

Volume 68

March 2021

No. 3

Calendar

Sat. Feb 27	Farmers Market, 10 am – 1 pm, Penn Place	Sat. Mar 13	Farmers Market, 9am – 1pm, Penn Place
Wed. Mar 3	GPHAC Meeting, 7 pm	Sat, Mar 20	Farmers Market, 9 am – 1 pm, Penn Place
Sat. Mar 6	Farmers Market, 9 am – 1 pm, Penn Place	Wed. Mar 24	2021 Election Candidates Nomination Meeting, 7:30
Mon, Mar 8	Town Council Meeting, 7:30 pm	Sat, Mar 27	Farmers Market, 9 am – 1pm, Penn Place

Town Council Meeting Notes

Your reporter must begin this month with correction of an error! Last month I wrote that I have lived in town long enough to recall when there was a bell at the train crossing—meaning that there is no longer a bell. Two readers have pointed out to me that I am wrong. I was puzzled because I had actually looked for a bell before I wrote that, and could not find one. But when a train came by, there was the bell sound—coming from a tiny cylinder at the top of a skinny metal pole holding a train crossing sign. I could say that it is not a bell—just a speaker playing a recording of a clanging bell, but that would be an evasion. Apologies. But, dear readers, why did only two people in town notice my mistake? I hope that is not an indication of how many people read this column. Anyway, on to the February Town Council meeting, which was a busy one, with three action items and an explosive new business item. Here we go.

- Election judges. The council quickly and unanimously voted to re-appoint the current three judges to two-year terms.
- Mid-year budget adjustments. Town Manager Andrea Fox (welcome back Andrea!) presented the draft adjustments. These revisions do not anticipate any major change in town tax receipts (including receipts from the state or county)—amazing considering all the stories in the media about cities and states facing major revenue shortfalls. The only noticeable drop in revenue comes from the lack of rental income from the Town Hall, closed due to the pandemic (a small \$10,156 loss), accounting for most of the \$12,470 decline in total revenues. Proposed changes on the expenditure side were mostly small and technical, with the largest individual increase being the cost of Andrea’s replacement while she was on maternity leave. In total,

expenditures will go up by \$125,722 (a rise of nine percent), covered by the carryover of funds from the previous fiscal year (which were considerably larger than had been anticipated when the budget was put together last spring). After a few minor changes, the council voted to introduce the revised budget, and the council will vote on its adoption at the March meeting.

- Charter amendment on voting by mail. You will recall that last year’s town election was done entirely by mail, under a temporary charter amendment and temporary ordinance. So far this year, the governor’s emergency declaration about elections remains in effect. Therefore, Town Manager Fox has prepared a draft permanent charter amendment that has language allowing the council to pass similar legislation for mail-in voting at times when the governor has declared an emergency, if the council so chooses. That is, the amendment does not mandate mail-in voting under these circumstances; it just enables the council to act if it wants. There was some discussion about the need and desirability of this permanent charter amendment (rather than another temporary measure). In the end, the council voted to introduce the amendment by a vote of four to one (councilmember Bennett voting against—she favored a temporary measure). In March there will be further discussion and a final vote on the amendment.

And now, new business--the BOMBSHELL!! The Catholic church has sold the property occupied by St. Angela Hall and along the driveway into the Academy of Holy Cross (a total of 15 acres) to a private developer. The developer plans on putting up roughly 9 single family houses, 115 townhouses, and a senior living center with 120 units. Aside from the

visual impact of covering up a stretch of what is now largely open land with multistory buildings, the main concern is the increase in traffic and the congestion caused by more cars turning from/to Strathmore (with 3 entrances to the development being proposed). The developer is currently thinking of beginning construction in 2022, extending for about three years thereafter. This project requires rezoning of the property, so it will involve hearings by the Montgomery County [Office of Zoning and Administrative Hearings](#). The town of Garrett Park has no direct control over what happens—the property in question is outside the boundaries of the town. But the town could submit a statement to the county during the review process regarding traffic issues. Stay tuned, as this topic will surely get more discussion by the Town Council.

On to updates.

