

Twinbrook Citizens Association

POST OFFICE BOX 834 - ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20848-0834

**THE
VOICE
OF
THE
COMMUNITY**

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Dear Twinbrook Supporter,

June 3, 2011

From our 2010 letter, many of you asked me for the source of the quote: [every inhabitant shall] *"enjoy the good will of the other Inhabitants; while every one shall sit in safety under his own vine and figtree, and there shall be none to make him afraid."* This citation from the Old Testament prophet Micah was quoted by Washington when he established that there would be equality for people of all religions in the new United States.

And to continue with our second president...John Adams said in his inaugural speech: *"This is very certain, that to a benevolent human mind there can be no spectacle more pleasing ... in which ... authority [is] exercised by citizens selected at regular periods by their neighbors to make and execute laws for the general good."*

The TCA makes and executes no laws, but I am always aware that you, our membership, place a great deal of faith in the TCA to speak for the general good of Twinbrook to those who do make and execute the laws. We have spoken (and written) for you many, many times this year, at the City, County, and State level, on topics ranging from schools to Pepco to much more. And what has become even more clear in this difficult year, is that when we truly speak for YOUR general good, we make common cause with our neighbors in other parts of the City and the County.

Good government for the general good does not happen by chance. Organizations like Friends of the Library, the PTAs, the Montgomery County Civic Federation, and yes, the TCA and many citizens associations run by volunteers are often the ones with the deep knowledge, history and long-term commitment to make the difference and change things for the better.

Those of you who give financial support with your dues, who email us, who come to our meetings, and who show up at City Hall to speak in support of our neighborhood, make good government possible, for everyone.

I am, as always, humbled by the trust you place in us.

Sincerely YOURS,

Christina Y. Ginsberg,
President, Twinbrook Citizens Association

Upcoming Community Events – watch the TCA Listserv for more information:

Twinbrook in the Parks – July 9 Contact the Twinbrook Community Recreation Center for more information about this free event, including the community yard sale with free setup.

National Night Out – August 2 If you would like help in starting a National Night Out Party for your street or block, contact the TCA or the City of Rockville Police Department (KMatney@rockvillemd.gov). This is a great way to get to know your neighbors. Twinbrook hosts more National Night Out parties than any other section of the City.

TCA in 2010-2011

MEGA DEVELOPMENT Planned for Rockville Pike

In 2010, the County Council unanimously approved two master plans for White Flint and Science City (formerly Gaithersburg West) that will permit extremely high levels of development to occur. Rockville is going through its own planning process for the area within its own borders along Rockville Pike from south of Town Center to the city border at Twinbrook Parkway and Rollins Avenue.

While the White Flint and Science City plans are already approved, there is still time for Rockville residents to weigh in on the Rockville Pike Plan, especially this fall as another series of hearings will be held. Written testimony will be accepted until at least September.

The Rockville Pike Plan was put together by a consulting firm without a citizens and stakeholders Advisory Group, although several open charettes and meetings were held. The plan was then “on hold” for more than two years as the consultants pulled together their recommendations. The City paid the consultants \$530,000 for their work.

The Plan promotes mixed use with high density, especially around the Twinbrook Metro. Based on plans for specific parcels that have been presented to the Planning Commission this spring, as many as 10,000 apartments in buildings up to 15 stories tall could be built around the Twinbrook Metro and along Rockville Pike, in addition to first floor retail space and offices. Rockville Pike could be expanded to 14 lanes of traffic with a Bus Rapid Transit line running either along each side or up the middle of the Rockville Pike.

The cost for implementing infrastructure such as changes to the road itself, not for the buildings could be \$826 million from State, County and City funds. As with Town Center, the City could take on debt to finance the Plan. In 2011, the City exceeded its debt limits.

Most citizen testimony before the Rockville City Planning Commission on March 9th and March 16th, 2011 was strongly negative in opposition to the Plan. Citizen organizations including the Twinbrook Citizens Association and West End Citizens Association spoke against the Plan. The oral testimony and written submissions can be viewed on the City of Rockville website.

