

SPARKS-GLENCOE COMMUNITY PLANNING COUNCIL



Preserving our rural heritage

Fall 2008 Newsletter

Dear Neighbor,

This issue contains some good news concerning our success in the recent Comprehensive Zoning Map Process. It also addresses further steps that need to be taken to protect the precious resources of the North County: land and forest conservation, water and soil protection.

The issue of development versus conservation looms over our future, and we want to hear from you about it. We know that many of you live in this area because of good schools, open space, and farming, but increasingly, these interests are threatened by growth. We want to know how you feel about it. Thus, in the center of the newsletter you will find a survey designed to solicit your thoughts and opinions about growth in the North County. Please take a few minutes to fill it out and mail it in.

Finally, we need your support. We encourage you to become a member of the Sparks-Glencoe Community Planning Council. Membership gives you a voice in developing policies that could affect this part of Baltimore County in years to come. Our meetings are open to the public and feature speakers on topics of interest. We hope to see you here!



The SGPC Board

1500 ACRES PROTECTED IN CZMP

Our efforts to protect land through zoning were rewarded by having over 1,200 acres granted Resource Preservation classification in the recently concluded Comprehensive Zoning Map Process (CZMP). Over 100 acres were given agricultural zoning, helping to keep that land in farm use. In addition, Sparks-Glencoe successfully opposed requests to increase development density for over 200 acres: current protective zoning in these cases minimizes future development potential.

We want to express our thanks to the following Baltimore government agencies and community associations that were critical in helping us achieve protective zoning during this county process:

- The County Planning Board
- The Office of Planning
- The Department of Environmental Protection and Resource Management
- North County Preservation

Additionally, we want to thank the many community members who wrote letters, made phone calls, and met with county officials to express their support for preserving the rural character of our area. Our County Councilman, Bryan McIntire, made the ultimate decisions. The changes to the zoning map will help protect the rural character and the vital resources of northern Baltimore County.

Paul Hupfer



We are saddened by the loss of Paul Hupfer, our friend, colleague and one of the most dedicated board members of Sparks-Glencoe. Paul died on April 21st of this year after a brief and untimely illness.

Paul was a tireless and selfless worker who served on the board of Sparks-Glencoe with unparalleled energy and perseverance. “His knowledge and command of developmental regulation was amazing,” remembers Lee Bishop, a board member who worked with Paul for many years.

In the late 1980s, Paul was instrumental in reducing the size and presence of the UPS facility, originally intended as a major operation hub for the region, in Loveton Highlands. “Nobody was as thorough as Paul in searching down the facts and following through. I always knew that I could count on Paul for any zoning or technical question,” recalls Judy Waldman, a long time advocate for rural preservation.

“Paul was a walking encyclopedia,” adds Kirsten Burger, President of Sparks-Glencoe. “He was always ready to take the time to explain a situation. His knowledge, his patience, and above all, his generosity with his time, made him a great person to work with. He is sorely missed.”

Sparks-Glencoe wishes to recognize and honor Paul Hupfer for his outstanding community leadership and his stewardship of our rural heritage. We have lost a friend and colleague, but his spirited dedication to preservation will inspire us for years to come.

HIGH COURT APPROVES LOYOLA DEVELOPMENT

The Maryland Court of Appeals recently issued a disturbing ruling that Loyola College has the right to build its “retreat center” in the midst of prime and productive farmland in Parkton.

The decision is a blow to the future of agriculture in Parkton as it will erode the critical mass of land necessary to sustain the viability of farming. The creation of a retreat center will negatively impact the environment in that the increased temperature of the stormwater runoff will lead to the death of the native trout in the Class III trout stream. Development on this scale will also contribute to the phosphorus contamination of the Loch Raven Reservoir, which is already in violation of the Clean Water Act.

Although we did not prevail in this battle, we fought the good fight. Our lawyer, Macy Nelson, was joined in this effort by People’s Counsel, Peter Max Zimmerman. Both attorneys did a marvelous job throughout the course of this lengthy battle. Residents of the Parkton area, Sparks-Glencoe and elsewhere in the North County

all came together as a community to save pristine farmland from destruction. It was a grassroots effort of which we can truly be proud.

Again, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all of you for your support.

