



Calendar

Wed Apr 3	Arboretum Committee Meeting, Pann Place 3 rd Fl., 7p	Sat Apr 13	Chicano Sol Farm Stand, Penn Place, 9a – 1p
Wed Apr 3	Historic Preservation Comm. Meeting, 11018 Kenilworth Ave., 7:30p	Sat Apr 20	Chicano Sol Farm Stand, Penn Place, 9a – 1p
Sat Apr 6	Large Item Pick-up	Sat Apr 20	GIVES Collection, Post Office, 9a – 11a
Sat Apr 6	Chicano Sol Farm Stand, Penn Place, 9a – 1p	Wed Apr 24	Candidate’s Forum, Town Hall, 7:30p
Sat Apr 6	GIVES Collection, Post Office, 9a – 11a	Sat Apr 27	Chicano Sol Farm Stand, Penn Place, 9a – 1p
Sat Apr 6	7th Annual Children’s Egg Hunt, Field outside Post Office, 10am	Sun Apr 28	Centennial Chevy House Self-Guided Walking Tour, 1p – 5p
Mon Apr 8	GP Town Council Meeting, Town Hall & Virtual, 7:30p	Sun Apr 28	Reception (Part of Chevy House Tour), Town Hall, 4p – 6p

Town Council Meeting Notes

The agenda for the March meeting of the Town Council appeared to be relatively short and simple, but one item generated a lot of discussion and some controversy. I will get to that shortly. First the agenda was approved with a change—moving the controversial agenda item, a “new business” item that usually comes late in the agenda, to the beginning in order to accommodate the residents attending the meeting who were waiting to speak. And the February minutes were approved without change.

First up, on presentations by residents, were comments on budgeting by Ken Schwartz. Much of what he presented was a summary concerning renovation of the Town Hall estimated costs and available funds to pay for it. But he also raised another issue—the mid-year revisions to the Town budget for the current fiscal year. As I covered in last month’s report, revenues are running considerably higher than anticipated, and there was an unexpectedly large carry-over of funds from the previous fiscal year. The higher revenues resulted in adjusting budgeted operating expenditures upward. Ken asked the Council Members if they knew how much higher the now-revised budgeted operating expenditures are, relative to the actual expenditures in the previous fiscal year, in percentage terms. No one seemed to know (and your reporter did not know either). The answer is 22 percent higher. He noted that this is a very large percentage change, and he suggested that it might be better to allocate more of

the increased available funds to the capital budget for the Town Hall renovation, rather than increasing operating expenditures so much.

Kenilworth Gate

Now we come to the controversial issue. As residents of Garrett Park know, there is a closed gate across Kenilworth close to where it intersects with Rokeby. The issue is: should the gate be removed? The Town Manager reported that the initial discussion at the Town Council to install a gate dates back to the mid-1950s. Having lived in Garrett Park for 45 years, your reporter can tell you that the issue of removing the gate seems to come up about once every 10-15 years. So far, the gate has remained closed. This time, the topic came up because the gate was opened during the removal of the house on the former Yeandle property, which is very close to the gated intersection. Trucks would not have been able to turn around by the house because of the narrowness of Kenilworth. That opening then led several Council Members to ask why the gate exists. Hence the appearance on the agenda of this issue.

Several residents who live near the gated intersection spoke up, mostly in favor of keeping the gate shut, but one asking for it to be opened or removed. Those in favor of continued closure raised a number of points: it does not affect driving times very much; the fire department is not bothered by the gate; both the trash/recycling truck drivers and school bus drivers know they can open the gate; the gate helps traffic calming; and makes Kenilworth safer for pedestrians. Arguments against the gate included the

fact that not all drivers (e.g. package delivery trucks and substitute bus drivers) know they can open the gate, and end up being uncertain about how to get through to Rokeby. Another issue was the question of why this one intersection, out of all the ones in Town, should be closed. Your reporter adds from personal experience, though, that Cambria Avenue is also closed--in this case in the middle (where Keswick intersects with it). That closure dates back to at least the 1970s. Discussion of the pros and cons of the gate went on for a considerable period of time. The result was: the Town will conduct a survey of Town residents to find out if there is a preference one way or the other on this issue.

