



THE COMMUNITY ADVOCATE

The Newsletter for the Aspen Hill Civic Association, Inc.

From the President and the Members of the Board.....

We've been busy these past months since the May General Membership Meeting. This newsletter will recap some activity. A new neighborhood watch has formed with the cooperation of AHCA, Inc. with many of our members as participants. Interesting presentations along with the support of the 4th District Police combine to enhance community involvement. We held two candidate forums in August, each well attended, a fine platform for community concerns to be recognized and discussed by our elected officials. We look forward toward spring when beautification projects may be supported by grants from select county agencies. Our website has been enhanced with hopes of delivering timely informational updates and links to useful resources. Thanks Webmaster Don. Please visit <http://www.aspenhillcivicassociation.org> and e-mail us: ahca06@msn.com to let us know how we can best keep you in the loop.

A very urgent message is found on page 2 of this newsletter. An unfortunate judgment call by select members of the County Council has imperiled the dedicated efforts of many to amend county code in a manner benefiting ours and surrounding neighborhoods. Please review the notice with care, and take action if you see fit. Members of the Board have replied in unison supporting these amendments.

Best regards, we all look forward to seeing you this month.

General Membership Meeting
 October 20th 7:30 p.m.
 Aspen Hill Library

Nominations to the Board.....

The fall membership drive is on! We continue to encourage new participation from our community. JOIN the civic association, or renew your affiliation. Tell your neighbor about us and ASK them to become part of the membership numbers. The Community needs all of our help in making Aspen Hill a better place to live. For volunteering for the Board of Directors, nominations to the Board, and more information about the functions of the Board, contact the Treasurer, David Polinsky 301.460.4874 or DAP1049@comcast.net.

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED! For three years AHCA, Inc. has been working with Montgomery County officials to improve housing and zoning codes. Our purpose is to maintain strong property values by improving the safety and appearance of our neighborhoods. An Amendment to the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance ZTA 09-03 was developed, which covers such actions as:

- LIMITS OF PAVING FRONT YARDS
- RESTRICTIONS ON PARKING VEHICLES ON LAWNS
- EXCLUDING OFF STREET PARKING OF HEAVY COMMERCIAL VEHICLES ON RESIDENTIAL LOTS
- TIGHTENING THE REGULATION OF HOME OCCUPATIONS

and many others.

This critical legislation was crafted with the County Executive's support and introduced to the County Council. Unfortunately, on October 25th this important Zoning Text Amendment will expire due to inactivity and disregard by members of the PHED Committee of the County Council, where it sits idle. In particular, the three members of this Committee especially need to hear of your support for the ZTA 09-03. Committee member, Mark Elrich, is strongly supportive of the bill. However, the other two members of the PHED Committee are preventing it from going to the full council for a vote. Those two members are:

- Nancy Floreen 240-777-7959 E-mail:
<mailto:councilmember.floreen@montgomerycountymd.gov>
- Mike Knapp 240-777-7955 E-mail:
<mailto:councilmember.knapp@montgomerycountymd.gov>

Please contact these two members of the County Council immediately by telephone and by e-mail to express your support of this legislation #ZTA 09-03 for clarifying and improving the code enforcement in Aspen Hill and surrounding neighborhoods. Remember, call or e-mail sufficiently before the October 25th, 2010 deadline so that the ZTA can be reported out of committee and voted on by the entire council before October 25th.

It would also be helpful to contact the entire council to express your support for this legislation. You may do so by e-mailing the "All Councilmembers" address below where the message becomes available to all members and staff, and is part of the daily mail log.

- All Councilmembers 240-777-7900 county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov

An update from the neighborhood watch.....

The Aspen Hill “Neighborhood Watch” (NW) was formed after a meeting May 18th of the Aspen Hill Civic Assoc. That evening, District 4 Police Officer Sharif Hidayat had described to the AHCA members the numerous recent crimes in the Aspen Hill area, and it motivated Dawn Doscher to accept Officer Hidayat’s invitation to try to organize a “NW” using instructions in the Neighborhood Watch Manual” of the National Sheriff’s Association - and asking many questions via phone and e-mails to Officer Hidayat.

The first meeting was scheduled for June 28 at the Aspen Hill Library Meeting Room. We had NO idea of how many persons would attend. FORTY people showed up, thanks to the publicity of the AHCA’s Officers including President Alexandra, Membership Chairman, David; the AHCA website (Don), some posters at various stores, banks, and libraries; and the announcement by Mimi in the weekly “Gazette.” Instead of dividing up the area into Blocks with “Block Captains” per the NW Manual, the MCPD uses a PRA (Police Reporting Area) system in which we had to assign NW members to the various PRA’s according to their home address, so the July 21 meeting (again at the Library - this time with 70 attendees) was held to explain the PRA system to the NW members and to choose PRA Captains. Confusing? Yes, it was. However, we soon got the hang of it.

