

The Berwyn News



Published by the Berwyn District Civic Association, Inc.

(ISSN 10619-515X)

P.O. Box 535, College Park, MD 20740

Volume 14, Issue 3

www.myberwyn.org

March 2006

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Berwyn Neighborhood Watch

Sign up for email updates. Send an email to:
Berwyn_Neighborhood_Watch-subscribe@yahoo.com

For emergencies, call 9-1-1
Non-emergencies or suspicious activity, call Prince
George's County Police at 301-333-4000



Berwyn District Civic Association Meeting

Thursday, March 16, 2006
THIRD THURSDAY, 8-10 pm, FEALY HALL

AGENDA

APPLICATION FOR PAWN SHOP IN BERWYN

Speaker: **Tom Haller**, Attorney for applicant
Followed by discussion and vote

1. Introductions, Roll Call
2. Approval of Minutes from January and February Meetings. *Minutes are posted at www.myberwyn.org*
3. **Application for Pawn Shop on Greenbelt Road (at the Suburban Signs location)**
4. **Parking in Berwyn – Do we want parking permits?**
5. Board and Committee Reports
 - Treasurer Report
 - Committee Updates
 - Neighborhood Preservation Coalition
 - Civic Association Updates
6. Reports from City Council Representatives
7. New Business
8. Adjournment

Pot-Luck Social

Saturday March 26, 6 – 8pm
Holy Redeemer Church – Lower Level

Bring: Main dish, appetizer, or dessert
Also bring: Games/activities for kids

Get to know your neighbors and have a great time!

Dear Berwyn Residents,

A pawn shop owner is requesting a special exception zoning to allow a pawn shop on Greenbelt Road at the location of the current Suburban Signs shop. At the March 16 BDCA Meeting, we will hear from the applicant and have an opportunity to ask questions. Following the presentation, we will have a discussion/debate and a VOTE on whether the BDCA will stand in opposition to the pawn shop.

You must be a dues-paying member of BDCA to vote, according to the BDCA Bylaws (see www.myberwyn.org). If you have not paid your dues, please use the form on the back of the newsletter and **bring your dues with you to the meeting** - \$10 individual or \$15 for a family. Our treasurer will bring the list of BDCA members and the dates of dues paid.

My view on the pawn shop: I am opposed to a pawn shop on the edge of our neighborhood. Arguments in favor of non-opposition include a) a thriving business would be better than an empty building, b) not standing in opposition leaves our options open to ask for concessions, and our ability to be more influential with the owner if the pawn shop is approved, c) pawn shops are highly regulated and help catch criminals, and d) members of the community may be interested in pawning items or shopping for bargains there.

I **oppose** the pawn shop for the following reasons:

1. The police have informed us that 1% of goods brought into pawn shops are ultimately recovered as stolen items. That means that the actual number of stolen items would be higher than 1% since we all know that not everyone reports stolen items or has information on the serial numbers and other identifiers. I think having a shop that caters to criminals is not a benefit to our neighborhood. Pawn shops also get robbed frequently.

2. The interest rate the pawn shop charges for pawning an item is 20% or more per month. Seventy-five percent of the items brought into the pawn shop are retrieved up by the owner who pays the 20%. Proponents argue that these kinds of small loans offer an important service to the community. I believe it is more like a loan shark preying on the most vulnerable. Twenty percent per month would be equivalent to a 240% per year interest rate! Also, the business model of the pawn shop relies more on the high-interest loans than on selling goods, which leads to the phenomenon that many have noticed - pawn shops don't really offer great bargains on used merchandise.

3. A pawn shop will damage the image of our neighborhood – for prospective home buyers and

others, I don't think a pawn shop on the edge of our community is a sign of a family-friendly neighborhood.

Please come to the March 16 meeting and learn more about the pawn shop owner's application and arguments, voice your own opinion, and vote on the matter.

PARKING: Parking has become more of a problem in Berwyn, since the opening of University View. Our City Council Representatives, Bob Catlin and Jack Perry, have been looking into options, including parking permits. The March meeting will include a brief explanation of some of the options we have, and briefly offer an opportunity for neighbors to ask questions and raise concerns. We will schedule a more in-depth discussion with a speaker from the City's parking enforcement in April.

PLAYGROUND UPDATE: We have the good fortune of learning from Parks and Planning that they have sufficient funds to cover our playground renovation, so donations are no longer needed from BDCA members. Parks and Planning has informed us that they cannot place playground equipment amongst the trees for safety reasons. By clearing the dead trees and planting new ones, they will create a playground area with all the equipment within a certain perimeter. Our playground committee worked hard to come up with a solution that maintains the nice old trees while some smaller ones will be cut down. More trees means less equipment, so that made the whole project cheaper. Many thanks again to our playground group and all the work you have been doing!

