

**Minutes of the Oakmont Annual Town Meeting  
7:00 pm April 24, 2007**

Attendees – Committee Members: Laurens van der Tak, Chair; David Levy, Treasurer; Barbara Moskowitz, Secretary; Irv Faibisch, Parking Marshal; Marilyn Mazuzan, NIH/Suburban Liaison; Ase Sewall, Accountant.

Attendees – Other town residents: Marianne van der Tak; Ron Payne; Howard and Ella Iams; Eric Moskowitz; Jeff Gemunder; Bob Wenthold; Walt Friauf; Fran Faibisch; John Yetter; Virgil Huber; Pat Mazuzan

**Daley Lane and Tree Work**

Following general introductions, Laurens reported that renovations of Daley Lane are complete. Electrical problems with the lighting have been repaired, and the lights are now on a sensor. The Committee hired a contractor to maintain Daley Lane on a quarterly basis and to add additional plants as directed by the Committee.

Trees on town property on Oakmont and Oak Place have been trimmed by Myers & Law, and the dead tree at 5616 Oak Place is scheduled for removal on April 26. The town did not have to pay to remove the large tree that came down on Oak Place last Halloween during a storm because the County took care of it for us.

**Oakmont Web Site**

Barbara has completed an extensive renovation of the Oakmont Web Site, which had become quite outdated. We launched the new site this week ([www.townofOakmont.org](http://www.townofOakmont.org)), although some small issues are still being worked out. Resident Alex Baden is hosting the site and serving as Web Master for the town. He will be able to keep the site updated with information provided by the Committee.

Barbara encouraged residents to submit photos of town events for the Photo Gallery and to provide their email addresses so we can keep the Directory updated. Residents expressed interest in also continuing to have a paper copy of the Oakmont Directory distributed.

**NIH/Suburban Report**

Marilyn reported that Dennis Coleman is the new chairman of the NIH Liaison Committee. He appears to have a lot of experience working with communities and has started an outreach effort to Naval Medical as a result of plans to close Walter Reed and move more than 10,000 patients/visitors/doctors to Bethesda Naval as part of the BRAC. This move will affect traffic throughout the area. The results of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) are expected in June, although there has been some talk by planners of skipping the EIS as a means of streamlining the process. Local government officials are opposed to by-passing the EIS. The Oakmont Committee has written a letter expressing concern about traffic and environmental issues associated with the move. We will continue to monitor the situation and respond as appropriate.

The NIH Vehicle Inspection Station on Rockville Pike is open, and NIH plans to add plantings to minimize the focal impact of the facility.

NIH has guaranteed that the perimeter shuttle bus available to residents will continue to be funded throughout this fiscal year. Anyone experiencing problems with the shuttle is encouraged to report them immediately to Marilyn at 301-530-4249.

Suburban Hospital has plans to expand north across Lincoln Street, closing the street and replacing the parking garage with underground parking and doctor's offices. Marilyn will keep us informed of developments.

### **Parking Report**

Irv Faibisch briefly explained the parking permit process and noted that he has given out several warnings recently to people who were illegally parked. None has required calling police.

### **Treasurer's Report**

As the apparent result of a town resident cashing in a major investment, Oakmont's share of the Maryland Income Tax for 2006 was approximately \$60,000, more than double our usual income. Income this year has returned more to its traditional level of about \$30,000. The town has \$32,546 currently on hand and estimates ending the year with a balance of \$27,511.

David proposed ending the recent practice of having the town pay residents' County water quality and waste collection fee of \$281 per household, which costs the town \$17,700 a year and requires a great deal of paper work. He proposed that the money be put instead toward one or more capital projects to benefit the town. Following discussion, it was moved and seconded that the town no longer make these payments to the County on behalf of residents. The motion passed.

