community Meeting of 2012

Tuesday, 7 February 2011, 7:00 pm; John Eager Howard Recreation Center, 2100 Brookfield Avenue

Druid Lake UV Disinfection Project

SP Arch Inc. has been hired as consultants by Baltimore City regarding a UV disinfection project at Druid Lake. The scope for this project is to design an ultraviolet (UV) disinfection facility that will provide additional purification to the drinking water supply at Druid Lake Reservoir. Due to the size of the proposed UV disinfection facility they are reviewing three possible sites close to the existing Druid Lake Reservoir to place the facility. SP Arch Inc. architects will be at the community meeting goal to discuss the project with the community and answer any questions they may have regarding the UV disinfection facility and possible sites.

Developer Update

Jacob Danyali, the owner of 2226 and 2228 Callow Avenue, plans to renovate both buildings this year. Mr. Danayali will speak with the community about his plans for the renovations, and will take questions from the audience.

Flip the Power Energy Savings Initiative

RHIC introduces "Flip the Power: Save Money + Energy, Reservoir Hill". Did you know you can save money on your electric bill with just a few simple steps? Many of you heard about this energy saving initiative when it was introduced at the Annual Meeting back in October, and now is the time to sign up! By signing the pledge, you'll be eligible for a number of giveaways and a free Project Lightbulb visit. A sign-up and information table will be at the community meeting.



Reservoir Hill is a Healthy Neighborhoods community

Do You Support Increasing the Bottle Tax to Fund Schools?

Most of our readers probably know that Mayor Rawlings-Blake is advancing a proposal to increase the bottle tax in Baltimore City and use all the bottle tax revenues to help fund school renovation and repair. Reservoir Hill Improvement Council (RHIC) and the School & Recreation Team have long advocated for new sources of revenue that could address the serious need for renovation of school facilities throughout the city. The Mayor's proposal stands to be part of that new funding.

We want to know what you think of the Mayor's proposal.

A recent post on the RHIC blog, *Views From the Hill*, describes both the bottle tax increase that is under discussion and a proposal to address school construction and renovation needs. The post queries readers as to their support of the idea for a bottle tax to fund school renovation.

We encourage you to read the post and submit your comments. Here's the link:

<http://rhicviews.blogspot.com/>

The School & Recreation Team will be following this blog and will seriously consider every comment posted.

Sign up for Whitelock Community Farm CSA (Community Supported Agriculture)

CSA has become a popular way for consumers to buy local, seasonal food directly from a farmer. The Whitelock Community Farm (WCF) will give its members a weekly "share" of fresh, seasonal vegetables grown at the farm from June- October. Each week the share will consist of 5-6 veggies.

Here are some examples of a weekly share of produce: tomatoes, potatoes, scallions, radishes, chard, herbs **or** carrots, kale, turnips, cucumbers, peppers, green beans. This arrangement creates several rewards for both the farmer and the consumer. In brief:

Advantages for farmers:

- Spend time marketing the food early in the year, before their 16-hour days in the field begin
- Receive payment early in the season, which helps with the farm's cash flow
- Have an opportunity to get to know the people who eat the food they grow

Advantages for consumers:

- Eat ultra-fresh food, with all the flavor and vitamin benefits
- Get exposed to new vegetables and new ways of cooking
- Get to regularly visit the farm to see the produce growing.
- Kids typically favor food from "their" farm – even veggies they've never been known to eat
- Develop a relationship with the farmer who grows their food and learn more about how food is grown

Our CSA will run for 20 weeks from early June until mid October. Members will receive 5-6 items per a week in their share for a total of \$350. **We are offering a 20% discount for SNAP/EBT or WIC recipients.** Please fill out the **attached application** and send it back to Whitelock Community Farm. Space is limited so sign up today. **Please send applications, payments and questions to: farmer@whitelockfarm.org or Whitelock Community Farm, 2254 Linden Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21217. Also feel free to call us at (410) 205 – OKRA, that's 410-205-6572.**

A Reservoir Hill Home in the News

The beautiful Reservoir Hill home of Rebecca Yenawine and Mark Carter was featured in the *Baltimore Sun* on 12 January 2012.

