

View from the Hill

Reservoir Hill... A Community Blooming With Opportunity!

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

- Beth Am Synagogue
- Bolton-Park Neighbors, Inc.
- 2200 Brookfield Block Club
- 900 Brooks Lane Block Club
- Corpus Christi Community Center
- Druid Community Association
- 700 Block Druid Park Lake Drive
- Ducatel Improvement Association
- Historic Mt. Royal
- Neighborhood Association
- Kids on the Hill
- Lakeside Coalition
- Lakeview Blockwatchers
- Lakeview Towers
- Next Level Boxing Club
- 2500 McCulloh Street Block Club
- Reservoir Hill H.O.P.E.
- Reservoir Hill Mutual Homes
- St. Francis Neighborhood Center
- Upper Eutaw/Madison-Neighborhood Association

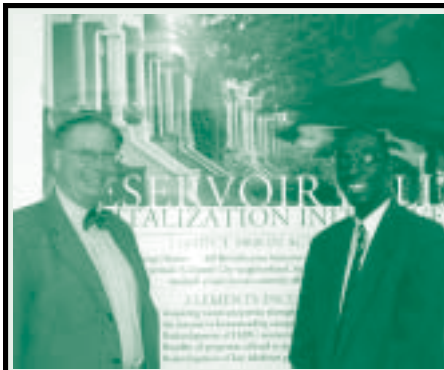


Representing the Neighborhoods and Friends of Reservoir Hill

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 reservoircouncil@aol.com

RHIC Receives Abell Foundation Grant

Recently, the Abell Foundation awarded Reservoir Hill Improvement Council a \$100,000 grant to build upon its current housing initiatives. The award will be shared with Jubilee Baltimore as the Council's key housing partner. Through Jubilee Baltimore, a rehabilitation specialist will be available to homebuyers to assist with rehab planning. RHIC will be hiring a new housing counselor to assist residents with home purchase, and coordinate the Council's homebuyer education program. Together, these addi-



Charlie Duff (left), executive director of Jubilee Baltimore and John Ruffin (right), executive director of Reservoir Hill Improvement Council welcome the recent award of \$100,000 by The Abell Foundation.

tions help move RHIC's Housing Resource Center toward being the one-stop shop for homebuyers we want it to be.

The award allows RHIC a much needed expansion of the housing program to accommodate the growing inter-

est in Reservoir Hill, but it does even more. It demonstrates confidence in the organization and the approach RHIC has taken in promoting revitalization and tying that revitalization to the well-being of the present community.

Kwanzaa in Reservoir Hill: A Celebration of Our Community

By Frank Patinella

A community is not just an area where people live, but also a place where people feel connected and care about the well-being of their neighbors. Reservoir Hill is also a community that is full of people who are talented, spirited, intelligent, hard-working and strong. On December 27, Reservoir Hill Improvement Council invited the community to *Kwanzaa in Reservoir Hill* to reconnect neighbors with each other and to celebrate all the wonderful assets of our community.



"Sankofa dancers and drummers set the mood with traditional African rhythms and dances"

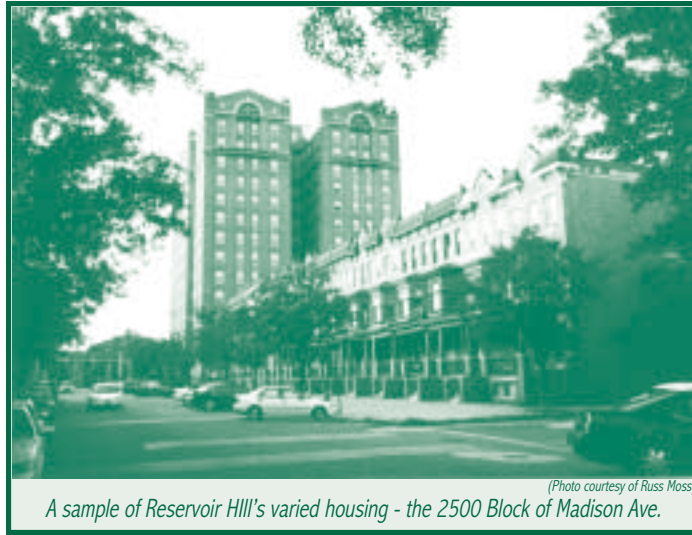
About 200 people came to the

(continued on page 5)

