



Calendar

Sat Jan 6	Large Item Pick-up	Mon Jan 15	MLK, Jr.'s Birthday Obs.; Town Office Closed
Mon Jan 8	GP Town Council Meeting, 7:30p, Hybrid		
Wed Jan 10	Historic Preservation Committee Meeting, 7:30p, Town Hall	Wed Jan 17	Arboretum Committee Meeting, 7:30p, Town Hall
Sat Jan 14	GIVES Collection, 9a – 11a, Post Office	Mon Jan 22	Town Council Work Session, 7:30p, Details TBD

**No Chicano Sol Farm Stand in January*

Town Council Meeting Notes

December's meeting involved two highly significant topics: presentation of the annual audit results for town finances, and renovation of the Town Hall. But let us begin from the beginning. The meeting agenda and the draft minutes (of both the November regular Council meeting and the minutes from the retreat meeting on October 31) were approved without changes. For presentations by residents, there was one. Jean Horan indicated that the no-parking signs put on Keswick and Cambria in the vicinity of the swimming pool have disappeared, so she requested the town to install more substantial metal posts for the signs.

Audit. Next on the agenda was the presentation of the audit. Every year, the Town's finances must be audited by an outside accredited auditor. In our case, the auditor is SB & Company. Stephen Mackall of SB made a slide presentation of the results, and the longer written report was distributed with other materials for the Council meeting. What is the big picture? The auditors have confirmed the accuracy of the Town's financial accounts. In your reporter's judgement, the actual numbers are less important than the comments about Town procedures and controls. Audits often include suggestions or requirements for changes in procedures (often small technical changes). But this year, the auditors had no suggestions for changes in internal financial controls or accounting procedures. Our Town has a clean financial bill of health. Yay!

Town Manager's Monthly Report. Town Manager Matthews noted that unusually high income tax revenues continue, though a possible slowdown in economic growth and already low unemployment, may cause growth in receipts to moderate in coming months. Meanwhile, demolition of the house at the former Yeandle property on Kenilworth, now owned

by the Town and being turned into a park, is complete.

The big item in the Town Manager's report, though, concerned stormwater. The issue is: who is responsible for stormwater infrastructure in the Town, the County or the Town? The Town says this is the County's responsibility, and the County, surprise, surprise, says it is the Town's responsibility. Part of the problem is that records from back in the 1960s when the jurisdiction was supposedly settled, are missing. The Town is faced with a choice: sue the County or accept the County's position. Litigation could be costly with no certainty of a win. This topic generated considerable discussion. The conclusion leaned toward discussing the choice with the Town attorney, but with the likely outcome being for the Town to handle stormwater infrastructure. In that case, the Town Manager indicated at least the County will offer technical assistance and guidance to the town. The necessary budget for maintenance and future additions to town stormwater infrastructure would be considerable, which will require further town council discussion of funding arrangements.

Budget Amendment. At the November meeting, the Town Council had introduced a budget amendment to the shift in funds in the budget between American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funded and regular budget funded items. Confusing? See the November meeting notes. The December meeting, therefore, dealt with final adoption of the budget changes. This generated no discussion and a quick unanimous vote.

Town Hall. Now came the big "unfinished business" topic for the night, renovation of Town Hall. Readers will recall that the November meeting had reviewed a new sketch by councilmember Paczkowski. Since that meeting, Town officials discussed the design with Wiedemann Architects, who then produced two new designs for the

Council's consideration. These designs provided the focus for a lengthy discussion at the December meeting. The upshot of that discussion was to accept, with some modification, one of those designs (labeled 1B in the materials supplied by Wiedemann).

Town officials have been in conversation with the town's representatives in the state legislature, seeking state funds to partially fund the renovations. The hope is to have a more refined (but still preliminary) design from Wiedemann that our state delegation can insert into the draft state budget for the next fiscal year. The deadline for doing so is late January. At the meeting, the consensus was that we should be able to meet this deadline for submitting a proposal.

One uncertainty concerns the foundation under the rear part of the building. From what Axias, Inc. (a subconsultant to Wiedemann Architects) could see, the foundation appears solid, but there is always the possibility that once work has started and the foundation more easily seen, problems could be exposed. But the Council decided against bringing in a structural engineer now to snoop around the foundation more intensively. One other topic discussed was whether to try to renovate the rear part of the building within the existing exterior shell, or tear down the whole rear addition and rebuild. The hope had been that the first alternative would be less expensive. The architects at Wiedemann, however, cautioned that the opposite is likely to be true, given the extensive interior work involved (moving walls and doors, rewiring, etc.).

Conclusion? At the end of the discussion, the council had settled on plan 1B provided by Wiedemann. Further tweaking and development of a cost estimate based on that design will move forward quickly with a proposal for our state delegation in January. Meanwhile, the Council will ponder further the renovate/rebuild options for the rear part of the building. In general, your reporter is left with the impression that this project is moving ahead quite rapidly with considerable momentum.

