



REGENCY RECORD



NEWSLETTER OF THE
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2017 #2 – November

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



I hope you had a great summer!

Of course, autumn is upon us, and the hours of darkness are growing longer as we head all too rapidly towards the imminent Thanksgiving and end of the year. With those longer hours of darkness come increased risk to pedestrians, both at intersections and on roads without sidewalks. I want to remind you to exercise extreme caution as you travel around our neighborhood roads. Although RECA has done its best to ensure that there is adequate street lighting throughout the neighborhood, there are still dark spots. Furthermore, wet roads and falling leaves create hazardous conditions for pedestrians and vehicles alike. If you're a pedestrian, please wear clothing that makes you visible to motorists. If you're driving in the hours of darkness, please drive slowly. Let's keep the roads safe for everyone!

I sent out an RECA Newsbrief about the Tax Assessment Meeting in late September, but if you missed it, you can read about the meeting in this issue. In summary, though - you will be receiving the triennial notice of your property value that is used for the purposes of determining your Montgomery County property taxes some time in December or early January. If you want to learn about the assessment and, most importantly, how to appeal it, please come to our meeting on December 6 at St. Andrews Episcopal School. We hold this meeting every three years and it's always extremely well attended.

Finally, as you may have read in the press, and most probably seen by now, the new owners of Cabin John Shopping Center, Edens, have started to execute on the addition of two buildings close to the intersection of Seven Locks Road and Tuckerman Lane. We have met with Edens to understand both their short-term plans and longer term objectives for the Shopping Center. Edens seem eager to keep the local residents' and home owners' associations engaged and want to make the Center more community oriented that it has been historically. We will continue to monitor developments.

May I take this opportunity to wish you Happy Holidays and a wonderful 2018!!

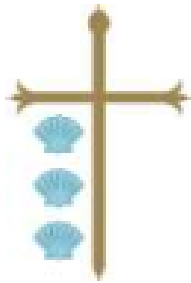
Kind Regards,

David Freeman

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AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Tax Assessment Meeting – December 6th



Your 2018 Real Estate Tax Assessment Value Notice will be arriving through your mailbox soon. The assessed value of your property provided by this Notice is the basis upon which your property tax is determined for the next three years, starting with the one you receive in July 2018. There is an opportunity to appeal your assessment, but the window to do this is short.

RECA will be holding its triennial Tax Assessment Meeting on December 6th on Wednesday, 2017 in MacDonald Hall, St. Andrew's Episcopal School, 8804 Post oak Road starting at 7:00pm. You will have the opportunity to learn how to:

- Appeal your assessment.
- Request a homestead exemption to limit your 2018 real estate increase to 10% per year.
- Apply for a senior property tax credit for lower income residents.

Gerard Barber, the Manager of Assessments from the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation will be our guest speaker and will be able to answer your questions about your assessment.

If you want to try to save money on your property tax assessment and be properly armed with the information to do this, you are urged to attend. Please save the date!

RECA Treasurer, Jerry Garson, has written a detailed article on this topic. The article can be found on page 13.

St. Andrew's and the Neighborhood Impact

As you probably know by now, Barron Trump, son of the President and First Lady, started attending St. Andrew's Episcopal School this Fall. RECA was concerned about the potential impact on the neighborhood during school days.

While there was a significant police presence during the first week of school, the number of police cars seem to have reduced over the last few weeks. Having said that, you will notice both secret service and county police patrolling the neighborhood.

Overall the school start has been uneventful and given the significant level of policing we now have in RECA, we're probably one of the safest neighborhoods around! We hope the impact on the neighborhood remains low.


Street Number Painting Continues



The house curb number painting project got underway over the summer and continues, albeit at a slower pace than we had hoped. About a third of the neighborhood is complete but many streets still need doing. The project will continue now in the spring when the weather improves.

RECA does not charge for this service, unlike commercial businesses who now seem to charge up to \$20 and are actively soliciting business in the neighborhood. Of course, donations to RECA are always welcome!

NEW TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD?



Have you recently moved into the Regency Estates neighborhood and not yet received a visit (and a little welcome gift) from RECA? If not, please contact us by completing the 'Contact Us' form on our web site, www.regencyestates.org

We'd be pleased to drop by, welcome you to our neighborhood and collect your information so that we can keep you informed about local news, events and emergency situations.