The State of the Community

Reservoir Hill had an extremely productive 2003. During the year, Reservoir Hill began implementing an ambitious five-year, \$8.8 million vacant housing revitalization initiative that, when complete, will have a substantial impact on the physical and human infrastructure of the neighborhood. Reservoir Hill Improvement Council (RHIC) also achieved several other successes in 2003 that provide a foundation for the initiative, neighborhood organization, and the quality of life (housing, social, crime and sanitation) in Reservoir Hill:

- Hired a professional staff to help us transition from a volunteer-based organization to one with paid professionals.
- Strengthened our partnerships with the philanthropic funding community, garnering six grants.
- Developed and strengthened working relationships with various City departments, including Housing and Community Development, HABC, Baltimore City Police, and Department of Public Works.
- Continued to be identified as the premier Mayor's Healthy Neighborhood Initiative community and began seeking State Community Legacy funding for upper Madison Avenue. We collaborated with Jubilee Baltimore to provide a shared Neighborhood Housing Consultant to advise residents and potential homeowners on home purchasing.



(Photo courtesy of Russ Moss)
A sample of Reservoir Hill's varied housing - the 2500 Block of Madison Ave.

- Increased community communication and participation. We partnered with members of our umbrella organization to provide and support 50 different events and 25 small block projects amongst community members and organizations. We held two major housing tours to promote and market the neighborhood, with the second tour generating more than 1,000 interested participants. We developed and distributed a quarterly newsletter to neighborhood households, enhanced the neighborhood website on the Internet, and added 75 new individuals to the volunteer participation network.

- Partnered with Midtown and Seton Hill to develop a Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan to impact livability within our combined communities.

- Received designation for the entire neighborhood as a Target Investment Zone. Currently we are coordinating

an application for Historic Designation for the entire Reservoir Hill neighborhood.

For 2004, we will continue our focus on crime and grime.

Overall crime has decreased by 10% over the past year; however the narcotics markets continue to be a vexing problem. The Police Department has intensified its efforts, and we expect that focus will continue.

The most exciting item for the neighborhood in this coming year will be the continuing housing revitalization. We expect a significant portion of the City's 200 remaining houses to become available in 2004-2005. There is a proposal to extend the Healthy Neighborhoods program to cover the entire southeastern quadrant of Reservoir Hill. RHIC looks forward to working to achieve the full promise of the Reservoir Hill community.

**To all of our neighbors, new & old,
Welcome and Best Wishes for Joy and
Warmth in your new community.**

...oom Media

- **Printing**
- **Graphics**
- **Marketing**

1601 Guilford Avenue • (443) 629-4086

RHIC Holds Annual Meeting

By John Henry Ruffin,
Executive Director

Reservoir Hill Improvement Council held its Annual Meeting on November 4th, 2003 at Beth Am Synagogue located here in Reservoir Hill. The event was well attended by almost 90 residents and stakeholders from throughout the community. The meeting was kicked off with a rousing and motivational keynote address by 11th District Council Member Keifer Mitchell. Council Member Mitchell's speech was very inspirational and focused on his vision of The Reservoir Hill Neighborhood as a diverse crime-free community of well-maintained, architecturally and historically significant row homes.