Town Manager's Report

Most of the Town Manger's report was routine. On the fiscal side, revenues continue to exceed expectations, especially local income taxes. Let me concentrate, though, on the most important part of her report: the Town Hall renovation. One possibility for additional funds to pay for the renovations is Congressionally Directed Spending (a.k.a. earmarks). Initially it was not clear whether this project would be eligible for such funding. That question is not fully resolved, but the Town is going ahead with an application for the maximum of \$500,000. In addition, the project might be eligible for State historical preservation funds, up to \$100,000. Meanwhile, we are waiting to hear on the fate of the application to the Maryland General Assembly for \$750,000. The Mayor asked what all this meant for the Town Council? Should we try to scale the project back to the amount of currently available funds? The consensus was to sit tight for another month or two, at which time we will learn whether the application for Maryland General Assembly funding has been accepted or not.

Action Items

There were two action items on the agenda, both of which were dealt with expeditiously. The first of these was adoption of the mid-year budget revisions. These had been discussed in January, and officially introduced in February. The Council voted to adopt the revisions unanimously. The second item was adoption of the rule that requires sellers of real estate property to provide the buyer with a document outlining Town rules and regulations that affect property owners (such as not cutting down trees on the town right-of-way). Since this had been discussed at previous meetings and introduced in February, it quickly passed unanimously.

New Business

Aside from the Kenilworth gate, there was one other bit of new business—revision of the Town Charter. Councilmember Eisenstadt noted that some of the language is archaic, and some parts of the Charter seem outdated. He volunteered to further review the Charter, consult with fellow Council Members, and investigate County/State recommendations on best practice charters. He hopes to provide draft changes during the summer. So, on this one, stay tuned for further discussion later this year.

With that, the meeting came to a close.

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.

Town Manager's Notes

Important Dates:

- Saturday, April 6, 2024 – Quarterly Large Item Collection
- Monday, April 8, 2024 – Town Council Meeting – 7:30 pm
- Wednesday, April 24, 2024 – 2024 Election Candidates' Forum – 7:30 pm
- Monday, May 6, 2024 – Election Day (Polls open 7:00 am – 7:30 pm)
- Monday, May 6, 2024 – Deadline for Submission of Absentee Ballot – 7:30 pm

Income Tax Return Reminder (MD Form 502) –

Did you know that income tax receipts are one of the Town's most significant revenue sources? By State law, municipalities in Maryland receive a portion of the income tax levied by Montgomery County. But the State of Maryland needs to know to return this revenue to the Town.

What can you do to ensure that the Town receives its fair share? Whether you fill out your own State income tax forms or have someone prepare them for you, please be sure that "Town of Garrett Park" is written in the box labeled "City, Town or Taxing Area."

REQUIRED: Maryland Physical address of taxing area as of December 31, 2023 or last day of the taxable year for fiscal year taxpayers. See Instruction 6. Part-year residents see Instruction 26.			
1604	Town of Garrett Park		
4 Digit Political Subdivision Code (See Instruction 6)	Maryland Political Subdivision (See Instruction 6)		
Maryland Physical Address Line 1 (Street No. and Street Name) (No PO Box)			
Maryland Physical Address Line 2 (Apt No., Suite No., Floor No.) (No PO Box)			
City	MD	ZIP Code + 4	Maryland County

The political subdivision code for the Town is 1604.

2024 Town Election

This year's Town election will be held on Monday, May 6. Voters will select candidates for the office of mayor and councilmember (the two seats currently held by Gerilee Bennett and Lisa Max).

For the office of mayor, the candidates are Chris Keller and Joanna Welch.

For the office of councilmember, the candidates are Gerilee Bennett and Lisa K. Max.

The successful candidates shall be considered elected as of May 6 and shall take office at the next Town Council meeting after the election (Monday, May 13).