Access to Churchill Athletic Field – Fall Hours

I wanted to remind you about access to the Churchill Athletic Field now that school is back in session.

During the 2017-18 school year, the track will be available for community use:

- Monday through Friday: 6:00am – 7:00am and 5:00pm to sundown, Restricted when athletic teams are present and from 7:00am -5:00pm

- Saturdays: 7:00am to 3:00pm
- Sundays: Variable, as staff is present

This schedule will remain in effect as long as the following guidelines are adhered to:

- No community use on school days from 7:00am though 5:00pm and during all athletic practices, contests or any school events.
- NO DOGS PERMITTED on school grounds. This includes the track and fields. Dog waste has become an increasing problem for our building service staff and PE and Athletics Departments.
- No one is permitted to use the Stadium Field or school equipment without proper approval. The school will issue a permit if approved.
- See something, say something. Please say something to your neighbor if they do not follow the guidelines. If you feel uncomfortable, provide information to the school so it can be addressed.

Communicating with Your 'Nextdoor' Neighbor (update)

By David Freeman, RECA President



A reminder about Nextdoor, a modern take on the concept of a listserv. Nextdoor is a private social network, accessible by invitation only, that allows you to get time sensitive notices (for example lost pets, suspicious activity etc.) out to the area without having to wait for RECA. Furthermore, unlike RECA notices, you can control the distribution of notices to adjacent neighborhoods. Nextdoor also provides a forum to canvass the neighborhood to obtain or provide services, receive recommendations, get answers to questions, make announcements etc. Nextdoor is an 'app', available from the Apple Appstore, Google Play, and on the web at www.nextdoor.com.

Signups for Nextdoor continue to be good, but there are still plenty of residents who have not yet taken advantage of the service yet. Judging by the volume of threads, Nextdoor is proving to be a very valuable resource to those who have signed up for the service. I must once again emphasize that RECA has no commercial or other relationship or involvement with Nextdoor or in the administration or moderation of Nextdoor neighborhoods. It is simply a tool we are promoting to fill a need for which RECA has not been able to provide a solution. The more residents that sign up, the more valuable it becomes.



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Realtor

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For more information on Real Estate, please call Fifa or text at 301-787-9447. I'll be glad to take your call.

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A reminder on how to join, which is by invitation only. In order to receive an invitation, please fill out the form on www.regencystates.org/nextdoor, and you'll receive a link to register.

RECA Web Site Replatformed & Redesigned

By David Freeman, RECA President

Due to the obsolescence of the software we used to maintain the RECA web site and the high cost of web site hosting, we recently decided to replatform the web site with a new hosting provider and convert it to Wordpress, the most popular tool for web sites. We also moved our email to the new hosting provider.

If you visit www.regencystates.org, you'll see a far more modern looking web site that also renders well on mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets.

The cost savings are very high – for the next six years, our cost will be 20% of what we were paying! Many thanks to my son, Daniel Freeman, for donating his time to do the lion's share of the replatforming work. I hope you like the new web site!

On the subject of modernization, you may also have noticed that the RECA Alert and RECA Newsbrief emails have also been redesigned so they look good on mobile devices.

Gainsborough Road Speed Camera



At the time of writing this, the speed camera, which is usually located near the RESC Swim Club on the site of the road heading towards Seven Locks Road had disappeared.

However, it does seem to be reappear at random intervals, so please look out for it as you drive on Gainsborough towards Seven Locks.

Local Resident to hold Art Show on Dec 3rd

RECA Resident, Nancy Heindl will be hosting her open house 42nd annual art show at her home, 8512 Victory Lane, on December 3rd between 12:00pm & 4:00pm.

On display and for sale will be paintings of local scenes in our area, plus miniature paintings with display easels and hand-painted jewelry. You can contact Nancy at (301) 299 6176 for information, and also her website: www.nancyheindl.com.

We're Glad You're A Neighbor

You may have seen these signs in Spanish, English and Arabic in the front yards of homes in Regency Estates. The origins of this sign are [here](#).