This presentation was followed

“Great achievements are nurtured with the cooperation of many minds with a common vision working toward a common goal”.

by a panel discussion featuring various community stakeholders representing distinct groups within the neighborhood. The panelist included the following individuals: Ms. Georgia Winder, Druid Hill Coalition, Rev. Karen Brown, Asst. Pastor of Madison Presbyterian Church; Lisa Hodges, Baltimore Development Corporation, and Mike Cooke, RHIC Board Member and member of Mt. Royal Improvement

Association. Each panelist spoke briefly from their perspective on the benefits of being involved in the community revitalization process and answered questions from the audience concerning their efforts.

The next item on the agenda for the evening was the election of Board members to the RHIC Board of Directors. This year there were four seats on the Board up for election. The candidates for election were unanimously elected to the Board and included Ms Lavenia Lane-Johnson, Rev. Janice Collins, Mr. Dexter Gaines, and Mr. Antonio

Hayes. After the elections the evening closed with an old fashioned ice cream social featuring apple turnovers prepared by long time community resident Ms Judy Estes.



Scenes from the RHIC Annual Meeting

(Photos courtesy of Ross Mess)

Meet Your Newest RHIC Board Members

At the annual meeting of the Reservoir Hill Improvement Council on November 4, four new directors were elected to the board. Here are brief profiles of these new board members.

Janice Collins, representing the Ducatel Improvement Council, has been a resident of Reservoir Hill since 1979. Working as a community organizer in the neighborhood from 1978 to 1981, Ms. Collins fell in love with the community and the residents. She welcomes the opportunity to serve again. She brings to the Board vast experience as a fundraiser, media specialist, concert promoter, professional meeting planner, and community relations spe-

cialist. Ms. Collins feels a strong need for residents to become more involved. Ms. Collins “understands the problems of the community” and sees her role as a community activist as bringing resolution to the problems. She takes to heart the words, “Go ye therefore and teach all nations.”

Dexter Gaines is a resident of the 2400 block of Madison Avenue. He has lived in the community for over 11 years. Dexter has served over 15 years as an educator in the public and private sector. He is an Army Reservist and currently volunteers with the American Red Cross Emergency Services. Mr. Gaines looks forward to using his talents, leadership

skills, and abilities to better the community for all. He envisions a strong community plan as a basis for Reservoir Hill becoming a vibrant neighborhood and feels communication between community residents and public officials is a key factor for an effective process.

Antonio Hayes, a lifelong resident of Baltimore, has been a Reservoir Hill resident for 2 years. Mr. Hayes resides in the Riviera. He has expertise in the legislative process of City government and, in state government in Annapolis as well. Mr. Hayes feels partnership of the community with government and private industry is paramount for success-

ful rehab of our attractive housing stock. He welcomes the opportunity to be part of the renaissance that Reservoir Hill is experiencing.

Lavenia Lane-Johnson's experience includes community activist, educator (30 years with the Baltimore City Public School System), entrepreneur, and property landlord. Having lived in Reservoir Hill for 15 years, Ms. Lane see more community-wide activities and increased use of community facilities as a means to aid the neighborhood to become more accessible and visible. Ms. Lane welcomes service on the Board as an opportunity to enhance the quality of life in the community and better serve her neighbors.

Crime and Safety News

Crime and Safety: Our Kids Are Calling Out! Are You Listening?

By Frank Patinella

A year ago, the Reservoir Hill Improvement Council (RHIC) and the Kids on the Hill formed a partnership and received a grant from the Baltimore Police Department to develop activities and programs to reduce and prevent crime. A year has passed and everyone in the community should be aware of what the Kids on the Hill has accomplished.

At the public safety committee meetings held by the RHIC, it became clear that young people and adults had very different ideas about addressing the drug problem. Since many of the kids know drug dealers either through friends or family, they felt that they had a good understanding of the problem and believed jailing the dealers was not the solution. Consequently, the kids researched many services within walking distance of the neighborhood that could help people who were selling or using drugs. The information on the services was compiled into a brochure.

Young people also felt that it was important to build unity among residents and inspire them to engage in positive activity in their community. Kids designed and painted the boards on seven vacant houses on Linden Avenue last summer with colorful, positive messages intended to boost our spirit.

