Volume 68 February 2021 No. 2

Calendar			
Sat, Jan 30	Farmers Market, 10 am- 1pm	Mon Feb 15	Presidents Day, TOWN OFFICE CLOSED
Sat Feb 6	Farmers Market, 10 am – 1 pm, Penn Place GIVES Collection, 9 am – 12 pm, outside the PO	Wed Feb 17	Arboretum Advisory Committee Meeting, 7 pm, via Zoom
Mon Feb 8	Town Council Meeting,7:30 pm, Town Hall	Sat Feb 20	Farmers Market, 10 am – 1 pm, Penn Place
Wed Feb 3	Historic Preservation Advisory Committee Meeting, 7:30 pm, via Zoom	Wed Feb 24	CA Event: Chat with Officer Dana Stroman (via Zoom), Community Services Officer, 2nd District, Montgomery County Police
Sat Feb 13	Farmers Market, 10 am – 1 pm, Penn Place	Sat Feb 27	Farmers Market, 10 am – 1 pm, Penn Place

Town Council Meeting Notes

The January town council meeting was short and civil, so this report will also be short and sweet as well.

The main event of the evening was the first agenda item after the routine approval of the minutes and agenda: a presentation on the issue of loud, persistent train horn blasts. Note: steam engines had whistles; today's diesel-electric engines have horns. (Sorry; as a train enthusiast I cannot pass up making that picky distinction.) Dan Simons introduced Alison Fultz, a consultant on issues of municipalities and trains. She gave a detailed PowerPoint presentation on the Garrett Park train horn issues—much too detailed to cover point by point here, presuming that her presentation and report will become available on the town website.

I will just focus on what struck me as important and interesting. Technically, Garrett Park has two crossings. One is the paved crossing connecting to the hiker/biker trail leading to Rock Creek Park. The other, less than 100 feet away, consists of footboards between the rails so MARC passengers can cross the track to the northbound station platform. Surprisingly, since neither crossing is for vehicular traffic, federal rules do not mandate a horn being sounded for the crossing, and the state of Maryland (unlike some states) has no rules of its own. CSX Corporation, however, does mandate that its engineers sound the horn when approaching a station. In both directions, CSX has a sign next to the track to alert engineers where they are supposed to sound the

horn. From the discussion between Ms. Fultz and council members it appears that the main sound problem is with southbound trains, which sometimes sound their horns for an inordinately long time (often with more blasts than the standard long-long-shortlong for a crossing).

Options for the town include negotiating with CSX to shorten the length of the blasts or asking for a "quiet zone" with no horn sounded at all (as is the case at the Kensington station). Having received Ms. Fultz's report and listened to her presentation, the mayor and town council will decide what approach to take after further discussion at the February council meeting.

Editorial aside: your reporter confesses to having lived in town so long that he remembers when the main crossing (then still classified as a vehicular road crossing—a long story) had a bell that rang as trains approached. Presumably this was removed when the crossing was downgraded to a pedestrian crossing. But putting in a new bell as part of the solution did not come up in the discussion. In any case, stay tuned to find out what the town government decides what to do.

There being no presentations by residents, the meeting moved on to action items, of which there was one. Recall that draft legislation was formally introduced at the December meeting to alter the required setback on the side of corner lots (i.e. lots with a street both in front and at one side of the property) from 30 feet to 15 feet—see substitute reporter Ken Schwartz's excellent coverage of this issue in the last *Bugle*. (Hey, it's always a good idea

to praise substitutes just in case they are needed again in the future). Having already been discussed in December, the proposed ordinance was quickly adopted unanimously.

On to updates.

- Sidewalks (Mayor Kacky). There are still some changes on the punch list for the concrete company to deal with (e.g., at the corner of Oxford and Shelley Court).
- Archives (Phil Schulp). The archives are pleased to note that there were more research requests in 2020 than in 2019.
- Stormwater management (Mario Grande). A report drafted by the town engineer is currently undergoing revisions, and there is now a draft map of all stormwater drains in the town. The town is also in discussion with the county about water pooling on the basketball court.

Interim town manager Debi Sandlin then gave her monthly report, indicating that revenues and expenditures are within expectations. The February council meeting will take up the usual mid-fiscal-year budget revisions. The January meeting was also interim town manager Debi Sandli's last before the return of Andrea Fox from maternity leave on February first. Thank you, Debi! And welcome back Andrea!

The Garrett Bugle is a newsletter publication by the Citizens Association of Garrett Park and published 10 times a year. Publication is supported by member dues. All residents of Garrett Park are members of the Citizens Association. Yearly dues (\$25 per family or \$15 per individual per address) can be sent to Citizens Association, Box 456, Garrett Park, MD 20896. Articles, ads and other content for the Garrett Bugle can be emailed to garrettbugle@gmail.com*

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*Editor and staff reserve the right to edit submissions for length and clarity. Unsigned Letters to the Editor will not be printed.

How can residents keep informed about Town news and events?

The best way to know about **Town** services, government, committees and meetings is to sign up for e- notifications from www.garrettparkmd.gov To do so, register for a website user account at: https://www.garrettparkmd.gov/Sys/sso/Register, and please provide your street address.