Lynne Jones, Chairwoman
Citizens Against Loyola Multiuse Center



LOCH RAVEN AND PRETTYBOY RESERVOIRS POLLUTED

Loch Raven and Prettyboy Reservoirs supply water to all of Baltimore City, most of Baltimore County, and some surrounding counties. Unfortunately, both reservoirs are in violation of the Federal Clean Water Act because they are contaminated with too much phosphorus. Local authorities have been ordered to reduce phosphorus levels by at least 50% in both reservoirs.

What is phosphorus?

Phosphorus is a chemical nutrient. It can come from both human and animal waste, as well as the fertilizers used in lawn care. Phosphorus can also come from agricultural operations, if they are not properly managed. Most agricultural operations, however, have nutrient management plans which have been largely successful in controlling phosphorus pollution.

Phosphorus bonds to soil and is carried into the streams by the storm water runoff. Runoff occurs when vegetation is removed from the land and replaced with impervious surfaces such as driveways and roofs. Thus, phosphorus contamination is also caused by excessive suburban and exurban development in the reservoir watershed.

How can phosphorus pollution be prevented?

While our roads and homes are here to stay, there are other things we can do to reduce phosphorous pollution:

- ◆ Dispose of pet waste in trash cans instead of allowing waste to be washed into streams and waterways.
- ◆ Minimize use of fertilizer products on lawns and gardens.
- ◆ Maintain your septic system on a regular basis. See article entitled “Do You Know How Your Septic System Works?” on page 5 of this newsletter.
- ◆ Plant trees on your property. Trees provide the best filtration system for groundwater as it makes its way to the reservoir. As the water travels through tree root systems, the roots absorb and utilize the nutrients and then release the water absent the phosphorus.

For more information on water quality, erosion control and septic maintenance, contact the Baltimore County Soil Conservation District at 410-666-1188 or www.mda.state.md.us/balt/balt.htm.

LAND PRESERVATION

Have you considered a Conservation Easement?

Do you have upwards of 25 acres that are wooded, or that you farm, or that border a river, or that are so picturesque you want them to stay that way forever? If so, you should be aware that you can preserve and protect your land from future development with a conservation easement.

A conservation easement is an agreement between a land owner and either the State, the County, or a private land trust, which permanently protects land with agricultural, environmental, historical, wooded or scenic significance. Among the organizations that hold conservation easements on the State level are the Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) and Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF). Landowners can also enter into agreements with Baltimore County through the Department of Environmental Protection and Resource Management (DEPRM) or with individual land trusts such as Gunpowder Valley Conservancy or the Manor Conservancy. Contacts are listed below.

Conservation easements can qualify landowners to receive cash payments and/or considerable estate, income and property tax benefits. While easements become a permanent feature of the property, they do not interfere with the owner's right to sell the property or transfer it to family members. The public does not have access to your property under these agreements, so privacy is maintained.

Contacts:

For **MALF or DEPRM** information, contact Wally Lippincott at 410-887-4488 ext. 241 or wlippincott@co.ba.md.us.

For **MET** information, contact Adam Block at: 410-514-7907 or ablock@dnr.state.md.us

For **Gunpowder Valley Conservancy**, contact: Mac McAvoy at 410-410-307-6627 or mac.mcavoy@suntrust.com

For **Manor Conservancy**, contact Jim Constable at 410-659-1315 or info@themanorconservancy.org.

FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMS

You can help protect resources and reap financial benefits by participating in a program to manage forested property you own to ensure its health and longevity. Healthy forests provide myriad environmental benefits, including filtering contaminants from stormwater, preventing erosion, providing food and habitat for wildlife, and absorbing pollutants in the air.

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources has a variety of programs for landowners who are interested in managing their forests to achieve these various objectives, including tree harvesting.

Participation in a forest stewardship plan enables your property to be assessed at the low agricultural rate. To be eligible for this program, you must have at least 5 contiguous wooded acres on your property. To sign up, or for more information, contact Rob Prenger, at 410-665-5820, or rprenger@dnr.state.md.us.

FALL IS THE TIME TO PLANT TREES

If you think your yard needs some autumn color, now is a great time to plant trees. Baltimore County is providing a \$10 off coupon to its residents through the Growing Home Campaign. Fall is considered an



optimum time to plant since the weather is cooler and the soil is able to retain moisture better than during the hot summer days. Consider native trees such as scarlet oak, red maple, American beech, dogwood or black gum for outstanding fall foliage and habitat for local birds and bees. For information,

contact www.growinghome.info, or Diane Cohen at dcohen@baltimorecountymd.gov, or at 410-887-4488, ext. 287.