Qualifications of Voters

Every person who (1) legally resides within the corporate limits of the Town on the day he or she

registers to vote and continuously thereafter until casting his or her vote in any Garrett Park election (2) is at least eighteen years of age, and (3) is registered either in the County or in the Town is a qualified voter of the Town. Every qualified voter of the Town is entitled to vote in all Town elections, whether or not they are a citizen of the United States.

It is the policy of the Town that all eligible voters shall be provided with an opportunity to vote. Qualified persons may register by universal registration with either [Montgomery County](#) or [the Town](#), or may register only with the Town (including residents who are not citizens of the United States), up to and including on election day. Voters may register at any time that the Town office or the polls are open as well as at other times or places that the election judges may designate. If a person registers with Montgomery County, that registration must be for a Garrett Park address in order to vote in Town elections. If a registration occurs with the County less than 30 days before the Town election, the information may not reach the Town by election day. In that case, the voter must register again with the Town in order to vote.

If you would like to register with the Town, please scan or photograph any document that verifies your street address (your driver's license, a utility bill, or other official document) and bring it to the Town Office. Alternatively, you may mail the document to the Garrett Park Town Office, PO Box 84, Garrett Park, MD 20896-0084 or email it to barbara.matthews@garrettparkmd.gov.

The option of voting by absentee ballot is also available. To request an absentee ballot, please email barbara.matthews@garrettparkmd.gov or call the Town Office at (301) 933 – 7488. Completed absentee ballots must be received by the Town Office by the time the polls close at 7:30 pm on Monday, May 6.

Installing a Fence, Solar Panels, or a Pool? Planning a Spring Home Improvement Project?

Are you planning to install a fence, solar panels, or a pool? If so, you will need to apply for an obtain a letter from the Town to submit to Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services.

Also, please keep in mind that a Garrett Park building permit is required when a new structure is to be built, including houses, home additions, sheds, garages, decks, porches, and driveways. The Town permit is in addition to any required Montgomery County permit.

To avoid any delay in the process, complete your Garrett Park permit application and submit it along with your plat and drawings to the Town Office before requesting a County permit. Permit applications and payment can be completed [online](#).

If you live in the designated historic district, please keep in mind that some projects may require a County Historic Area Work Permit. For more information, you can reach out to the Garrett Park Historic Preservation Committee or the Town Office.

Have a permit question? Email permits@garrettparkmd.gov for assistance?

New Town Residents

Are you new to Garrett Park? If so, welcome to our community! Take a break from unpacking boxes and contact the Town Office at (301) 933-7488. We'd love to get you up to speed with what you need to know about living in Garrett Park.

As always, please reach out to the Town Office with any questions or concerns. You can reach me at (301) 933-7488 or at Barbara.Matthews@garrettparkmd.gov.

Barb Matthews, Town Manager

Citizens Association Notes

The CA will host this year's Candidates Forum for elective office in Garrett Park. The Candidates Forum is an opportunity for all Garrett Park residents to get to know their future Town leaders and ask respectful but probing questions about each candidates' governing philosophy and goals for the next term.

The Candidates Forum will be held in person in Town Hall on Wednesday, April 24 at 7:30p. This year we will be hosting the Candidates Forum in a hybrid format in order to make the event as accessible as possible. A Zoom link will be sent out on the public listservs ahead of the meeting. We urge all residents to attend, and we look forward to seeing you there!

7th Annual Children's Egg Hunt

Date/Time: Saturday, April 6th at 10:00am

Location: Grassy area near the GP post office (by the basketball and tennis courts)

Ages: Children ages 12 and under. Children bring their own egg baskets/containers.

Logistics: A small group of volunteers will hide the eggs. Beginning at 10:00am, we'll have a staggered start by age, with the 0–2-year-olds starting the hunt first. We will also be using Porcupine Woods behind that area to hide eggs for our older participants. We will plan to start on time (unless all of the eggs aren't yet hidden) so please plan accordingly. Rain date will be TBD.