Check out the article: [Dream Home: Reservoir of style and charm](#)

Around the Community

A New Exhibit at the Rawlings Conservatory in Druid Hill Park

The camellias are blooming in the Rawlings Conservatory in Druid Hill Park, and the Conservatory has a fascinating and expanded exhibit of Baltimore's horticultural past. This display is ongoing through 26 February. The Conservatory is a warm place on a winter day. For more information, go to:

<http://rawlingsconservatory.org/>

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

Planning Begins for the 2012 Farmers Market in Druid Hill Park

It's still winter, but there's a lot to do before the second annual Farmers Market in Druid Hill Park opens in June. The first meeting of the 2012 market season will be Friday, 3 February at 1:00 pm at the Rawlings Conservatory & Botanical Gardens at 3100 Swann Drive. We will be discussing how to integrate federal nutrition programs in to our market, and farmer recruitment. If you would like to help make this second year successful for the Druid Hill Farmers Market contact Tom Orth.

Project Contact: Tom Orth, 443.469.8274, friendsofdruidhillpark@gmail.com

History Book Project Underway

Kelly Terrill is leading a project to produce a book on the history of Reservoir Hill. The book will be published by Arcadia Publishing. It will be significantly a pictorial history, but can contain information and stories. Everyone can help.

- Does anyone have any good pictures of homes/businesses in the area? The publisher requires the photos be scanned copies of originals. Kelly is mainly looking for pictures between 1850 and 1970, but will need a few present day photos as well.
- Do you have information about individuals who live or lived in the area that are locally or nationally known?
- Do you know any good stories of events in the area that were significant or speak to the history or character of Reservoir Hill?

Project Contact: Kelly Terrill, k.dale.terrill@gmail.com

Vacant Lot Reclamation Update

The completion of two major projects is scheduled for spring 2012. *First*, the renovation of the lots on the south side of the 900 block of Whitelock Street will result in a community use space for flea markets and other community events adjacent to a shaded sitting garden. Ground was broken on this project in autumn 2011 and designs were created through a process of community design sessions in collaboration with a pro bono landscape designer. Now we are ready for construction. *Second*, the final phase of the German Park restoration will be finished, giving the community an area for picnics and family activity. At RHIC's Annual Meeting in October 2011 Commissioner Graziano committed to removing the remaining concrete. The German Park Working Group secured the necessary permits through a pro bono landscape architect acquired through Beth Am Synagogue. Baltimore Housing is currently selecting the excavation contractor. Both of these projects will be completed in the first half of the year. We are considering options for one further land reclamation project in autumn 2012.

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

New Stop Signs at Park & Lennox

Residents may have noticed the new four-way stop signs at the intersection of Park Avenue and Lennox Street. RHIC would like to know what people think of them. Have they helped with traffic flow at the intersection?

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

School News

AmeriCorp VISTA Adds People Power to John Eager Howard School

Already poised for big steps this year with Child First organizer Jennifer McDowell and RHIC's University of Maryland School of Social Work Intern Elizabeth Taylor joining the community resources dedicated to John Eager Howard School, two new AmeriCorp VISTAs also recently started work at John Eager Howard. Melissa Doot and Renee Goodenow will be helping develop John Eager Howard as an Energy Hub school as a result of a grant proposal submitted by RHIC's Erin Bowman. Missy and Renee will be with us at least through May 2012. To learn more about Missy and Renee, read the messages from them recently posted on [RHIC's School & Recreation blog](#).

Project Contact: Erin Bowman, (410) 225-7547, ebowman@reservoirhill.net

MICA Students Work with John Eager Howard Students on School Murals

If you have walked by the front of John Eager Howard School on Linden Avenue recently you may have noticed that the mural at Linden and Lennox looks more vibrant. That's because MICA students worked with John Eager Howard students to freshen up the mural. While that the Linden and Lennox mural is a visible display of the vibrant activities inside John Eager Howard School, it is only one of four murals that the MICA students helped JEH students create. To see their work, [Click Here](#)