- **Sidewalks.** Mayor Kacky gave the update on the Safe Routes to School sidewalk project, including a response to a question raised earlier during Residents’ presentations (by Eileen Kelly (11002 Kenilworth Avenue) about water ponding on the sidewalk. Resolution of “punch list” items that need fixing by the contract is still ongoing—including the ponding issue. But there is no timeline for when the fixes will take place.
- **Archives.** Due to time pressures of a new job, councilmember Grande has moved from being the oversight member for stormwater issues to the archives, while councilmember Schulp takes on stormwater.
- **Stormwater.** So, councilmember Schulp has been getting up to speed on the stormwater issues in town, and particularly the problems at the far end of Rokeby, working closely with Stormwater Task Force member Chuck Berry. The current focus is on getting a survey of the complicated physical structures involved—drainage pipes, manhole access covers, electric wires, etc. so that contractors know what they are getting into when they bid on the project. And apologies were made concerning delays in moving forward with the Rokeby issues.
- **Train horn.** Councilmember Simons noted that the town has the full report (and PowerPoint slides) prepared by the consultant who made the presentation at the January meeting, including a set of options. Councilmember Simons asked that all council members read through the report so it can be discussed at the March meeting. There was also some discussion of whether to have a survey of town opinion or hold a public meeting to get a better idea of what people want.
- **Town Hall.** Councilmember Paczkowski said he is ready to set up a public meeting to discuss options for Town Hall renovations. By the time you read this, there may be a date for this.

As always, the meeting ended with the Town Manager’s report. And, as usual, revenues and expenditures are running at expected levels. Yay!

Ed Lincoln
Bugle Reporter

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/residents-portal/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

Thank you for warmly welcoming Debi Sandlin, who served as the Interim Town Manager while I was out on leave. And many thanks to Debi for so capably stepping in while I was out! I am back as of February 1st and busily getting caught up.

Important Dates:

- March 1, 2021 – Yard waste collection resumes
- March 8, 2021 – Town Council meeting
- March 24, 2021 – Town Election 2021 Candidate Nominations Meeting, hosted by the Citizens Association
- April 10, 2021 – Large item pickup

Town Elections 2021 – The terms of office for three councilmembers are up this year. The councilmembers shall be citizens of the United States, have resided in the town for at least one year

prior to their election, and be qualified voters of the town. Check the Town website and Post Office bulletin board for deadlines, dates, and information; all will be finalized at the March 8th Town Council meeting.

Town budget – The FY21 midyear adjustment will be considered for adoption at the March Town Council meeting. The FY22 budget will be introduced at the April Town Council Meeting and considered for adoption at the May Town Council Meeting

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.

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.

Regular Reminders:

Communication – The resident’s portal provides the Town Office with one more way to reach you. Register at www.garrettparkmd.gov/residents-portal New to town? Contact adminelizabeth@garrettparkmd.gov to get acquainted with what you need to know about living in Garrett Park.

Permits – A Garrett Park building permit is required when you want to build a new structure 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 at www.garrettparkmd.gov/government/operations/permits

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

Andrea Fox, Town Manager

Citizen Association Notes

Chat with Officer Dana Stroman

Thank you to those who attended the Zoom meeting with Officer Stroman! Officer Stroman discussed a wide-range of matters, including car break-ins and the utility of installing public closed circuit television cameras. The meeting was recorded and will be accessible shortly.

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.

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David Altar
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David.altar1@gmail.com

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Garrett Bugle

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Garrett Park Community Fund

The Garrett Park Community Fund (GPCF) was established in 2013 to serve as an umbrella organization for charitable programs within the Town of Garrett Park.

GPCF now administers two well-established and valued programs—the [Betsy White Emergency Fund](#) and the [Ilah Gieser Music Scholarship Fund](#). The officers are Garrett Park residents who serve without compensation. GPCF is an independent group and is separate from any Town of Garrett Park administration or responsibility. It has 501 (c) (3) tax status as a charitable organization.

For fifty-two years, the **Betsy White Emergency Fund** has helped address a variety of emergency needs, including covering expenses related to illness, death, family separations, storm damage, tax shortfalls, loss of employment, and other unexpected financial costs. The Women’s Club of Garrett Park established this emergency fund in 1969 with a donation of \$700 from the town residents. The fund was renamed in 1973 in honor of Betsy White, an officer and beloved member of the women’s club. The service has been maintained since then through donations from generous Garrett Park neighbors, and bequests as well as fundraising effort by the Women’s Club.