DONATIONS & VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: With growing interest in this entirely parent and volunteer-driven event, we need your help. Based on my data from our egg hunt in 2022, I estimate that **we need close to 3,000 eggs!!!** No matter whether you or your family will participate in the hunt, you can help by [signing up here](#) to:

- 1) Donate some plastic eggs, candy or small non-candy items, like stickers, we can use to fill the eggs or donating pre-filled eggs.
- 2) Donate some \$\$ via venmo that we can use to purchase eggs/candy on your behalf.
- 3) Attend a "stuffing event" for the eggs with the collected goodies.
- 4) Hide eggs the day of the hunt (the more people we have the easier it will be).

Even if you don't have a "dog in the hunt," we hope you'll join us either by donating or cheering on our egg hunters the day of the event. Please email Lesley Maloney at lesleymaloney@gmail.com if you have any questions.

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Historic Preservation Committee

The Historic Preservation Committee presents a new monthly quiz. Answers at the end of the Bugle.

- Garrett Park was included on the National Register of Historic Places in:
 - 1950
 - 1975
 - 1980
- The Garrett Park Historic Preservation Committee:
 - Issues building permits
 - Substitutes as the review for the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission
 - Develops and recommends policies, standards, criteria and guidelines that maintain the historical characteristics of Garrett Park
- Plans to develop the community that became known as Garrett Park were drawn up in:
 - 1887
 - 1895
 - 1898



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Art at Penn Place

Beginning April 1st, Penn Place Gallery presents 'Cityscapes', by Garrett Park artist Rob Pearlman. Loving nature and also drawn to the geometry and April 2024

order of architecture, Rob captures moments of light in his paintings that highlight those fleeting moments when a skyscraper remarkably dissolves into nature, a warmly lit porch stirs feelings of hearth and home, or soft light nestled in fog brings calm to a busy city. Through his photography and paintings, he becomes more observant of both the man-made and natural world we live in. Please stop by the Gallery between April 1-27 to see Rob's unique paintings and join him for his Meet-the-Artist reception on Sunday, April 14, from 2-4pm.



9am-9pm
Mon-Sat
9am-7pm
Sunday
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Letters to the Editor

Town Reimbursement of Driveway Aprons

Roughly three years ago, my wife and I entered discussions with the Town about permitting for a driveway replacement. Our contractor had told us, after lengthy research, that the pavement's deterioration was caused, in large part, by an incorrectly installed driveway apron next to the street which allowed rainwater to channel toward the house. After a lengthy back-and-forth, including an opinion by the County that this should be a local issue and a review by the chair of the Land Use Committee, the Town agreed—as stipulated by section 723, part B of the Garrett Park Code of Ordinances—to the apron replacement by our contractor, to be reimbursed at a "fair and reasonable" rate. In dozens of messages about this project, no Town representative ever mentioned any dollar cap on that rate.

After the work was completed, we submitted a detailed invoice of the job. The Town offered to reimburse just under 40 percent of the cost, based on, it said, Montgomery County standards and the opinion of its engineer. Our attempts to negotiate any different rate were rebuffed.

The case went to small claims court. The Town won. The judge agreed that the proposed compensation was appropriate. While we disagree with that judgment, we accept it.

However, there are issues that go beyond money. The Town, as it admitted in court, failed to follow its own regulations. The Code says, "The Town will assist in the construction of access and parking driveway facilities by furnishing standards for finished grades and by reimbursing the party installing a driveway for the approximate cost of paving that portion... with the actual amount of reimbursement to be calculated at a rate which the

Council shall from time to time set as being fair and equitable.”

The Town could not provide any date when the Council had reviewed reimbursement rates, and—in response to a Public Information Act request—reported the Town Archivist could provide no evidence that such a review had ever occurred. In other words, the Town employed a cap that it imposed without following its own code. Without Council action to set a rate, it is impossible to calculate inflation or to compare to industry standards. The decision on rates is not, in any way, designated to be administrative.

Town leadership has even admitted this policy is opaque. During a meeting about the issue, the Mayor of Garrett Park referred to the Town’s reimbursement policies as “somewhat vague.” Of course, what you and I may be charged by the Town for, say, a building or variance permit application is definitely not somewhat vague.