If you would like to obtain one of these signs, please contact Nina Chien at nchienone@yahoo.com



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 上课地点: Herbert Hoover Middle School
 8810 Post Oak Road, Potomac MD 20854

Potomac Chinese School (PCS), established in 1976, is a non-political and non-profit organization. PCS supports community events that endorse ethnic diversity. The school is managed by board of directors who are elected from volunteer parents. Potomac Chinese School has been devoted to introducing Chinese language, art and culture to the local community. Our mission is to work with the local community to inspire and embrace knowledge of Chinese heritage. PCS is in session on Sunday afternoon at Herbert Hoover Middle School, Potomac, MD.

- Chinese cultural classes and academic classes for Chinese and non-Chinese speaking families from Pre-k to 12th grade. Classes are taught by highly-qualified, native speaking teachers
- Chinese cultural classes for children and adults including Chinese martial art, Tai Chji, Chinese calligraphy and painting, crafting, Chinese dancing, Zumba, Belle Dancing
- PCS also offer sports classes including badminton, tennis and basketball
- We offer various opportunities for middle school and high school students to earn student service learning (SSL) credits
- High school students could earn foreign language credits toward their high school diploma at PCS

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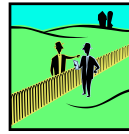
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- School Age open daily Monday-Friday from 7:00-9:00 am and 3:30-6:30 pm on the premises of Beverly Farms Elementary School
- Large outdoor area with playground and blacktop at both locations
- Research based, nationally recognized curriculum that focuses on school readiness
- Skilled staff with expertise in early care, education and school age development
- Field trips for Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten
- Nutritious breakfast and snacks
- Parent/teacher conferences
- Family events and programs

Contact the Center Director at 301-299-6442 or
cindy.ocarroll@mccaedu.org for more information or
to schedule a tour.

Visit our website at www.mccaedu.org.

Watch out, there's a thief about



Despite the increased police presence in the neighborhood, we continue to receive occasional reports of thefts from homes, vehicles and yards in Regency Estates. Below are some safety tips that can be used to make homes and vehicles as secure as possible.

Home Safety

- Always keep doors and windows locked when away from your house.
- Close the garage door when working in the back yard.
- Make sure the garage door is closed overnight.
- Your house should be well lit. It is a good idea to use automatic timers for the outdoor and indoor lights; motion sensors can be used also.
- Never leave easily removed items such as bicycles in your yard.

Vehicle Safety

- Doors to vehicles should be locked at all times.
- Make sure all valuables are out of sight i.e. cameras, laptop computers, loose change and GPS systems.
- Garage door openers and keys should not be left in vehicles.

Neighborhood Safety

- **IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING!** Report any and all suspicious activities to the Montgomery County Police, (non-emergency number 301-279-8000/ emergency number 911).

AROUND THE COUNTY & STATE

New Maryland Laws started October 1st, 2017



<http://wtop.com/maryland/2017/09/new-md-laws-take-effect-sunday/>

Maryland is the first state in the nation that could take action against pharmaceutical companies that gouge prices of "off-patent generic drugs. That is one of several laws that took effect on October 1st. Here are some of these laws.

- **Essential Off-Patent or Generic Drugs — Price Gouging — Prohibition** - The law prohibits a manufacturer or wholesale distributor from engaging in price gouging of an essential off-patent or generic drug. It authorizes the Maryland Medical Assistance Program

to notify the Attorney General of an increase in price of the drugs.

- **Justice Reinvestment Act** The law requires a risk and needs assessment of inmates as soon as feasible after sentencing and a plan for rehabilitation while in custody. It authorizes expungement for convictions for specified misdemeanors after a number of years under specified conditions.
 - **Hydraulic Fracturing (fracking) Prohibition** - This prohibits a person from engaging in fracking, a technique used to extract oil and gas from rock by injecting high-pressure mixtures of water, sand or gravel and chemicals, of a well for exploration or production of natural gas. The law repeals a provision of law that requires the Department of Energy to adopt specified regulations.
 - **Child Sexual Abuse Statute of Limitations** - The new law extends the statute of limitation to sue from age 25 to age 38.
 - **Conditional Release - Electronic Monitoring (Amber's Law)** Named after Amber Schinault, who was killed by an ex-boyfriend against whom she had an order of protection, the law allows victims to request that a person be placed on electronic monitoring.
- Ethics Reform** - The law carefully defines "close economic association" and clarifies when an official should stay away from a business or entity, prohibiting them from using the prestige of office to award contracts.
- **Public School Employee Whistleblower Protection Act** - One of the provisions of this new law protects public school employees who report that an employer has engaged in unlawful activity.
 - **Marijuana Possession Expungement** - The law reduces the amount of time to seek expungement of marijuana possession from their records.
 - **Internet Sales — State Lottery Tickets** - The law prohibits the state lottery from establishing a system or program that allows a person to purchase tickets through an electronic device that connects to the internet.
 - **Collective Bargaining** - Employees of the Maryland Environmental Service will have the ability to collectively bargain.