We are also grateful to those who have donated to the special playground fund. We have contacted each donor, and all have agreed to apply the additional funds to the general BDCA activities, including the Pot Luck Social (March), Berwyn Day (September), Berwyn News (Sept – June), Bonfire (October) and Holiday Party (December).

POT-LUCK SOCIAL: We look forward to seeing everyone on Saturday evening, March 26 for the Pot-Luck Social. Bring a favorite dish, and a recipe, and enjoy some good food and fun with neighbors.

See you soon!

**Best,
Heather**

Comments about the *Berwyn News*? Ideas for new columns? Send them to the editor at: cookwithbob@hotmail.com

The City Council is still in a relaxed mode. Normal housekeeping stuff. The mayor and his cronies are running back and forth to Annapolis to protect the city's interests and get some 'free money.' I don't understand how it can be 'free'...it has to be tax money that somebody else in the state paid out. Remember, the state can't sell more widgets...only raise taxes and/or fees to get money from us. That raises the question, if money is doled out to special groups and causes, where does the money come from to take care of the normal expenses? By normal, I mean those that are state expenses that still have to be met.

Our city faces some of these same decisions, only on a smaller scale. There is, however, an attitude in some quarters that the government (read city) should take care of it or me, and/or my program. The down side to this is that you and I end up paying twice or becoming dependent. Some things are best done by another level of government and many things should be done by the group itself or yourself. This is not to say that we should not help each other when we can, or the community as in the 'Christmas in April' or 'Meals on Wheels' programs.

We are getting ready to prepare our budget for the next fiscal year. The city staff is already well into submitting to the city manager their proposals to run their departments next year. They are also pricing out the various 'wish lists' that council members were asked to submit so that advance planning and estimates can be assembled as to the costs. I'll be no one submitted a request to *lower taxes* and/or discontinue a program. The reason is that it is a given in municipal government to grow and the mayor is set on expanding the municipal employee base. He has convinced or attempted to convince some that it is necessary. Even if we don't add more employees, we will add more expenses to pay to Prince George's County police officers to do on a part-time basis what the county does not do on a regular basis...routine patrol of our community (and I might also add the entire county).

College Park has signed up with an area-wide coalition to eliminate trash from the Potomac River. If it's on the ground and doesn't grow there, it doesn't belong there. If it ends up in the streams or storm drains, it will make it to the Potomac and then the Bay. Pick it up and properly dispose of it. The old adage 'every litter bit hurts' is true. Plastic bottles, cans, cups, paper and other things such as old tires, automobiles, washing machines, and a multitude of other things are dumped in our streams and other places in our city. Can you help stop it?

I understand that the students in downtown are involved with a weekly cleanup. Let's see if it makes a

difference in their attitude with respect to litter and overall neighborhood cleanliness.

Our very own community has some concerns. Parking had to be restricted on Pontiac Street. 48th Avenue has asked for traffic calming (read speed humps). There is talk of permit parking and the mayor says that he wants to decide on a parking strategy. I sure hope the Berwyn neighborhood agrees with **his** assessment of the problem. A pawn shop is proposed for the empty store on Greenbelt Road in front of the *Washington Post*. Is this the highest and best use for this site? I was in upper Montgomery County the other day, and didn't see one pawn shop.

What do you know about 'M Square'? This is a research park located off of River Road across from the College Park Metro Station. Three buildings with almost 7000 parking spaces...so much for transit oriented development. And the buildings are all 'plain Jane' in their design. The university is saying that traffic studies done 15 years ago that required roadway improvements are 'old' and need to be re-examined. Of course, traffic has improved and 7000 parking spaces will encourage transit use. So I guess that the current roads are sufficient.

I dare not say anything about a certain property on Route 1. I hope you've seen the work being done to keep Jiffy Lube from falling into the creek.

See you on Thursday. (Maybe the president will give me and Bob more than five minutes.)

May God continue to bless America.
- Jack



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Greetings neighbors. Spring is just around the corner. After a cold December, the rest of the winter proved to be mild, so our heating bills while high, were not nearly as high as they could have been. At the end of February, James Ridgeway of Berwyn Heights, age 82, passed away. Mr. Ridgeway owned the buildings at Berwyn and 49th Ave., which have been vacant for a very long time. With his passing, it is likely that the property will be sold.