I am angry about this issue, but anger will fade. What will remain, however, is a deep sense of disappointment. We never expected an apology, and none has been offered. Nor has any Town representative admitted outside of a courtroom that it failed to follow its own code. The Town spent staff time and legal expenses—paid by you and me—to defend what, in small claims court, could have been no more than \$2,100 over the town’s reimbursement amount. Again, though, it’s not about the money.

In a Town that prides itself on small-town values and neighborliness, I expected more. I expected transparency. I expected the Town to follow the same code it expects citizens to follow.

We are now in an election cycle. No doubt, candidates will write glowing statements about how much they love and respect the Town. I suggest we should follow up with some tough questions. Will you follow the Town Code or seek changes to bring it to current standards? Will you be transparent about policies and decision-making? And will you be forthright about your mistakes?

Any candidate should have ready answers.

Richard Folkers
Kenilworth Ave.

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Town Council 2024 Capital Finance Issues
You may be interested in some key Town Council financial issues that I have tracked in recent months.
April 2024

Garrett Bugle

Below are some of the “highlights” that pertain to capital funding and Town Hall renovation:

Town Hall Renovation Cost. As previously reported, the Weidemann/Axios (i.e., consultants) estimate of the construction cost of the most recent Council-approved renovation plan is \$2.7 million. But that excludes engineering services which our Town Manager and Weidemann have roughly estimated to be an additional \$0.6 million. Therefore, the total project cost is about \$3.3 million. If expressed in terms of cost per square foot (2,285 sf), that equates to about \$1,400 per square foot.

Town Hall Available Funding. Currently, the Town has approved \$1,558,929 for Town Hall renovation. In addition, the Town has requested \$775,000 in Maryland grant funds (as well as other potential grants). The Town will know whether it will get State funds by the end of April. In short, the funding gap is \$1.7 million if no State funding is provided and \$1.0 million if the full request to the State is approved.

Resolving the Town Hall Funding Gap. The Town Manager (Barb Matthews) has indicated that there are three ways to approach the funding gap.

1. Scale back project elements to accommodate funding in hand;
2. Defer the project until more funds are available; and
3. Issue bonds. Note: The Town Charter requires a referendum for all Town bond issuances.

Timing. Clearly, it will take months before the Council is ready to go to contract. If construction inflation runs about 5% annually, each month of delay will cost the Town about \$14,000.

2024 Town Capital Budget. As of the March Council meeting, \$2.99 million is available in the capital fund. Of that, as noted above, \$1.56 million is designated for Town Hall renovation. That leaves \$1.43 million for other capital projects. Assuming Town Hall is the top capital priority (shouldn’t it be?), it is not clear why some of that residual capital funding is not being reprogrammed for Town Hall renovation – especially \$309,000 in capital contingency funds. That would still leave \$1.13 million for other capital projects, most of which are years away from being “shovel ready.” In fact, it may be appropriate to give all those other pending capital projects a “financial haircut,” and reappropriate the savings to Town Hall.

I hope this information is helpful. In the future, perhaps Town Government will be more proactive in informing Town residents of the status of the Town Hall renovation plan.

Ken Schwartz
Clermont Ave.

Answers to the Historic Preservation Committee Quiz:

1. B
2. C
3. A



CENTENNIAL CHEVY HOUSE TOUR

SUNDAY, APRIL 28, 2024

SELF-GUIDED WALKING TOUR OF 8 HOMES: 1–5 pm

RECEPTION: 4-6 pm at Town Hall, 10814 Kenilworth

Enjoy 1920s-era refreshments

View historical documents, original artifacts and a 1928 Chevrolet

Buy advance tickets in P.O. lobby, Saturdays 9-12 pm, April 13, 20, 27

Buy tickets day of tour at 4705 Argyle

\$20 in advance / \$25 day of tour /Cash, Check, Venmo

Rain or Shine/ Adults Only

We're looking for volunteers! If you're interested, please contact Henri Keller,

hkeller4501@verizon.net

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For general information, contact nancywalz@gmail.com.