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The New RideOn extRa



The new, Ride On extRa rush hour service was launched at the beginning of October. Here's all you need to know:

What is the new Ride On extRa service?

- A limited stop (12 stops versus 80 along the route) faster service along state Route 355. Stops include: Lakeforest Transit Center, Summit Ave., Westland Dr., Shady Grove Metro, Montgomery College, Rockville Metro, Edmonston Dr., Halpine Rd., Marinelli Rd., Security Ln., Tuckerman Ln., and Medical Center Metro
- 10-minute frequency of service during peak rush hour periods
- Brand new and different buses with low floor boarding
- No loading of fare cards on buses
- Buses feature Free WiFi access, USB charging ports, information displays, and extra padding on seats
- Runs only during peak periods - Monday-Friday, 5:30-9:30am and 3:30-7:30pm
- Regular Ride On fare
- Traffic signal priority for this service

- Connection to 50% of the transit services network including the MARC rail, MTA buses, Metrobus, Metrorail, and 44 Ride On routes

How to Prepare for the Ride On extRa

The service will only take SmarTrip cards, passes, and cash. **THERE WILL BE NO LOADING OF CASH ONTO A SMARTRIP CARD.** YOU SHOULD ALWAYS HAVE ENOUGH FARE ON YOUR CARD OR USE CASH ON THESE BUSES. WWW.SMARTRIP.COM.

What's new

Here is what to look for:

- New Bus Shelters and Bus Stop Flag Signs and 15 bus shelters along the route are customized to promote the new service. These bus shelters are shared with other Ride On routes and Metrobus routes but are the only stops (plus Metro stations) on this new service.
- Ride On extRa service advertisements are both inside and outside buses, especially buses in the northern region of the County. Other shelters not on the route also advertisements promoting the new service.

Why is it the Route 101?

- This route overlays major portions of the Routes 46 and 55. 46 + 55 = 101!

Connecting People and Places!

To realize a future for Montgomery County that includes a first-rate, multi-modal transportation system, MCDOT is expanding choices for all the users of its network. The Ride On extRA represents the second tier of bus service in a four-tier plan.

Senior Transportation Resources At A Glance

[This PDF](#) is a quick reference guide with names of transportation services and their phone numbers.

Protect yourself, protect others – get a flu vaccine every year

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/resident/flu.html>



Get vaccinated against the flu. Everyone 6 months of age and older should be vaccinated. The circulating strains of flu are a good match with those included in this year's vaccine.

If you are pregnant, you can and should receive the flu shot during any trimester. Pregnant women are at high risk of flu-related complications. If immunized during pregnancy, protective antibodies help protect your baby for up to 6 months after birth.

Locate other providers of flu vaccine, at <https://vaccinefinder.org/>

- Prevent the spread of germs: Cover coughs and sneezes
 - Cough and sneeze into your sleeve. This prevents germs from getting on your hands, which then leave germs on the things you touch (door knobs, hand rails, light switches, etc.). Flu can survive on these surfaces for several hours!
 - If you use a tissue to cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze, throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.



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- Stay home when you are sick
 - If you or your child has a fever, stay home! You or your child should be fever-free for at least 24 hours before returning to work or school. A fever should be gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine (like Tylenol).
 - If you are sick, do not visit loved ones in the hospital, nursing home, or any facility housing the elderly and/or anyone in frail health. People with **certain health conditions** are more likely to have complications that result in hospitalization or even death. Limiting contact with others as much as possible while you are sick keeps you from infecting them.
- Wash your hands
 - **Wash your hands often** with soap and water.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Stay informed
 - Visit www.flu.gov for more information.
 - Weekly influenza activity estimates are available at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [Influenza Summary Update Map](#).
 - Help track flu in our area: visit [Flu Near You](#) for more information.