New Business. Town Manager Matthews brought up a potential new ordinance. The Town has a number of rules and regulations that differ from those of the county. The question is whether the Town should have a list of important town regulations that sellers of property must provide to buyers. This should prevent, for example, a buyer from unknowingly removing a town tree in front of their property. This idea received some preliminary discussion, such as whether there would be some form of financial penalty imposed if the seller failed to provide the disclosure. However, no decision was reached. Town Manager Matthews was asked to touch base with other communities on how they convey information about their regulations.

Updates. Councilmember Paczkowski had three update items for his meeting, concerning possible actions by the town.

Holiday decoration on Strathmore. Could the Town look into the possibility for next year of decorating the street lamps with lights and/or wreaths on Strathmore (with state permission, since it is a State road) for the holiday season?

Speed measuring. Could the Town or the State install electronic speed signs on Strathmore that show the speed limit and the approaching vehicle's speed?

Basketball hoop. The basketball hoop by the pool parking lot is badly deteriorated. Could the Town replace it?

Councilmember Paczkowski's updates ended the public meeting. At that point the Council went into closed session to discuss a personnel issue.

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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Town Manager's Notes

Important Dates:

- Monday, January 1, 2024 – Town Office closed for New Year's holiday
- Saturday, January 6, 2024 – Large item pick up
- Monday, January 8, 2024 – Town Council Meeting – 7:30 pm
- Monday, January 15, 2024 – Town Office closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday

Thank You to Members of Town Government Committees

With calendar year 2023 drawing to a close, I wanted to take a moment to thank our many volunteers who gave of their time by serving on one of our Town government committees. These volunteers play a vital role in making our Town government work, and I'm grateful to each of them for their service and their contributions.

Holiday Gifts

Thanks to everyone who has contributed a holiday gift for the crew members who take away our trash, recycling, and yard waste. If you would like to donate, there's still time to do so. Please mail your check to the Town of Garrett Park, P.O. Box 84, or drop off your check at the Town Office. Checks should be made payable to the Town of Garrett Park with "Holiday Fund" written as the memo. The Town Office will collect contributions through the close of business on Wednesday, January 17, 2024.

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 “Garrett Park” is written in the box labeled “City, Town or Taxing Area.” The political subdivision code for the Town is 1604.

Snow Removal and Sidewalk Clearing

Now that the winter season has officially begun, I wanted to share some actions you can take to help the Town and your neighbors navigate inclement weather.

- Please park off the streets when snow is expected so that the Town maintenance staff can clear curb to curb where possible. This will allow for more space to park after the streets are plowed.
- Please be a good neighbor and clear the sidewalk in front of your home of ice and snow for safe pedestrian use. If clearing is not practicable, then residents should spread sand on the ice and snow. In accordance with the Town Code, sidewalk clearing should take place within 24 hours of a snowfall or freeze.

Town Permits

Just a reminder that a Garrett Park building permit is required when a new structure is to be built, including houses, 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 at www.garrettparkmd.gov/government/operations/permits.

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.

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

From the Archives

Happy New Year from your Town Archives! As we kick off 2024, I've been writing New Year's resolutions for the archives. There is always plenty to do, but I also like to have special projects and priorities each year. This year, one of my priorities is to expand our collections, especially materials on town clubs and organizations. As you begin planning your club, society, network, or association meetings for the coming year, please consider inviting me to speak briefly about what we have in the Town

January 2024

Garrett Bugle

Archives and how we can help you preserve the history of your organization.

I am also interested in expanding our photography collection and welcome digital (preferred) and print photographs of town events, people, and buildings. If you are interested in donating photographs you have taken, please contact me via email (Archives@GarrettParkMD.gov) to discuss what you have and the best way to transfer it to the Town Archives. If possible, please identify the people in your photographs, as well as events, locations, and dates. For all donations, I will request that you complete a donor form for our records.

Wishing you a happy and healthy 2024!

Claire McDonald, MPA:HA, MLIS
Town Archivist



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~ Garrett Park resident ~

   

Garrett Park Women's Club – Holiday Awards

Wow what a show! Thank you neighbors for the delight! Below are the award recipients, kudos to all!

- **Best House** - The Hicks family 10700 Montrose Ave. (Town Hall side)
- **Best Yard** - The Maloney family 11118 Kenilworth Ave. (Penn Place side)
- **Best Door/Window** - The Flaherty family 10905 Clermont Ave. (Penn Place side)
- **Best Porch** - The Liden family 4605 Waverly Ave.

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- **Kids Award** - The Paige-Bone family
10903 Kenilworth Ave. (Penn Place side)
- **Most Creative** - Fumi Tamaki & John Hillery
4708 Argyle Ave.
- **Most Charming** - Pamela & Rick Lane
4701 Albemarle Ave.
- **Best Trees** - The Martinez family
4402 Oxford Ave.

- **Mayor's Award** - Jessica Trinh & Sean Bailey
4705 Argyle Ave.
- **Elves' Award** - The Brocato-Yasseri family
10918 Montrose Av. (Penn Place side)

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