RURAL ROADS AND BRIDGES

As Baltimore County considers whether one size fits all when it comes to roads and bridges, Sparks-Glencoe has participated in the process to encourage different standards for roads and bridges in rural areas.

Several Sparks-Glencoe Board members testified before the Planning board last year, pointing out that “improvements” sometimes make things worse by inviting more traffic that speeds up on wider, straight roads. A study commissioned by the Valleys Planning Council demonstrates that safe, cost-effective roads and bridges can be built without



destroying the rural character of the area. Rural roads do not carry the same traffic load as those in the more urban areas of the County, and need not be held to the same standards. We are pleased that the Planning Board agreed with this principle, and hope that the County Council will follow suit.

Do You Know How Your Septic System Works?

Taken from “A Homeowner’s Guide to Improving our Environment and Drinking Water,” provided by Baltimore County Soil Conservation District.

Since northern Baltimore County is not serviced by public sewer service, household wastewater (from the bathroom, kitchen, and laundry) is treated in individual septic systems. By maintaining your septic system carefully, you can help protect the surrounding environment.

A septic system has two major components: a septic tank and a drainfield. Wastewater sewage flows from the house to the septic tank, which retains wastewater long enough for the heavy solids to settle to the bottom and then releases the untreated wastewater into the drainfield. A solid pipe leads from the septic tank to a distribution box, where the wastewater is channeled to the drainfield— one or more perforated pipes set in trenches of gravel. The water slowly infiltrates the underlying soil. Dissolved or suspended wastes and bacteria in the water are trapped or absorbed by soil particles or decomposed by microorganisms.

These microorganisms perform the only treatment of the water before it percolates through the soil to the groundwater table. Under normal conditions, the microorganisms perform well, unless very toxic materials overwhelm the septic system. Their performance can also be diminished if the drainfield becomes saturated with storm water.

To keep your septic system functioning well:

- ◆ Pump out the tank every 2 to 5 years, depending on use, size of the tank, and number of people in the house.
- ◆ Don’t add “starter enzymes” or yeast to your system.
- ◆ Conserve water to extend the life and increase the efficiency of your septic system. Fix leaks and drips. Install “low flow” fixtures.
- ◆ Direct downspout discharges and runoff away from the septic field to avoid saturating the drainfield area with excess water.
- ◆ Do not overload the system—this is the primary cause of system failure. Early morning and bedtime are peak use times in the bathroom. Run dishwashers and washing machines at other times of the day.
- ◆ Dense grass cover and other shallow-rooted plants are beneficial over a drainfield, but large plant roots can clog or break the pipes, so do not plant trees near a drainfield.
- ◆ Do not pour fats and oils, chlorine bleach, solvents, chemicals, pesticides, paint thinner or auto products down the drain. These substances can kill the bacteria that make the system function.
- ◆ Do not put trash such as tissues, disposable diapers, or paper towels in the toilet. These items do not break down quickly and can fill the septic tank.
- ◆ Avoid compacting the soil over a drainfield to ensure proper percolation of effluent.
- ◆ For help with septic system problems, contact the Groundwater Management Section, Baltimore County Dept. of Environmental Protection and Resource Management at 410-887-2762 or http://www.baltimorecountyonline.info/Agencies/environment/ep_wellseptic.html (click on “Septic Systems—A Guide to Maintenance”)

2008 Gunpowder Falls Plein Air Painting Competition

This past June, forty-nine artists participated in the second annual Gunpowder Falls Plein Air Painting Competition to benefit SGPCPC. The painters set up their easels throughout northern Baltimore County and produced some truly wonderful paintings which were judged by Nancy Tankersley of South Street Gallery in Easton, and exhibited at Diddywopps and Keeffers Gallery in Monkton.



At the evening reception, \$1100 in prizes was awarded, as well as art materials and certificates donated by art supply companies. The event was well-attended with plenty of art to enjoy, friends to meet, and food and wine to share.

Mike Bare, the winning artist, generously donated his prize money back to Sparks-Glencoe. Other prize winners were



John Brandon Sills of Sparks, Murray Taylor of Phoenix, and Claudia Brookes of Monkton. The commission from the sale of artwork was divided between SGPCPC and the North Baltimore County Art Foundation.

Let's put our area on the map for artists and art collectors and show off the natural beauty that surrounds us to the rest of the world. Tell your artist friends about this great event. Let your art collector friends know about this superb opportunity to own paintings of familiar landscapes.