The Twinbrook Citizens Association identified these objections to the Plan:

- * the Rockville Pike Plan is not the citizens’ vision
- * citizens would have to take on the financial risk,
- * we would like to keep Rockville, including Rockville Pike, family friendly and affordable
- * we want to keep Rockville’s retail diverse,
- * we do not want Rockville or any other government agency to use eminent domain (seize private property) for the benefit of private persons or corporations,
- * we don’t support mixed use at the proposed densities,
- * we want to maintain good standards for infrastructure with general improvements in transportation and pedestrian accessibility without increased density to achieve these improvements.
- * we oppose weakening the APFO or traffic limits

Rockville Economic Development, Inc. (which is mainly funded by the City) presented an analysis to the Planning Commission which concluded that implementing the Plan could deprive the community of needed and profitable stores and services that fill the Pike. They recommended a more intense and comprehensive evaluation of the commercial and financial issues before proceeding with the Plan.

While no developers objected to the major Plan concepts, several spoke against proposed changes (such as road realignments) that would affect their specific properties.

“Fixing” the APFO

In 2010 and 2011, a number of attempts have been made to “fix” or “tweak” the City’s Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) to allow more development.

A bill was put before the Maryland General Assembly on behalf of Montgomery County Public Schools by State Representative Maddelena that would have stripped Rockville and other Maryland municipalities of their zoning authority. On the surface, the intent of the bill was to permit the MCPS to add portable classrooms to schools without complying with the City’s APFO, especially with respect to adequate fire and rescue services. The bill was not passed in Annapolis, but the City Council amended the APFO to exempt portables.

Other amendments for the benefit of specific property owners are currently being considered by the City Council.

The City Council recommended the Planning Commission appoint a committee to study the APFO. The APFO committee has been meeting since January 2011, and among its findings is the possibility that developers in the City of Rockville may not have been required to pay school impact fees or taxes. County school impact fees are approximately \$22,000 per student generated from a new development and are intended to support school renovations or building new schools for those students. The City attorney is expected to return shortly to the APFO committee with more information.

The Rockville Pike Plan also recommends weakening the City’s Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance and the City’s traffic regulations. Currently, these City standards do not permit the Plan’s level of density.

In 2008, the TCA objected to including language in the Twinbrook Neighborhood Plan that would have weakened the APFO. The language was removed. TCA, along with other invited citizens representatives, spoke before the APFO commission on May 26th, and again on June 2nd.

General Membership Meeting and Election

Our annual election will be at our June General Membership Meeting on Tuesday, June 28, 2011, 7 PM at the Twinbrook Community Recreation Center, 12920 Twinbrook Parkway. A household membership entitles every person in the household 18 or older to vote in the election. Please be prepared to show ID at the door. Nominations need to be received by 5:00 PM June 12th. They may be submitted to the Secretary, Dr. Steven Wilcox, at spwilcox@acm.org or mailed to the Twinbrook Citizens Association, P.O. Box 834, Rockville, Md 20848-0834. Nominations can also be made from the floor at the June 28 meeting.

Rockcrest Park Certified as a Wildlife Habitat, Continuing Efforts to Green Twinbrook

Thanks to Twinbrook residents Anne Farrelly and John Goodman (farrelly@erols.com), leaders of the City-sponsored Certified Wildlife Habitat Team, Rockcrest Park has received certification and signage as a National Wildlife Federation Certified Wildlife Habitat.

TCA paid for the three signs posted in the park this spring at the park entrances.

The Team’s goal is to get enough community and home-based certifications to qualify the City of Rockville citywide.

Twinbrook Elementary Schools Expansion?

During the fall of 2010 and the spring of 2011, a number of meetings were held to assess the feasibility of adding or expanding the Twinbrook Elementary School. Twinbrook’s PTA successfully lobbied the Montgomery County Board of Education to include Twinbrook on the assessment list, since Twinbrook was one of a number of schools which was not adequately assessed or renovated in the 1980’s. TCA president Christina Ginsberg and several members of the City Council attended Board of Education hearings in the spring to urge the Board to consider Twinbrook for renovation or a complete rebuilding.

Twinbrook received approximately 50 more students in the 2010-2011 school year than in the 2009-2010 school year. At this time, it appears that schools in the Richard Montgomery cluster are at or above capacity. The Board of Education conducted feasibility studies for several other schools in the cluster as well as for reopening an older school in the Hungerford neighborhood.