Business Portal for Montgomery County



Montgomery County has a new business portal that will make it easier for businesses to interact with County government.

The business portal is a gateway to County government services and information related to doing business in Montgomery County. It is modeled after national, best practices and based on input from an extensive survey in 2016 on improving government services for businesses. Integrating information from multiple County departments, the business portal is a single point of entry that aims to further streamline County services and operations to make it easier to start and grow a business in the County. The portal is available at: montgomerycountymd.gov/biz.

Latest Go Montgomery!

The latest issue of Go Montgomery! the online newsletter that provides news and information about transportation in the County is available [here](#).

Montgomery County Winter Recreation Guide.

The Winter 2017-2018 Montgomery County Parks and Recreation Guide is available [here](#).

ALL THINGS INTERNET

By Mitangi Mehta, RECA Board Member

Securing Today's Kids Online

https://securingthehuman.sans.org/newsletters/ouch/issues/OUCH-201705_en.pdf



So how much time did the kids spend online this summer? My guess is quite a bit! How much as a parent/guardian do we know about their online activity? It depends on the parenting style. Even for a tech savvy parent it is a cat-n-mouse game to keep up with their online access. The security software products provide some level of baseline protection but the rest is up to the parents.

Communicating and educating works best for me as a parent. The non-Internet rules still apply to how to interact on the Internet. The values and behavior in real world and on the Internet, must be the same.

Gaming Online Safely and Securely

https://securingthehuman.sans.org/newsletters/ouch/issues/OUCH-201707_en.pdf



Online gaming is fun for all ages but it is not age appropriate for all unfortunately. Kids under certain age should not be allowed to play online games.

Parents must at least sit down with the kids once to see how the game is played, how do the kids interact, and who do they interact with!

If you do allow older kids to play online games, you must keep your computer up to date with latest operating system, gaming software, anti-virus software.

Make sure you check the gaming site and the owners of the website before you download the gaming software. Investigate and research the website/company name, if the gaming software and the updates it provides are hosted on anything but .com or .net. Question the site and company if it is hosted overseas.

The kids may not like it but hover over them and watch them play for 5-10 minutes on a regular basis ☺.

Equifax Data Breach – What To Do

<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2017/09/equifax-data-breach-what-do>



If you have a [credit report](#), there's a good chance that you're one of the 143 million American consumers whose sensitive personal information was exposed in a data

breach at Equifax, one of the nation's three major credit reporting agencies.

Here are the facts, according to Equifax. The breach lasted from mid-May through July. The hackers accessed people's names, Social Security numbers, birth dates, addresses and, in some instances, driver's license numbers. They also stole credit card numbers for about 209,000 people and dispute documents with personal identifying information for about 182,000 people. And they grabbed personal information of people in the UK and Canada too.

There are steps to take to help protect your information from being misused. Visit Equifax's website, www.equifaxsecurity2017.com.

This link takes you away from our site. Equifaxsecurity2017.com is not controlled by the FTC.)

- Find out if your information was exposed. Click on the "Potential Impact" tab and enter your last name and the last six digits of your Social Security number. Your Social Security number is sensitive information, so make sure you're on a [secure computer](#) and an [encrypted network connection](#) any time you enter it. The site will tell you if you've been affected by this breach.
- Whether or not your information was exposed, U.S. consumers can get a year of free credit monitoring and other services. The site will give you a date when you can come back to enroll. Write down the date and come back to the site and click "Enroll" on that date. You have until November 21, 2017 to enroll.
- You also can access [frequently asked questions](#) at the site.

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Here are some other steps to take to help protect yourself after a data breach:

- **Check your credit reports** from Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion — for free — by that you don't recognize could indicate identity theft. Visit IdentityTheft.gov to find out what to do.
- **Consider placing a credit freeze on your files.** A credit freeze makes it harder for someone to open a new account in your name. Keep in mind that a credit freeze won't prevent a thief from making charges to your existing accounts.
- **Monitor your existing credit card and bank accounts closely** for charges you don't recognize.
- If you decide against a credit freeze, **consider placing a fraud alert on your files.** A fraud alert warns creditors that you may be an identity theft victim and that they should verify that anyone seeking credit in your name really is you.
- **File your taxes early** — as soon as you have the tax information you need, before a scammer can. Tax identity theft happens when someone uses your Social Security number to get a tax refund or a job. Respond right away to letters from the IRS.