To beautify the vacant lot on Whitelock Street and Linden Avenue, Kids on the Hill and Father Tom Composto created a large, beautiful sign that reads, "Get Together Reservoir Hill! Associate, Communicate, Participate." The message was also made into bumper stickers, which will be distributed along with the brochures to residents during the upcoming months.

Another big project was a 25 minute documentary about

drugs in the neighborhood titled "The Streets Calling." The film, designed and produced by teens, seeks to build a better understanding of the drug by capturing a broad spectrum of views, from dealers and users to community leaders like City Council President Sheila Dixon, Baltimore Health Department Director Peter Beilenson, and Richard Burton, director of the BELIEVE campaign. Also appearing on film is John Ruffin, executive director of the Reservoir Hill Improvement Council, and Ruthie Wilder, an active resident. The video premiered at the Patterson Theater on December 11 and was shown at the *Kwanzaa In Reservoir Hill* event on December 27. This film has already received a lot of praise. (If you haven't seen it, you can view it at the teen conference in March – see related story below.)

Young people are speaking out in our neighborhood with important messages and are trying to be part of the solutions to the problems that we all deal with in Reservoir Hill. The teen conference on Saturday, March 13 is the perfect time to show these young people that you are listening and that you are doing what you can to make Reservoir Hill a safer, healthier, and more beautiful place to live.



GET TOGETHER RESERVOIR HILL CONFERENCE!

AN ACTIVE AND INTERGENERATIONAL STRATEGY FOR MAKING COMMUNITY CHANGE

Saturday, March 13, 2004 • 12:00 pm – 3:00 pm Madison Avenue Family Life Center Fellowship Hall 2100 Eutaw Place

Kids on the Hill is sponsoring a teen-run neighborhood conference to foster youth/adult partnerships in communities.

- Workshops & Activities
- Skits
- Video
- Free lunch will be served

The purpose of the conference is to let people know that young

people have positive solutions to problems in our neighborhood, to teach adults to work with young people, and to come up with things we can do together to improve our community.

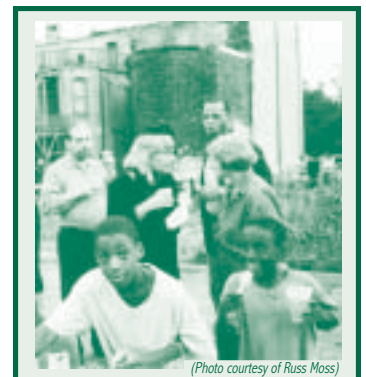
Teens! This is your opportunity to be recognized as an important part of your community.

Adults! This is your oppor-

tunity to learn how to help young people become a really positive force in our community.

Everyone! This is a unique event that could immeasurably bolster the possibilities for a good future for Reservoir Hill.

To get more information or to register, call Kids on the Hill at (410) 383-7200



(Photo courtesy of Russ Moss)

Kwanzaa on the Hill

continued from page 1

event at John Eager Howard Recreation Center. Streamers, balloons, and tablecloths dressed the room with the colors of Kwanzaa: red, green, and black. A live jazz trio, consisting of musicians who reside in Reservoir Hill, warmed the atmosphere as people entered the room. John Ruffin, the executive director of the Reservoir Hill Improvement Council, welcomed everyone to the event.

Wendall Rawlings and Skher Brown, residents of Reservoir Hill, with a colleague performed *Capoeira*, a Brazilian martial art. Before the performance, Skher summarized the history of *Capoeira* and how African Americans are connected with this art form. Following the discussion, the three martial artists demonstrated the techniques of *Capoeira* as they moved about

acrobatically, defending and attacking each other. It was quite interesting to see kicks being swung from the ground, cartwheels being used as an evasive maneuver, and defense mounted by standing on one's head.



Next, there was a viewing of the new documentary, "The Streets Calling," created by Kids on the Hill, an after-school, arts-based community program led

by Rebecca Yenawine. This documentary about the drug culture aimed to bring awareness and understanding about the drug problem in Reservoir Hill and similar neighborhoods. The documentary was well received by the audience.