Project Contact: Erin Bowman, (410) 225-7547, ebowman@reservoirhill.net

John Eager Howard School Receives Baltimore Energy Challenge Grant

John Eager Howard Elementary School has been awarded a \$1,000 Baltimore Energy Challenge Grant. The Green Keeper students and Green Team teachers, led by Ms. Katrina Petzel and Ms. Tamara Hanson with the help of Ms. Erin Bowman from the Reservoir Hill Improvement Council, will be leading the school in Energy Conservation Efforts. As reported in the December 2011 Community Briefing, John Eager Howard was selected by the Baltimore Office of Sustainability to be an Energy Hub school. What is an Energy Hub? It's a place dedicated to raising awareness about energy conservation! It's also a place where John Eager Howard parents and families can sign the Baltimore Energy Challenge Pledge and pick up a free energy saving kit. The kit will help Reservoir Hill households save energy and save money on their energy bills. **At the January Family Learning Night 25 new households signed up.** Any household in Reservoir Hill can get the free energy saving kit. To sign on to the campaign, contact Erin Bowman.

Project Contact: Erin Bowman, (410) 225-7547, ebowman@reservoirhill.net

Progress on New Funding for City School Renovation & Construction

City-wide advocacy by parents, teachers, and other community members to give our children quality school buildings is having an effect. Dr. Alonso and Baltimore City Public Schools adopted Transform Baltimore's school construction and renovation proposal and presented it to the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee in Annapolis on Tuesday, 24 January 2012. Thanks to the [Baltimore Education Coalition](#) and [Transform Baltimore](#) members, nearly 100 students, teachers, and advocates attended the committee briefing to show state legislators that we desperately need this innovative financing plan to renovate our crumbling school buildings now. The story made the front page of the *Baltimore Sun* on Wednesday, 25 January. Read the article here: [Alonso wants to borrow \\$1.2 billion to repair city schools](#). On 29 January, the *Baltimore Sun* issued an editorial supportive of Dr. Alonso's position. To read it, click on: [For city schools, a promising vision](#). Find out more about the proposal to fully renovate Baltimore's schools at [Transform Baltimore](#).

[Reservoir Hill Improvement Council](#) is a founding and active member of Baltimore Education Coalition (BEC) and Transform Baltimore (TB). In President Obama's words ". . .one of the best anti-poverty programs is a world-class education." For all families, a high quality education for their children is crucial. For neighborhoods, a stellar neighborhood school makes families want to remain in the community, and attracts others to move in. While these recent developments are important steps, we have a lot of work ahead of us to guarantee that every city child can walk into, study in, and grow in, a sound, modern school facility. John Eager Howard School parents and personnel will be participating in BEC and TB activities through the spring. **We need your help to ensure that the opportunity to invest in Baltimore's youth is not missed.**

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

Breaking Ground on a Rain Garden at John Eager Howard

Residents may have noticed the digging underway on the John Eager Howard schoolyard near Brookfield Avenue. This is the first step toward installation of a rain garden at the school. Baltimore City Public School System has approved the removal of the old multi-unit bordering Linden Avenue. Construction of the rain garden requires removal of this building. The new rain garden will augment the school's science curriculum and the environmental education component being developed at the school since the Spring 2011 semester. In addition, the Outdoor Classroom continues to grow. In January asphalt began to be removed to open up more planting space. To learn more about the recent developments at John Eager Howard, go to: [Breaking Ground](#)

Project Contact: Erin Bowman, (410) 225-7547, ebowman@reservoirhill.net

Greening Reservoir Hill

Get Your Recycling Bin 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 staffed 9:00 am – 5:00 pm, but call first to pick up a bin.

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

Community Food Assessment

Supported by funds from Johns Hopkins University, the Whitelock Community Farm is leading an assessment of food purchasing habits and needs in Reservoir Hill. At present, Whitelock Community Farm and RHIC personnel are working with the Johns Hopkins University Center for a Livable Future to design the survey. The assessment will get underway by March using community volunteers. The results will help Reservoir Hill healthy food initiatives to better match planning with community needs. For instance, if we better understand what people want but cannot get locally, the Whitelock Community Farm can try to design its planting to produce some of that food. In addition, we can use that information in working with local stores to stock more of residents want. Alishea Galvin from Whitelock Community Farm is coordinating the food assessment. For more information or to help, contact Teddy Krolik.