It will be important in the coming year that ALL residents of Twinbrook support the “modernization” of Twinbrook Elementary as the process moves forward. School quality is an important determinant of home prices and values, and is a major contributor to the quality of life in our neighborhood.

Former TCA President Harry W. Thomas to Be Honored at Rockville Public Safety Awards – Citation:

“Harry Thomas has been a fixture in Rockville all of his adult life. He joined the Rockville Volunteer Fire Department in 1971 and was an active riding member until 1985. From that point until today, he continues to be an active administrative member of the department by serving on many of the committees that support the efforts of the volunteers. He also served for many years with the Rockville Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary, which, among other duties, supports ground operations at the scene of fire and rescue operations. He could be relied upon to leave his home at all of hours of the day or night to bring the canteen to a fire scene to provide essential food and drinks to the firefighters. Harry Thomas may be best known to the community for his civic activism. He has been president of the Twinbrook Citizens Association, a member of the city’s Traffic and Transportation Commission, and was a coach and umpire of the Rockville Baseball Association. He has also been a regular visitor to City Council meetings, where he expresses his concerns and ideas during Citizens Forum. For all of his efforts and good works to make the community safer and stronger, Harry W. Thomas earns the 2011 Community Service Award.”

TCA is a sponsor of the Rockville Public Safety Awards.

TCA Objectives:

- ❖ Monitor and influence the implementation of the Twinbrook Neighborhood Plan and the Rockville Pike Plan
- ❖ Monitor the buildout of Twinbrook Station and insist on accountability to development agreements
- ❖ Continue the greening of Twinbrook – including responsible storm water management, maintaining tree cover and establishing new amenities in our parks.
- ❖ Support our local schools and PTA to address the needs of our students here in Twinbrook, recognizing that great schools mean a great neighborhood
- ❖ Review and monitor transportation projects, especially the traffic mitigations associated with the Twinbrook Station development, including efforts to slow traffic on Twinbrook Parkway near Meadow Hall.
- ❖ Work to ensure that Twinbrook receives its fair share of city and county funding.
- ❖ Work to ensure that the Twinbrook neighborhood remains vital and dynamic without compromising property values or homeowners’ property rights.
- ❖ Provide informational seminars of value to our citizens on financial issues such the homeowners property tax credit.
- ❖ Continue expanding our networking with other community organizations to work on mutually beneficial goals for our citizens.
- ❖ Continue to monitor local crime issues and advocate for public safety

TCA Member Appointed to Historic District Commission

The Mayor and Council appointed Twinbrook resident and TCA member Jessica Reynolds to the Historic District Commission in October 2010. Jessica is an economic development consultant, manager, and urban planner. She has worked at J.E. Austin Associates, Inc. (JAA), for the past 6 years. Her work has included a number of overseas assignments providing technical assistance in the areas of developing regional and municipal economic growth planning capacity.

Jessica recently graduated with a Masters of Community Planning from the University of Maryland, with a specialization in Local Economic Development and a Certificate in Historic Preservation. Mrs. Reynolds' previous work and volunteer experience has included interning at the Maryland Department of Business and Economic Development, interning at the World Trade Center Institute in Baltimore MD, fundraising for higher education, and teaching English to speakers of other languages

The TCA LISTSERV is free and open to everyone! If you have changed your email, if you think you be getting emails, or you would like to receive our emails, please notify twinbrookpres@yahoo.com

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Take Pride in Your Community!

Help make Twinbrook a great place to live and work!

Join the Twinbrook Citizens Association (TCA)!

Membership is easy and economical – just fill out this form and mail it along with your annual dues of \$12 to:

**Twinbrook Citizens Association
P.O. Box 834
Rockville, MD 20848-0834**

Regular Household Membership:

\$12 – Regular Membership for Twinbrook residents entitles all persons 18 and older living in the household to vote.

Resident Name(s):

Street Address: _____

Home Telephone: _____ Work Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Associate Membership:

\$12 – Non-voting membership available to any non-resident owning property in Twinbrook.

Property Owner Name(s): _____

Twinbrook Property Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Home Telephone: _____ Work Telephone: _____

Email: _____

_____ *Yes*, I would like my name added to the TCA listserv.

_____ *Yes*, I am interested in volunteering for _____

(please indicate area of interest)

Our website: <http://www.rocknet.org/Community/Twinbrook/>