Eager to participate in the fun, young people from two dance groups, *The Littles* and *Babies-R-Us*, led by Kimberly Bell of the John Eager Howard

Recreation Center, put on a lively 20 minute performance that energized and inspired the audience.

The final 45 minutes of the night was saved for the *Sankofa Dance Theater*, a professional African theater group. The group, led by Kabibi Ajanku, entered the room dressed in elaborate and colorful traditional African garments while beating out rhythms on their *jambes*. They performed traditional African dances and discussed the history and principles of Kwanzaa, stressing the importance of community and family. By the end of the night, several children danced with the Sankofa performers as Kabibi successfully led the audience in a call-and-response activity that involved the principles of Kwanzaa. This event would not have been possible without our community partners. We would like to thank them for donations, performances, equipment, film, desserts, and labor of love.

Member Spotlight: Druid Community Association

In the early 1950s the Druid Community Association was organized under the leadership of Mrs. Geneva Wise. The purpose of the organization was to promote goodwill in the neighborhood by bringing neighbors together to help in any way for a cleaner, more beautiful and healthy environment for all.

We, the members of this group, are committed to carry on the tradition of keeping our community clean, safe, and healthy by sponsoring clean-ups, flower planting, and block

club meetings. We have very dedicated members in the association, but we need more, and solicit as many neighbors as we can to get involved.

To highlight one project: We are responsible for the flower garden on Brookfield Avenue and Druid Park Lake Drive, and we desperately need help maintaining it. Please consider helping us to keep it beautiful. Any assistance would be appreciated.

Every neighbor should belong to a block club. You get

to know what's going on, and you have input into what's going on in your community.

The Druid Community Association meets the 2nd Thursday of every month at 6:00 pm at the Riviera at Linden and Druid Park Lake Drive. To get involved, call Georgia Winder at (410) 669-0291.

Georgia Winder, President
Velma Bailey, Vice-President
Helen Walker, Secretary



Scenes from the Druid Community Festival

City Sales Yield 12 New Homeowners

As we all know by now, the September 20 housing tour hosted by Baltimore City and the Reservoir Hill Improvement Council (RHIC) was a huge success, with over 1000 people in attendance. The good news continues! Fifteen of the properties offered for sale have been awarded – nine to owner occupants, and six to investors who must make them available for sale to owner occupants within 18 months.

The City offers a \$3,000 forgivable loan to each purchasing owner-occupant, which is forgiven entirely if the purchaser maintains the

property for five years.

The City set the sales prices of the houses low, ranging from \$5,000 to \$50,000. However, with rehab costs starting at \$170,000, the average cost for making the homes fit for occupancy range from \$200,000 to \$250,000. Most properties had been vacant and/or abandoned for a number of years, which is why rehab costs are high.

Linda Harrington, Reservoir Hill’s Homeownership Coordinator, will be working with the new homebuyers before, after and during

various aspects of the purchase / rehab process, assisting them with items such as contractor referrals, lender referrals for financing, homeowners insurance coverage, construction concerns /issues while work is in process, historic tax credit assistance, etc. Ms. Harrington may be reached at 410-225-7432.

Homebuyers who rehab to historical standards, maintaining any and all historic features remaining on the property, are eligible for a tax refund equal to 20 percent of the rehab cost. Jubilee

Baltimore has agreed to have their Historic Trust department review contractor proposals prior to submission to the State, to insure that the proposals meet the requirements.

The next offering of City-owned properties is expected before April 1. Watch out for the announcement via the Baltimore City web-site @ www.baltimorehousing.org (click on the link for Reservoir Hill), the RHIC web-site @ www.reservoirhill.net, Live Baltimore web-site @ www.LiveBaltimore.com, news and media coverage.

Homeownership Workshops in Reservoir Hill

Are you tired of renting? Learn more about becoming a first-time home buyer.