Visit www.identitytheft.gov/databreach to learn more about protecting yourself after a data breach.

WEED WARRIORS

<http://www.montgomeryparks.org/caring-for-our-parks/natural-spaces/weed-warriors/>



Most natural communities support a great variety of native plants and animals. Such biodiversity is threatened when a few plant species take over and dominate the herbaceous, shrub, and canopy layers of a forest. Find out more about the problem with invasive plants and how you can help below.

Know Your Invasive Plants

Most natural communities support a great variety of native plants and animals. Such biodiversity is threatened when a few plant species take over and dominate the herbaceous, shrub, and canopy layers of a forest.

Overly successful non-native invasive species (NNI) can alter the complex webs of plant/animal associations that have evolved over thousands of years to such a degree plants and

animals once familiar to us are eliminated. In edge and meadow areas, for example, NNI monocultures can reduce or destroy butterfly populations that can no longer find the native host plants on which their survival depends. Recent research has shown that pure monocultures of NNIs can alter soil chemistry or disrupt the growth of the mycorrhizal fungi on which healthy forests depend. NNIs are causing significant changes in the composition, structure, and ecosystem function in natural areas.

NNI plants are particularly difficult to control. Often it requires a mix of mechanical, chemical and hand removal efforts to be entirely successful. The key is to find NNI populations when they are small (Early Detection) and remove them before they establish (Rapid Response). The timeline is different for each species.

But some populations of invasive species have been here much longer kudzu (1876), wisteria (1916) and Japanese barberry (1875) have well documented histories associated with these plants' use for landscaping. Other species were brought in accidentally, e.g. stilt grass (as packing material) and mile-a-minute (contaminant in rhododendron nursery stock). These species are now wide-spread and the Parks looks at strategic methods to achieve local control.

A typical non-native invasive (NNI) plant has some or all of the following characteristics:

- Grows fast and matures early.
- Spreads quickly over large areas; thrives in many habitats.
- Reproduces profusely by seed and/or vegetative structures.
- Survives and produces seeds under adverse environmental conditions.
- Has few known diseases or pests, and is difficult to remove or control.

Non-native Invasive Plant List

These plants present the most serious threats to natural areas in Montgomery County, including parkland owned and managed by Montgomery Parks.

How You Can Help

In 1999, Montgomery Parks Forest Ecologist Carole Bergmann created the Weed Warrior volunteer program in response to the non-native invasive plant problem. The goal of the program is to educate citizens about identification and

management of NNIs. So far Weed Warrior volunteers have logged more than 57,000 hours and have made a valuable contribution to the control of non-native invasive vegetation in Montgomery Parks.

Will you join the fight?

Training

To become Certified Weed Warrior volunteers (age 16 and older), you must complete a 2-part online course, participate in a 2-hour field training session with a forest ecologist, and participate in a supervised workday with park staff. Certified Weed Warriors will then be authorized to work anywhere on Montgomery Parks, M-NCPPC property on their own schedules and at their own pace. To register for an upcoming Weed Warrior Training, please sign up [here](#).

Existing Weed Warriors

Remember to [log your volunteer hours](#) and update your contact information.

Special Project Weed Warriors

Most of our Weed Warriors work alone in their neighborhood parks. However, once in a while we'll get together and join forces. Group projects with Certified Weed Warriors, and non-certified volunteers and any combination in between. Special Projects give community members the chance to learn about and work on invasive plants in their parks, without making the commitment to become full-fledged Certified Weed Warriors.

Interested in joining in a Special Project Warrior Events for a day? Click [here](#) to see our current volunteer office listings or email our Volunteer Coordinator at mcp-weedwarriors@montgomeryparks.org to schedule a workday.

Weed Warriors Get Results

Native Meadow Returning to Life

After several years of selective invasive control, including many Weed Warrior hours, this year's revisit to the Kingsley Schoolhouse meadow uncovered a number of the plants that were installed last year. Hopefully this means the meadow has turned the corner and will soon be dominated by native species.

Garlic Mustard Month Results

Weed Warriors made a difference! With the average volunteer pulling over 20 pounds of garlic mustard an hour,

over 18,000 pounds of garlic mustard was removed from parkland.