After your account is active, and you are signed in, go to: https://www.garrettparkmd.gov/residentsportal/sign-up-for-email-notifications. Select which News/Announcements, and Calendar notifications to receive by clicking on the desired items, then scroll down to click "Submit".

For more informal town resident discussions, register for the Garrett Park Town Forum, by emailing: adminelizabeth@garrettparkmd.gov. Provide your street address and request to be added to the Forum. The Forum is a Google Group, and you

can adjust your settings to determine how you want the email managed.

Town Manager's Notes

Farewell – This will be my last Managers Note for the Bugle, Andrea Fox, your Town Manager will be returning from her maternity leave on Monday, February 1, 2021. I want to thank everyone for this wonderful opportunity and to tell each of you it has been an honor and a privilege serving as your Interim Town Manager.

Holiday Gifts. Many thanks to the residents who generously gave contributions to the Montgomery County Sanitation employees who take away our trash, recyclables, and yard waste. Letters of acknowledgement will be sent to all who gave, and in February, a year-end gift will be made to each of the four employees.

Important Dates

- Monday, February 1 Monthly Yard Waste
- Monday, February 8 Town Council Meeting
- Monday, February 18 Town Office closed for Presidents' Day (Trash and recycling will be on a holiday schedule – recycling will be picked up Tuesday, and trash on Thursday)

Snow removal – Please park off the streets when snow is expected so that the town crew can clear curb to curb whenever possible. This will allow for more space to park after the streets are plowed.

State tax form – Whether you fill out your own state income tax forms, or have someone prepare them for you, please be sure that "Garrett Park" is written in the box labeled "City, Town or Taxing Area." This ensures that our community receives its fair share of the income tax revenues distributed by the state.

Regular Reminders:

Communication. Please sign up for the resident's portal, as it provides the Town Office with one more way to reach you. Register at www.garrettparkmd.gov/residents-portal. New to town? Contact the Town Office at 301-933-7488 or email Elizabeth Henley, Town Assistant at adminelizabeth@garrettparkmd.gov or Andrea Fox, Town Manager at managerandrea@garrettparkmd.gov. We will help you get you acquainted with what you need to know about living in Garrett Park.

Permits. A Garrett Park building permit is required when a new structure is to be built including houses, additions, sheds, garages, decks, porches, and driveways. This is in addition to the required Montgomery County permit. Complete your Garrett Park permit application and submit along with your plat and drawings to the Town Office before requesting a County permit. Permit applications and payment can be completed online at

www.garrettparkmd.gov/government/operations/per mits.

As always, please reach out to the Town Office with any questions or concerns, 301-933-7488 or email Andrea Fox at managerandrea@garrettparkmd.gov.

Debi Sandlin, Interim Town Manager



A fancy new sign for the Town Hall! Photo by Stephen Welker.

Citizen Association Notes

CA Elections

On January 28th, the CA held virtual elections for our four executive board positions. The CA reelected the 2020 officers for another year:

President - Alysia Bone Vice President - Tom DiChiara Secretary - Stephen Welker Treasurer - Therese Keating

Chat with Officer Dana Stroman

On February 24, at 7 pm, Officer Dana Stroman, Community Services Officer, 2nd District, Montgomery County Police will host a Zoom meeting to get to know your local law enforcement. Officer Stroman will present on matters including local crime statistics and important contact information for Town residents. At the end, we will have a Q&A session. Info to join is below:

Join Zoom Meeting

Meeting ID: 837 3257 0774

Passcode: 272761

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,83732570774# US (Washington

D.C)

Dues and 2021 Events:

We're now collecting CA dues for 2021: \$25 per family or \$15 for an individual. Dues support the printing costs of the Bugle and are also typically used to hold CA events such as the Town Dinner, wine tastings, 4th of July activities, and Spooky Woods. Though COVID-19 restrictions may prevent us from

hosting some of these traditional events this year, we plan to organize other virtual activities (e.g., seminars and workshops) and other pandemic-friendly events. Please Venmo your dues to @GarrettPark-CitizensAssociatio, send cash or a check to PO Box 456, or email theresekeating@aol.com to make other arrangements. We'd love to hear your suggestions for 2021 virtual CA events! Feel free to email alysia.bone.gp@gmail.com.

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David Altar

301-602-2713

David.altar1@gmail.com





Town Resident Contributions

Hope is a Fire

We're going through tough times on this mountain that we climb

During this raging storm we can form a fire that shall keep us warm

Sometimes the sky is dark and our fire is just a spark In times like this it may seem doused

And you may feel there is not a way out

Let me tell you, this is never true

For even in dark there will *always* be a spark

A spark that flickers hope deep in your heart

The spark in us that keeps us going while the storm outside is growing

Our sparks reformed create a **blazing** fire, comforting and warm

This is the fire that braves that weather,

This is the fire that keeps us together

Bella Down 6th grader at Tilden Middle School GP Estates neighbor and Garrett Park Ladybug swimmer!





Tree removal on Keswick. Photo by Stephen Welker.

Don't just take my word for it

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