### **Sidewalk, Driveways, and Curbs Project**

In response to long-time community comments, including those on the Oakmont Survey conducted last summer, Laurens proposed that Oakmont undertake a new capital project. The project would have three elements:

1. Replace driveway aprons on homes where they were not already replaced following completion of the drainage project. This includes five homes at the top of Oakmont and one home on Oak Place, although a survey may reveal more.
2. Extend the sidewalk on Oak Place to Hempstead. This involves extending it the width of one lot that is not part of the town and would require County permission and homeowner notification. Extension of this sidewalk has been identified as a safety issue. Children must walk in the street at this point on Oak Place to get to their school bus stop.
3. Replace the macadam curbs on Oakmont with standard concrete curbs. This will be an aesthetic improvement, result in easier maintenance, and eliminate the danger posed by the fact that the macadam curb is too high in many places relative to the ground on the house side of the curb.

Laurens presented a very rough estimate of \$49,000 to complete all the work. Even assuming the project costs as much as \$60,000, the town will be able to pay for it without a tax increase based on current income and assuming only a small (\$5,000-6,000) bridge loan.

A request to get the County to do the work might be successful but would take five – 10 years. Residents approved a motion to get bids for the work and move ahead with it if the bids are for less than \$62,000.

We will also write a letter to the County asking to be put on the schedule to have Oakmont repaved in a way that takes into account the heavier loads the street now gets as a result of increased construction in the neighborhood.

### **Tax Rate**

Residents unanimously approved a motion to keep the current tax rate of \$.06 per \$100 of property value for another year and to get a small loan, if needed, to allow for payment of the concrete project over a two-year period.

### **Oakmont Survey**

Barbara summarized the results of the Oakmont Survey conducted in June 2006 and reported to the town in September 2006. (Complete results are available on the Oakmont web site at [www.townof oakmont.org](http://www.townof oakmont.org)) The survey illustrated the high level of interest in the town for finding a means of dealing with issues related to mansionization/tear downs. With a 30% response rate, every resident who responded expressed some level of concern. Greatest areas of concern included the effects on storm water drainage, mature trees, the character of the neighborhood, diversity in the affordability of houses in the town, and impact on tax rates.

### **Proposed Building Ordinance**

Laurens explained that the ordinance being considered now is the continuation of an effort that began in early 2006. A draft ordinance presented at the 2006 Annual Meeting was deemed unsatisfactory for a variety of reasons, and the Committee was charged with doing more research into the issues prior to drafting a new ordinance. The current proposed ordinance requires that any construction project in Oakmont that requires a County permit also receive an Oakmont Permit before proceeding. Oakmont requirements would not go beyond those of the County, but the permit process would give us an opportunity to bring concerns to the County's attention prior to their issuing their permit.

During the last year, Committee members investigated what other towns in the County are doing and found that virtually every one has put a building permitting process in place already. Drummond, a town similar in size to Oakmont, has recently completed the process of getting their ordinance approved by the County, and theirs was used as a basis for the draft we created. Laurens described the process needed to gain County approval and the following points were made during discussion of the draft ordinance:

- The town is increasing its insurance coverage for a variety of reasons, and the new insurance will cover Committee member liability, which may become especially important if we pass such an ordinance.
- The Committee needs to specify any fee associated with a permit application.
- The hearing process described in the ordinance must be clarified.
- The process for issuing a Stop Work Order must be clarified, including a description of who has authority to issue such an order.
- The ordinance should include a time line for the permitting process.
- The amount of the bond should be increased and it should be posted by the person who gets the permit (i.e., the general contractor). Circumstances under which a bond will be invoked should be clarified, and a step should be added to the process requiring a formal notice if that happens.
- The Committee should consider adding a process to allow the town to take standing as the homeowner for purposes of appealing County decisions.
- Oakmont will hire an engineer as needed on a case-by-case basis to review plans submitted as part of a permit application.

Residents approved a motion to move forward with revisions and schedule another town meeting to review a second draft of the proposed ordinance.

### **Picnic**

The annual town picnic will be held this year on Saturday, September 15. The rain date will be Sunday. Volunteers to organize and work on the event are needed. Anyone interested should call a Committee member.

### **Elections**

Laurens is retiring from the Committee this year after serving in an elected position for two years and as a volunteer manager of the drainage project for four years prior to that. The time and energy he has put into town business are greatly appreciated.

Pat Mazuzan was unanimously elected to replace Laurens on the Committee.

### **Door Prizes**

Ron Payne and Pat Mazuzan were each selected in a random drawing of names to win door prizes of small gift certificates.