With respect to the parking problems in the vicinity of 48th and Pontiac, steps have been taken to fix the problem. One hopeful sign is that beginning in the summer the University will let University View residents use the large parking lot that is almost adjacent to the apartment building, rather than requiring them to park at a location that is not close by. I also expect that we will reduce the cost of the eleven monthly spaces available on the western end of Pontiac, so that all of these spaces can be put to use, too.

A major source of the funding being used for the ongoing capital improvements to the Berwyn Road commercial area came from a Maryland Heritage Area Authority (MHAA) Grant. City Staff has recommended two projects for MHAA grant funding that involve Berwyn. One project involves the publication of a pattern book which would suggest guidelines and illustrations for additions and new housing, so as to compliment the existing architecture of each College Park neighborhood. Such pattern books have become a useful tool in the revitalization of older neighborhoods, though the idea is only a few years old. The second project is to fund an architectural survey and walking tour brochure for the Lakeland and Berwyn neighborhoods. Within the last few years the City has so surveyed the Old Town and Calvert Hills neighborhood with grant funds.

Staff is reviewing the lighting of the Trolley Trail pedestrian path from Paint Branch Parkway to Pierce Ave. This section of the path is 1,700 feet long and has 11 existing Pepco poles along the trail. Lights could be installed at a cost of about \$2,000 a pole for a total cost of about \$20,000. The project would be eligible for a State safety grant, provided we pay at least 20 percent of the project cost. This proposal is to be discussed at our March 7th worksession.

April 1st and April 8th, both Saturdays, the Mayor and City Council will meet at City Hall all day to discuss the City Manager's proposed budget. Audio of the discussion will be carried over the City's Municipal Channel on Comcast Cable. Residents are invited to attend the discussions. The City will also have copies of the 350 page draft budget available to the public

when the elected officials get it in late March. The budget meetings are being held a week early this year to avoid a conflict with Easter weekend.

I hope to see you at the Berwyn District Civic Assn.'s Thursday evening meeting at Fealy Hall and the annual potluck dinner on Saturday the 25th at Holy Redeemer Church. Please use the form in this newsletter to join or renew your membership in the BDCA. Our costs for printing, our post office box, and sponsoring neighborhood events are about \$3,000 a year. The BDCA's \$15 family memberships are a major source of the funds that are used to print this newsletter and sponsor events.

21st District Delegates

Your legislators serving you.
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Delegate Brian Moe
Delegate Barbara Frush

210 Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

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Neighborhood Homes

Information Provided by
Jerry Anzulovic
 of Bright and Associates

Properties Sold or Rented (Berwyn 4, Branchville 0)


- 4711 Berwyn Road**, \$298,000, (\$309,000), Shelley & Ina Kline, Absentee owners, 15116 Manor Lake Drive, Rockville MD, 20853-1558, 301-871-9541, DOM 76, SS \$10000, 1200 sf, SA Raymond Owen (rayowen@mris.com), SB RE/MAX Realty Services, Bethesda MD, 301-652-0400.
- 5004 Roanoke Place**, \$366,000, (\$359,900), Jose & Aurelia Cruz, Owner occupants, DOM 148, SS \$00, 1020 sf, SA Milagros Boulocq (homesbymila@hotmail.com), SB Fairfax Realty, Hillandale MD, 301-439-9500.
- 8513 48th Avenue**, \$359,900, (\$359,900), Juan P. Martinez, Owner occupant, DOM 102, SS \$00, 1170 sf, SA Jorge Martinez (jorgemartinez@mris.com), SB Realty Executives/Alan, Silver Spring MD, 301-949-9147.
- 8705 48th Avenue**, \$455,000, (\$470,000), Joyce & Andrews Jones, Owner occupant, DOM 155, SS \$3500, 2712 sf, SA Homal McDowell (hmcowell@mris.com), SB REMAX Sails, Berwyn Heights MD, 301-474-2400.

Properties under Contract (Berwyn 3, Branchville 1)

- 4713 Greenbelt Road**, \$350,000, Christine & Eric Michelson, Owner occupants since 10/06/1996
- 8310 48th Avenue**, \$379,000, James Bowen, Absentee owner since 8/13/1999
- 8400 48th Avenue**, \$400,000, James Bowen, Absentee owner since 8/28/1998
- 8907 48th Avenue**, \$339,900, Babu & Beena Varghese, Owner occupants since 3/28/2000

Properties for Sale or Rent (Berwyn 27, Branchville 1)