GPCF greatly appreciates our past and current donors. Applications for the Betsy White Emergency Fund are at the town office, or requesting the form by sending a note to PO BOX 381 Garrett Park MD 20896, or [online](#). The application process and distribution of the funds are strictly confidential. The trustees determine the appropriateness of the requests and make decisions based on need. The anonymity of the applicants is preserved throughout the process. If approved, a check will be mailed directly to the applicant.

To donate to the fund, please send a check payable to the Garrett Park Community Fund and write in the memo line Betsy White Fund.

Garrett Park Community Fund has another fund named the [Ilah Gieser Music Scholarship Fund](#). This fund was established in 1997 by Ilah Gieser, a long-time resident. She grew up on a farm, and as a young girl, she wished to learn how to play the piano, but her family did not have the resources for the little girl to do so.

She donated the seed money to start a music scholarship and planned the first Musicale at the Town Hall to raise more fund for it. The scholarship provides a year of tuition assistance for private instrumental music lessons for a rising 5th grade student at Garrett Park Elementary School. The selection is made by the school music teacher.

The annual **Musicale** featuring the musical talents of Garrett Park residents and friends helps to fund this scholarship. Unfortunately last year was the first year since the start of the Fund we were unable to have the Musicale because of the pandemic.

This spring, our 24th year, we are hoping to have a virtual Musicale in late spring so we can resume helping a young talented musician. Sue Petito is the tireless organizer of the Musicale. Stay tuned!

If you have questions about the two programs or making donations, please contact GPCF President, Megumi (Meme) Lincoln at mslincoln12@gmail.com or by phone at 240-447-2087.

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From the Town Archives



What better way to spend a winter day than curled up with a cup of tea and a fabulous book? Need reading ideas? Perhaps the history of the Garrett Park (GP) Library will provide inspiration.

Years before the creation of Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL), thanks to the Women’s Club and dedicated volunteers, Garrett Park had its own library. It began humbly in 1947 on the shelves of Lina Penn’s store. When Penn needed more space for groceries, the library moved to the basement of Lucile Stevens’ home. In 1950, it found its new home in the recently developed Community Center.

GP Library was one of nine independent libraries in the county when MCPL was created in 1950. A year later, librarian, Landon Bunker, signed an agreement to join MCPL; in return, the library gained “a telephone, new shelving, 203 books a month on rotation, and pay for a librarian 13 hours a week.” [*Garrett Park: A History*, p. 33] The library remained a daily part of town life until the late 1960s when the

Kensington Park Branch opened. Despite valiant efforts by the Citizens Association and volunteers to keep GP Library open, even just part-time, it ultimately closed in 1973.

Fortunately, the Town Archives has records of the library, including a handwritten notebook listing all the books acquired from 1947 through 1950. This accession list shows that the library held an eclectic array of books, as evidenced by the authors on the list—Louisa May Alcott, Taylor Caldwell, Upton Sinclair, Willa Cather, George Orwell, Pearl S. Buck, Winston Churchill, Sinclair Lewis, Dr. Seuss, Rudyard Kipling, and countless others. Acquired through gifts, purchases, and deaccessions from other libraries, GP Library offered books to engage and delight old and young. Check out the newly scanned accession list on the Town Archives website (<https://garrettparkarchives.omeka.net/>).

Rockville Cemetery Seeking Board Members

What do former Garrett Park residents Haile Chisholm, Lina Penn, Sallie Rucker, and Marion Elizabeth Hetzer have in common? They are all buried at Rockville Cemetery (RockvilleCemeteryMD.org), the community’s oldest burial ground, with gravestones dating from 1752. This historic cemetery is administered by the Rockville Cemetery Association, a non-profit organization comprising an all-volunteer Board of Directors that is currently seeking new members. Board Members attend monthly meetings, participate in day-to-day operating decisions, and work on special projects in support of the cemetery. For more information or an application, please email Town Archivist Claire McDonald.

Jean Christian Abels

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