Reservoir Hill Improvement Council (RHIC) will be hosting bi-monthly homeownership workshops throughout 2004, beginning in February.

In the workshop you’ll learn about the major factors in qualifying for a mortgage loan: income, assets and credit. You’ll also find out about funding sources available in Reservoir Hill and meet qualified lenders, loan officers, real estate agents and insurance agents.

For date, time and location of upcoming workshops, contact Linda M. Harrington, Homeownership Coordinator, at 410-225-7432 or by email at lharrington@reservoirhill.net

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Ask a Neighbor

Romell & Kenyatta Moon recently purchased a home in Reservoir Hill. Following is a conversation with our new neighbors:

Q. Why did you decide to buy in Reservoir Hill?

A. We were interested in settling in the city so that we could be close to the attractions and our work. We appreciated the architecture in this area as well as the vision of what this neighborhood could become and wanted to be a part of its growth and development.

Q. What is most attractive about living here?

A. The location—we are in close proximity to everything by car, but we enjoy the fact that we can walk to neighborhood restaurants, local shops and parks.

Q. What advice do you have for future homebuyers?

A. Consider the city! There is a wealth of architecture and the possibilities are endless as long as you are willing to be patient and work for the common goal.

The Snow Page for Baltimore City

SAFETY TIPS • SAFETY TIPS • SAFETY TIPS • SAFETY TIPS • SAFETY TIPS

Have on hand:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Heating Oil | Bottled Water |
| Flashlight | Batteries |
| Medicine Blankets | Canned Foods |
| Portable radio | |

When outside:

- Dress appropriately and layer clothing. Cover head, ears and hands.
- Stay dry.
- Avoid overexertion when shoveling snow.
- Beware of thin layers of ice on sidewalks and roads

Be Helpful:

- Assist your elderly and disabled neighbors.
- Bring pets inside.
- Clear snow from fire hydrants and storm drains.
- Do not shovel snow into the street.
- Keep Residential Permit Parking stickers visible.
- Use emergency numbers in cases of actual emergencies only.

Life-saving facts:

- Check smoke detector batteries.
- Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning! Have your furnace professionally cleaned and inspected.
- Maintain proper ventilation in your vehicle.
- Don't use your oven or kerosene stoves for heat.

Safe Driving Tips:

- Do not drive in severe weather unless absolutely necessary.
- Before driving, clear your vehicle of snow, especially the windows, mirrors and lights.
- When driving, keep a safe distance from snowplows and do not try to pass them.
- If possible, utilize off-street parking, such as a driveway or parking pad.
- Beware of thin layers of ice on streets and sidewalks.
- Keep emergency driving supplies in your vehicle, such as a shovel, ice scraper, snow brush, flashlight, booster cables, a blanket and sand or cat litter for traction.

The Office of Transportation would like to remind residents that during daylight hours, snow should be cleared from sidewalks within three hours from the end of a storm. Failure to comply may result in a \$15 fine.

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PRINTING & DELIVERY \$99.00 PER THOUSAND

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PIN NUMBER 9351
443.271.1819
CELL

*MOST AREAS ** MINIMUM ORDER REQUIRED

Reservoir Hill

Interfaith Gathering

Beth Am Synagogue at 2501 Eutaw Place will host an Interfaith Passover Seder on March 21st, from 5:30 to 7:00pm. Members of Beth Am and the Reservoir Hill community will share an evening of prayer, song, discussion and fine food! Together we will reflect upon the Exodus story, particularly the theme of suffering, in African-American, Jewish, and other cultural traditions. Please join us.

RSVP to the synagogue office: 410-523-2446.

“Snowflakes are one of nature’s most fragile things, but just look at what they can do when they stick together!”