Go to www.GunpowderFallsPleinAir.com in January to find out the dates for next year's event. Many thanks to Laura Wilke, Sparks-Glencoe board member and a resident of Monkton, who did a great job putting this event together.



Join us

At our September meeting, we heard from Soil Conservation District representative **Jim Ensor**. Jim's presentation focused on voluntary measures that landowners can take to ensure that farming and development activities do not imperil the environment. In many cases, financial assistance is available to help cover the cost of measures such as tree plantings, stream crossings for cattle, and runoff mitigation. To contact the Soil Conservation District, call 410-666-1188 x3.

At our October meeting, we were joined by local farmer, **Joan Norman**. Joan and her husband own **One Straw Farm** in White Hall, the largest organic vegetable farm in Maryland.

Check our web site, SGCPC.org, or local papers, for agendas and more information on future speakers.

GOALS	SGCPC BOARD																
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Educating residents and land use representatives about the natural resources in northern Baltimore County; ◆ Encouraging the protection and preservation of the rural, historical, and agricultural environment of northern Baltimore County; ◆ Promoting responsible community planning which maintains the rural character of the area; ◆ Advocating growth in keeping with the level of public services available in the area. 	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Officers and Directors</i></p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Kirsten Burger President</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Lawrie Deering Corresponding Secretary</td> </tr> <tr> <td>George Rew Vice-President</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>Additional Directors</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ty Young Treasurer</td> <td>Sharon Bailey</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Carmen Buccini Assistant Treasurer</td> <td>Lee Bishop</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wendy McIver Recording Secretary</td> <td>Nedda Evans</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Renaë Olver</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Laura Rew</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Laura Wilke</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">Officers and Directors may be contacted at our website: www.sgpc.org.</p>	Kirsten Burger President	Lawrie Deering Corresponding Secretary	George Rew Vice-President	<i>Additional Directors</i>	Ty Young Treasurer	Sharon Bailey	Carmen Buccini Assistant Treasurer	Lee Bishop	Wendy McIver Recording Secretary	Nedda Evans		Renaë Olver		Laura Rew		Laura Wilke
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<p>SGCPC Community Meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, Sparks School Belfast Road at 7:00 pm. Please join us!</p>	<p>For More Information About...</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;"><i>General Information</i></td> <td style="width: 33%;"><i>Plein Air</i></td> <td style="width: 33%;"><i>Land Preservation</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kirsten Burger</td> <td>Laura Wilke</td> <td>Lawrie Deering</td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>CZMP</i></td> <td><i>Water Quality</i></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Renaë Olver</td> <td>Nedda Evans</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<i>General Information</i>	<i>Plein Air</i>	<i>Land Preservation</i>	Kirsten Burger	Laura Wilke	Lawrie Deering	<i>CZMP</i>	<i>Water Quality</i>		Renaë Olver	Nedda Evans					
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We need your support to carry on our mission of protecting our rural environment. We are a tax-exempt organization, so your contribution beyond the cost of membership is tax-deductible. Please be as generous as you can! **Remember: we accept matching contributions from your employer.** Our tax ID# is 20-3888970.

DUES ARE DUE* *DUES ARE DUE

Basic membership: ___ (\$35) **Family** (2 adults in the same household): ___ (\$50)

I wish to make an additional donation of: ___ \$50 ___ \$100 ___ \$200 ___ Other

Please make check out to SGCPC and return in the enclosed envelope.

If you'd like to get more involved with our work, choose a committee that interests you:
 ___ zoning; ___ land preservation; ___ membership & fundraising;
 ___ communications; ___ web site; ___ monitoring county hearings,
 or let us know how you can help: _____

Name _____

Telephone (day) _____ (eve) _____

E-mail address _____

Street address _____

City, state, zip _____

Thank you for your support.

QUALITY OF LIFE & GROWTH SURVEY

We are conducting a brief survey to obtain your opinions on the quality of life issues and management of growth in your area. Please help us understand the perceptions of those in our community. We will aggregate all surveys so that your individual responses will remain anonymous. Please detach this form when completed, fold as a mailer, tape, and add a postage stamp. Our address is on the back.