Wavy Leaf Basket Grass

Six new populations of wavy leaf basket grass were reported since January 2013. All but one of the populations had several workdays with Weed Warriors hunched over working to remove every last piece of grass. Each population will need at least three years of monitoring, but the first step, finding it, was a success!

Donate

[Give a Gift of Green!](#) - You can also help by donating. Learn how you can give or dedicate A Gift of Green for various commemorative purposes, to honor a person, group or occasion; memorialize a family member, friend, or colleague; celebrate a birthday, an anniversary, or other special event. Visit [Montgomery Parks Foundation](#) to learn more.

PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENT APPEALS - WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

By Jerry Garson, RECA Treasurer

Your 2018 Real Estate Tax Assessment Value Notice should arrive at the end of this year or the beginning of next. For most residents we think there will be an increase in the assessment. If you want to try to save money on your property tax assessment and be properly armed with the information to do this, I urge you to attend. We will cover:

- Requesting the Sales Analysis Listing and property Worksheet on back of Assessment Form.
- Checking footage of House and other improvements listed on Property Record Card sent to you after you start the Appeal Process.
- Depreciation percentages, which should be higher than 30% for 50-year-old buildings.
- Teardowns. We now currently seeing a number of houses being torn down and being replaced by newer houses.
- Why land for larger lots is more valuable than shown on your Assessment.
- Why if your house is near the high voltage power lines you can use this fact to your advantage.
- What impact the age of the roof or last improvements to AC Heating System Kitchen and bathrooms may have.
- How to use pictures of rooms and the roof if they are not in very good condition.

The following is the Maryland State Department of Assessments formal Assessment Appeal Process
<http://dat.maryland.gov/realproperty/Pages/Assessment-Appeal-Process.aspx>

While we strive to provide the most accurate assessments possible, Customers sometimes feel that the Department's estimate of their property value is incorrect. The assessment appeal process allows property owners the opportunity to dispute the value determined by the Department. Property values rise and fall to reflect the market. Customers should file an appeal when the estimated value of their property does not accurately reflect what they believe to be its current market value.

Appeals may be filed on three occasions: upon receipt of an assessment notice; by a petition for review; and upon purchase of property between January 1 and June 30.

There are three options for an appeal, **Personal Hearing, Phone Hearing & Written Appeal**

Appeals made in writing eliminate the need to attend a scheduled hearing or to call in by phone, eliminating the need for the customer to take time out of their busy schedule for a hearing. The Department attempts to prioritize appeals made in writing.

APPEAL ON REASSESSMENT

Customers will normally receive a Notice of Assessment every three years that shows the old market value as well as the new market value. The new value reflects the current market influences, any additions or changes to structures on the property, along with any other conditions that may be affecting the property's value since the time of its last assessment.

If you decide to appeal, the first step is to file your appeal either online, or by replying to the Notice of Assessment by signing and returning the appeal form. Appeals must be filed within 45 days of the notice date. Depending on the volume of appeals for the jurisdiction in which the appeal is filed, every attempt is made to complete all reassessment appeals by June 1.

PETITION FOR REVIEW

You may file a petition for review by the first working day following January 1, for the two years your property is not valued at reassessment. It is best to file a petition for review when events have occurred since your last regular assessment that you believe have caused your property value to decline. If you fail to respond to a Notice of Assessment within the required time frame, you may file a petition for the following year. Click [here](#) to obtain a Petition

form. The completed form should be mailed to your local assessment office. After the petition has been received, a hearing will be scheduled after the following January 1. If you prefer, you may submit a written petition, so that the appeal can be reviewed, thus eliminating the need for a scheduled hearing.

APPEAL UPON PURCHASE

If you purchase a property and the property is transferred after January 1 but before July 1, you may file an appeal within 60 days of the transfer. Click [here](#) to obtain a Petition for Review form. After the new owner's petition for appeal has been received, the matter will be scheduled for a hearing. If you prefer, you may submit a written petition, so that the appeal can be reviewed, thus eliminating the need for a scheduled hearing. Please note that in order for the office to proceed with the appeal, the deed transferring ownership must be recorded with the local jurisdiction's land records.

FIRST STEP - SUPERVISOR'S LEVEL

The first level of the appeal process, known as the Supervisor's level, is informal. The intent of the Supervisor's level appeal is the exchange of information. This is the opportunity for the property owner to discover as much as possible about the manner in which the appraisal was made. In addition, the owner should note any factors which may affect the value of the property under appeal. The hearing is conducted with an assessor designated by the Supervisor of Assessments. Typically, hearings at this level take approximately 15 minutes.