RHIC Staff

- | | |
|---|---|
| John Henry Ruffin
<i>Executive Director</i> | Linda Harrington
<i>Home Ownership Coordinator</i> |
| Frank Patinella
<i>Community Organizer</i> | Cynthia Carroll
<i>Receptionist</i> |
| Richard Gwynallen
<i>Development Coordinator</i> | Christinia Lipscombe
<i>Receptionist</i> |

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Sanitation Roll Off Dates

Saturday, March 13, 2004

9 am-2 pm

Whitelock Street between
Madison Ave. and Eutaw Place

Tuesday, April 27, 2004

9 am – 2 pm

Newington and Callow Aves.

Roll-offs scheduled for Saturday Pitch-
Ins may be dropped off as early as
Friday and picked up as late as
Monday. Also roll-offs will not return
after filled to capacity.

Community Workshops

Home Ownership Workshop

10 am – 12 pm

Saturday, February 28, 2004

Madison Avenue Family Life Center

2100 Eutaw Place

Call 410-225-7547

Planning for Whitelock St. Corridor

9 am – 12 pm

Saturday, March 6, 2004

(location to be determined)

Call 410-225-7547

Reservoir Hill Teen Conference

12 pm – 3 pm

Saturday, March 13, 2004

Madison Ave. Family Life Center

2100 Eutaw Place

Community Celebration

Interfaith Passover Seder

5:30 pm – 7 pm

Sunday, March 21, 2004

Beth Am Synagogue

2501 Eutaw Place

The Reservoir Hill

Improvement Council would like
to acknowledge our Friends who recently
provided gifts, grants, and donation of
services to the Reservoir Hill Community

Abell Foundation

American Skyline Insurance Co.

Annie E. Casey Foundation

Baltimore Community Foundation

Baltimore Neighborhood Collaborative

Fantasia Partners

Preservation Maryland

Paulette Roberson

Darryl Smith

Barbara Blumberg

Reservoir Hill Improvement Council

2001 Park Avenue

Baltimore, Maryland 21217

FOR OUR NEIGHBOR OF
RESERVOIR HILL

(Acknowledgment of Friends cont.)

LaClaire Bunkey

Trudy Robinson

Cristina Lipscombe

Lavenia Lane

Russ Moss

Judy Estes

Cookie

Robert Ginyard

Greg Earl

Wendall Rawlings &

Capoeira Performers

Skher Brown

Nikki Anderson

Hilary and Anselm Ottley

Rebecca Yenawine, Alayne Francis -

Kids on the Hill

Courtney Dyson - Pennrose

Management Company

Sally Scott - Beth Am Synagogue

Georgia Winder - Druid Community

Association

Arlen Cullors - Upper Eutaw-Madison

Neighborhood Association

Harry Peaker - 900 Block of Brooks Ln

Father Tom Composto - St. Francis

Neighborhood Center

Bob Adams - Bolton-Park Neighbors

Charles Harrison - John Eager Howard

Recreation Center

Kimberly Bell & Littles and Babies-R-U

Reservoir Hill Improvement Council, Inc.

Reservoir Hill Improvement Council,
Inc. is guided by the philosophy that
organized people and economic
development leads to empowerment.
Empowerment is not created in a
vacuum, but rather as a result of
networking and combining talents
and resources.

Mission

The mission of the Council is to unite
residents, organizations, and groups
in order to provide a vehicle by
which to define and solve problems
common to the community of
Reservoir Hill.

Purpose

Serve as an umbrella organization of
Reservoir Hill. Supports and
develops programs for Reservoir
Hill. Promotes mutual support
among community associations,

creates an atmosphere that wel-
comes diversity, develops
community leadership, and
facilitates communication among public
and private institutions

Vision

Reservoir Hill is a vital, vibrant urban
community in which people of diverse
cultures, social backgrounds and
income levels live, work and celebrate
together in harmony and mutual
respect, united in their common
commitment to the highest good of
their community and in their shared
sense of empowerment to control their
common destiny.

MONTHLY COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Time: The first Tuesday of the month
7PM - 9PM

Location: 2100 Callow Avenue