1. About how long have you lived in the area? ____ years

2. Thinking back to when you first moved to the area, how would you rate the overall effect of past growth on your current quality of life (please check one):

	Positive Effect	No Change	Negative Effect
Jobs	_____	_____	_____
Affordable homes	_____	_____	_____
Property value	_____	_____	_____
Schools	_____	_____	_____
Traffic congestion	_____	_____	_____
Road safety	_____	_____	_____
Local shopping	_____	_____	_____
Walking/cycling	_____	_____	_____
Transit	_____	_____	_____
Parks/recreation	_____	_____	_____
Library services	_____	_____	_____
Emergency services	_____	_____	_____
Air/water quality	_____	_____	_____
Amount of open space	_____	_____	_____
Neighborhood/friendly atmosphere	_____	_____	_____
Other:	_____	_____	_____

3. Do you think the rate of growth and development in your area is? (check one):

___ Too fast ___ Somewhat fast ___ About right ___ Somewhat slow ___ Too slow ___ Don't know

4. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very poor and 5 very good, how well do you feel Baltimore County is managing growth in your area? ____

5. Thinking back to the last local election, was growth management a significant factor in deciding which candidates you would support? __ Yes __ No

a. If **NO**, was this due to lack of information on candidates position on growth management? _____
 other issues or considerations were more important _____ or Other (specify) _____

b. If **YES**, what was it about the candidate(s) growth management position or record that you found influential? _____

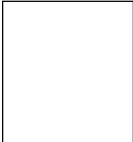
6. Will growth management be a factor influencing who you vote for in the next local election? __ Yes __ No

7. Please note any additional comments on growth management in your area:

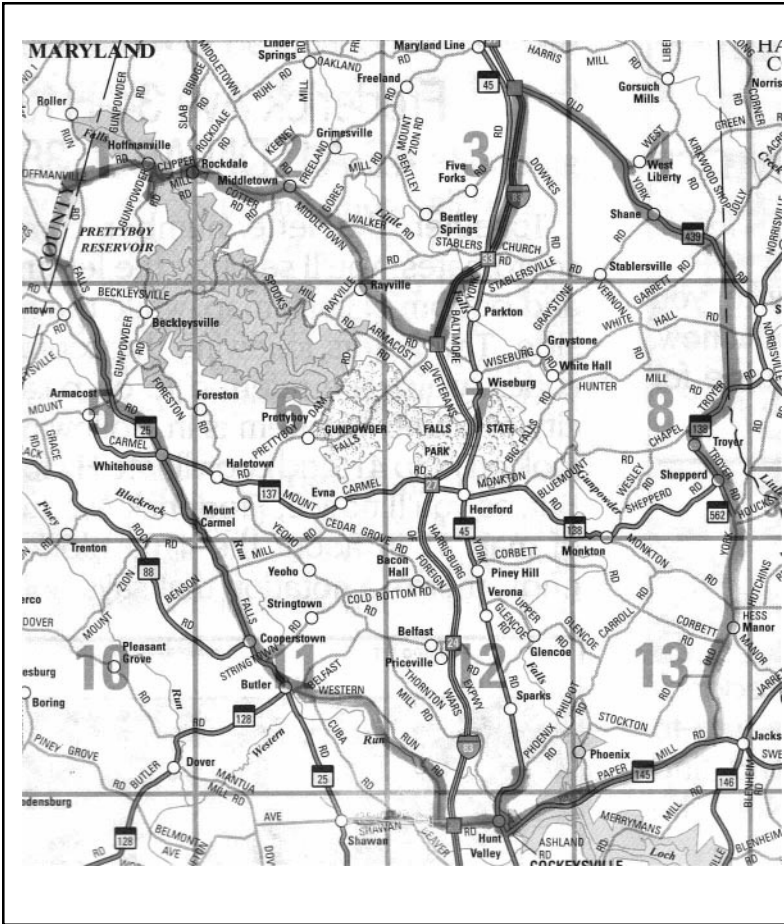
8. For classification purposes only , please share with us the following information:

Number of adults in your household ___ Number of children ___ Zipcode in which you reside _____

Thank you for your help.



**SPARKS GLENCOE COMMUNITY
PLANNING COUNCIL
P.O. Box 937
Sparks, MD 21152**



What's NOT in a name?

Although our name tells you that we represent the Sparks-Glencoe area, we are interested in surrounding areas as well. Our borders extend from Shawan Road to Middletown and Old York Roads, east to the Harford County line, and west to Falls Road. We work cooperatively with other organizations throughout northern Baltimore County to support efforts to protect our natural resources and rural character.

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