The Department provides a complementary property and Area Sales Listing to you at no cost prior to your scheduled hearing. Customers filing written appeals will also be provided this information so that it may be reviewed.

Customers have the right to postpone their hearing one time if the hearing date conflicts with their schedule. A postponed hearing is then rescheduled for the next available date.

The information on the property worksheet will be reviewed at the time of the hearing to assure its accuracy. The Area Sales Listing is provided to you by the Department for assistance in estimating the market value of your property. Customers may also obtain sales data from other sources. Other sources may include; searching sales through our Online Real Property Search (provide link for Real Property Search), utilizing other sales publications, or real estate professionals in your area. For a nominal fee, property worksheets of comparable properties may be obtained from your local assessment office. To be most effective, you should:

- Focus on those points that affect the value of your property.
- Indicate why the Total New Market Value does not reflect the market value of the property.
- Identify any mathematical errors on the property worksheet or inaccurate information describing the characteristics of the property (such as the number of bathrooms, fireplaces, etc.).
- Provide sales of comparable properties which support your findings as to the value of the property.
- Avoid the following issues since they are not relevant to the value under appeal: comparison to past values, percent of increase, additional metropolitan costs, the amount of the tax bill, and services rendered or not rendered.

SECOND STEP - PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENT APPEAL BOARD

Following the Supervisor's Level hearing, you will receive a final notice. If you disagree with the decision, you can appeal to the next step which is to the [Property Tax Assessment Appeals Board](#) (PTAAB). This appeal must be filed within 30 days from the date of the final notice you received as a result of the Supervisor's Level hearing.

PTAAB boards are located in each of the 24 jurisdictions. These boards are comprised of local residents of the jurisdiction who are recommended by the local government and appointed by the Governor. They are a separate and independent body from the Department. Customers generally need no assistance at this step, no fees are required, and they are free to present any supporting evidence, regardless of what was presented at the previous level appeal.

Hearing dates and times are determined by the members of PTAAB. If the hearing date conflicts with your schedule, the hearing may be postponed by contacting the local PTAAB clerk, however, no more than two postponements are granted at this level. You may elect to appeal in person or in writing.

Our Department provides a complementary property worksheet and a list of the comparable properties that will be used by the Department to support the Market Value of the property going before PTAAB. For more information regarding the Property Tax Assessment Appeals Board, please refer to their website www.ptaab.state.md.us.

THIRD STEP - MARYLAND TAX COURT

If you are dissatisfied with the decision made by the Property Tax Assessment Appeals Board, you have the option to file an appeal to the Maryland Tax Court (MTC) within 30 days of the date of the PTAAB order. The Maryland Tax Court is an independent body appointed by the Governor. Although the proceedings are more formal than the first two levels, it is still considered to be an informal administrative hearing. You must be present at the Maryland Tax Court appeal (no written hearings). There are no fees for filing an appeal to this level; hearings at this level are de novo, meaning nothing prior is considered.

The Hearing date, time, and location are determined by the Clerk to the Maryland Tax Court. Requests for continuance (postponements of hearing date) must be made to their office and are reviewed through that body.

At this level, our Department may undertake a more formal appraisal of your property. The Petitioner and Respondent are to comply with Maryland Tax Court RULE 7 (Notice of Reliance on Other Properties – Service of List – 10 days), mandating an exchange of information for any property to be offered as evidence other than the subject of the appeal. The street address should be provided along with the following information relating to the purpose of its inclusion as evidence:

- For the purpose of showing a sale of any such property, the date of sale and sale price shall be stated.
- For the purpose of showing the assessment on a property, the amount of the assessment and year(s) for which the assessment was applicable shall be given.
- For purpose of showing construction cost, the amount of said cost shall be given and year(s) in which construction was begun and completed.
- For the purpose of showing income derived, a detailed statement of the income and expenses shall be given for the year(s) in which income was received.

For more information regarding the Maryland Tax Court Please refer to their website www.taxcourt.maryland.gov. Property owners who are in disagreement with the Maryland Tax Court's decision can appeal further through the judiciary system, where appellants are advised to utilize legal counsel.

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