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

RHIC Tool Shed

The Tool Shed has a variety of new tools in its inventory due to purchases and donations resulting from the German Park Playground build. Check with the RHIC office for a full inventory. Available tools include: sledge hammers, power drills, 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: Erin Bowman, (410) 225-7547, ebowman@reservoirhill.net

Around the City and State

Bulk Collection is Still FREE

Curbside Bulk Collection is currently provided to Baltimore City residents at no additional charge. The service will remain FREE through June 30, 2012 Budget challenges continue to drive the evaluation of all services for efficiency. Bulk Collection is being reviewed and a fee for this premium service is being considered. A fee will not be implemented before July 1, 2012. City residents will be given advance notice of any changes to service. To schedule bulk collection, residents must call 311 at least three days in advance of their communities' regular bulk collection day, and place no more than three items for pick up.

Project Contact: Robert Murrow; (410) 396-1185; Robert.Murrow@baltimorecity.gov

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

Housing Resources

Maryland Mortgage Program Acquisition Rehabilitation Loan

The State of Maryland's Department of Housing and Community Development (CDA) in conjunction with National Homeownership Month announces it now offers a loan product for homebuyers seeking to purchase a property in need rehabilitation. This program offers eligible borrowers an acquisition and rehabilitation mortgage to purchase a single family, one unit home as a primary residence and obtain funds for needed repairs and/or renovations at the same time. The program provided by a CDA Participating 203(k) lender to the borrower under the terms of CDA's Maryland Mortgage Program. The acquisition costs are paid to the seller of the home at closing and a rehabilitation escrow account, per FHA 203(k) or FHA 203(k) Streamline requirements, is set up at the loan closing. This program is offered through the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development and is available statewide. Please contact Single Family Housing at (410) 514-7535 or at SingleFamilyHousing@mdhousing.org for additional information.

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

Maryland Insurance Administration

Maryland Insurance Administration (MIA) is the state agency that regulates the business of insurance in the State of Maryland. The MIA provides assistance to consumers, businesses, health care providers (including doctors and hospitals), and producers (agents or brokers) in all areas of insurance, including life, health, disability, automobile, homeowners, and property. The MIA has also instituted a Rapid Response Program which is designed to help certain consumers resolve property and casualty claims (i.e. auto and homeowners claims, including those made under commercial lines policies) quickly and without having to file a formal written complaint. For information about this program, please contact MIA at 410-468-2340 or 800-492-6116 ext. 2340

The MIA produces consumer guides, rate comparisons and frequently asked questions related to various types of insurance. The following is a sample list of available publications; Consumer Guide to Homeowners Insurance, Consumer Guide to Auto Insurance, Health Premiums for Small Employers, Annual Premiums for Medicare Supplement Policies, and Insurance preparedness Guide for Natural Disasters. Consumers may access this agency and its consumer materials in several ways; download from their website, www.mdinsurance.state.md.us, on the Consumer Publication page, call (410) 468-2000 or write to MD Insurance Administration 200 Saint Paul Street, #2700 Baltimore, MD 21202

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

Vacants to Value \$10,000 Booster Program

Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake and the Department of Housing and Community Development are pleased to announce the Vacants to Value \$10,000 Booster Program, along with enhancements to previously Vacants to Value incentives.

The first two stages of the broader Vacants to Value initiative- Streamlined Disposition and Targeted Code Enforcement- are working very, very well and producing outstanding opportunities for homebuyers. The Vacants to Value \$10,000 Booster Program is offered in addition to previously announced Vacants to Value homeownership incentives, traditional homeownership incentive programs and property tax credits.

Of special note is a change to the Good Neighbors Vacants to Value Homeownership Incentive previously announced for teachers, firefighters and police officers. All City employees are now eligible for the \$5,000 Good Neighbors Incentive which can be used in conjunction with the \$10,000 Booster Program. For a full listing of all Vacant to Value Homeownership Incentives and program description visit , www.baltimorehousing.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

St. Ambrose Housing Aid Center Foreclosure Report

A study by St. Ambrose tracks the outcomes of 1,031 households that entered into its foreclosure prevention program during the year 2007. The report finds that among other things 70% (720) of those receiving assistance had positive outcomes. Positive was defined as; remaining in their homes, or being able to sell the property for more than what the family had originally paid for it. For more information and additional statistics, visit:

http://www.stambros.org/downloads/sahac_fc_special_report_2011.pdf

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

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. 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

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. 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

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