- 4711 Berwyn Road**, \$2,300 per month, Shelly & Ina Kline, Absentee owner since 01/2006
- 4805 Berwyn Road**, \$399,900, Ross & Patricia McMullen, Owner occupant since 03/05/1997
- ***5030 Berwyn Road**, \$475,000, (\$ 489,000), Gloria Pope, Absentee owner since 9/2/2004
- 4711 Branchville Road**, \$399,500, Surinder & Harmeet Bhatti, Owner occupants since 3/8/1999
- ***4803 Osage Street**, \$465,000, (\$550,000), Silvia Adamo, Owner occupant since 1/5/1994
- 4822 Osage Street**, \$375,000, Jacqueline O'Keefe, Owner occupant since June 3, 1983.
- 8312 Potomac Avenue**, \$399,000, Edelu Awoke & Hermias Halle, Absentee owners since 3/16/2005
- 8430 Potomac Avenue**, \$479,900, Mohammed Sikder, Absentee owner since 5/20/2005
- 8702 Rhode Island Avenue**, \$349,000, Jacinto & Consuelo Victa, Owner occupants since 5/10/2001
- WITHDRAWN 5002 Roanoke Place**, \$400,000, Les Bernard, Absentee owner since 8/14/2002.
- 4705 Tecumseh Street, 101-104**, \$214,900-\$277,900, Stephen Tennant, Absentee owner since 06/17/2005
- 4705 Tecumseh Street, 201-204**, \$224,900-\$264,900, Stephen Tennant, Absentee owner since 06/17/2005
- 4705 Tecumseh Street, 301-304**, \$224,900-\$269,900, Stephen Tennant, Absentee owner since 06/17/2005
- 4707 Tecumseh Street, 201**, \$199,000. Stephen Tennant, Absentee owner since 6/17/2005
- 4709 Tecumseh Street, 205**, \$282,900, Stephen Tennant, Absentee owner since 6/17/1005
- 4709 Tecumseh Street, 101**, \$259,900, Stephen Tennant, Absentee owner since 6/17/2005
- 4709 Tecumseh Street, 201**, \$199,000, Stephen Tennant, Absentee owner since 6/17/2005
- 4709 Tecumseh Street, 301**, \$259,900, Stephen Tennant, Absentee owner since 6/17/2005
- WITHDRAWN 8410 48th Avenue**, \$295,000, Michelle Tam & Zo An Song, Absentee owners since 1/8/2002.



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DOM means day on the market from listing to filing of deed at courthouse, underline means a new listing, (*) means a change in offered price, LA means living area only (NOT the basement or lower level).

Berwyn now has an online MESSAGE BOARD!

Post your questions, items for sale, announcements, and more at www.myberwyn.org Click "BDCA Message Board" at the top-center of the page and post your message.

THE BERWYN NEWS ADVERTISING AGREEMENT 2006

AD SIZE (Circle all that are appropriate)

Eighth Page (Business Card) (3.75"W x 2.5"D)
Quarter Page (3.75"W x 5"D)
Half Page (Horizontal) (7.5"W x 5"D)
Half Page (Vertical) (3.75"W x 10"D)
Full Page (7.5"W x 10"D)

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\$75

10 ISSUES

\$200
\$275
\$350
\$350
\$500

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Repeat the same ad as before (yes/no)? I have e-mailed my ad to the Editor at cookwithbob@hotmail.com by the production deadline.

My ad is enclosed with the amount: \$ _____

Please make checks payable to "Berwyn District Civic Association, Inc.", and mail to Berwyn District Civic Association, PO Box 535, College Park, MD, 20740

For further information, please call Janeen Miller, Neighborhood Watch at 301-474-3123, or Heather Iliff, The Berwyn District Association President at 301-345-4433.

Thank you for supporting our community!!!

THE NEXT ISSUE of the BERWYN NEWS will be distributed on the weekend of April 15th-16th. Deadline for articles is April 10th.

Send articles to Bob Baca at cookwithbob@hotmail.com

**BERWYN DISTRICT CIVIC ASSOCIATION
2006 Membership Dues**

Membership dues are \$10 per person or \$15 per family. - Membership dues are collected once a year. Paying your dues today will make you an active member for the remainder of this year! Your dues support publication of this newsletter, community events throughout the year, advocacy for Berwyn issues, and much more. Please make checks payable to "Berwyn District Civic Association, Inc."

Please Print Clearly!

Street Address: _____

Family Name: _____

Total Enclosed: _____

Any individuals or businesses who contribute \$25 or more will be acknowledged on the BDCA website sponsorship page. Those contributing \$50 or more will be listed as gold star contributors. If you want to contribute but prefer not to be acknowledged then simply write in anonymous below. If you would like to include a link to your business or personal website then please provide a URL link below.

Name to be posted on website: _____

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Send to: Berwyn District Civic Association, PO Box 535, College Park, MD 20740