Two more Meetings were scheduled:

Monday, Sept. 27 - Topic: “Gangs in the Aspen Hill Area” by MCPD Gangs Specialist, Officer Bruce Beardsley - and

Monday, Oct. 4 - Topic: “County Code Enforcement” - by Natalie Cantor, Director, Mid-County Regional Services Center, and Kathleen Boucher from the Admin. Office of the County Executive Office.

A January meeting is planned - Topic: “Home Security Survey “ - by Officer Hidayat.

Success of this volunteer group is because of the complete cooperation of several of its members. Early on, the Oakvale St. cul-de-sac held a “get to know your neighbor” party on their street. That one event added 18 names to the new members list in the NW. A logo was designed by one member’s brother (a graphic artist in Baltimore) - at no cost as we received her “sibling discount” - thanks Helen; she also designed and distributed the NW Notice to schools. The design and printing of professional maps of the PRA’s that are inserted in printed flyers describing the NW - a very generous gift of the printing company, “The Magazine Group - TMG” (custom publishing and custom media) of Washington, D.C., are thanks to PRA Captain Scott, the TMG PrePress Manager, and PRA Captain Rob, working with Scott, designed the flyers and maps and produced an insert outlining what District 4 non-emergency number operators told him were the essential elements they need from callers. Rockville Printing & Graphics printed at no charge 3000 copies of the notepaper-size inserts, intended to be kept near one’s phone. Quick translation of the flyers from English to Spanish by NW member and Street Watch Team Leader, Rommel, plus Helen’s neighbor. The time and effort of the PRA Captains and their helpers to distribute these flyers to residents of the PRA’s all lead me to exclaim:

WHAT A TEAM !!!

(NW con't)

But we need MORE help!! There are some 6,225 homes in this area. Become a NW member, meet other persons with interests similar to yours. Get some physical exercise taking walks with your neighbor through your neighborhood. Observe....look for suspicious activities, neglected property, anything that is irregular. Telephone these into the MCPD non-emergency number: 301-279-8000.

JOIN the Aspen Hill "NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH" - Support the Montgomery County Police Department. Be the EXTRA EYES AND EARS of the MCPD. Encourage Teens and children 7 years and older to accompany their parents to the Meetings.

Montgomery County Launches New MC311 Online and Telephone System

The public is now able to access Montgomery County government information and non-emergency services online or by calling a single number: "3-1-1."

Features of the new MC311 Customer Service Center (CSC) include:

- Customers can call one easy-to-remember number in order to access Montgomery County information and services – "3-1-1";
- Customers can also access information and create or track service requests on the new website at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/311;

Hours of Call Center operation are Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. The self-service website is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week;

- About 30 County government "information and referral" phone numbers are now answered directly by MC311. All other County phones can continue to be dialed direct;
- Trained representatives who speak Spanish, Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese and French are available, as is a language interpretation service for other languages.

MC311 is also designed to support the County's "911" emergency system by diverting some non-emergency calls that are currently answered by 911 operators – freeing up 911 time to focus on emergencies

For more information about MC311, call the Office of Public Information at 240-777-6507

Our neighborhood statistic shows 50 single family homes currently for sale with prices ranging from \$539,000 to \$202,900. The average sales price in our community is \$311,098, the average days on market 84. A handful of those listings are approved short sales. Additionally, 52 properties are active as bank owned or auction listings.

Kindly help maintain the integrity of our neighborhoods by reporting property violations to the appropriate departments (dial 311), and suspicious activity to the Police.

September 2010 zipcode 20853

	<u>2010</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Total Sold Dollar Volume:	\$ 9,471,020	\$ 8,824,900	7.32 %
Average Sold Price:	\$ 394,626	\$ 339,419	16.27 %
Median Sold Price:	\$ 354,450	\$ 296,000	19.75 %
Total Units Sold:	24	26	- 7.69 %
Average Days on Market:	81	51	58.82 %
Average List Price for Solds:	\$ 415,793	\$ 364,777	13.99 %
Avg Sale Price as a percentage of Avg List Price:	94.91 %	93.05 %	

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Introducing the candidates.....

In late August, the AHCA, Inc. sponsored a Legislative Candidate forum and on another night a County Council Candidate forum. Over 100 individuals attended the first one and 75 interested neighbors the second one.

There was eagerness in the audience to ask questions and everyone listened attentively as each candidate answered. The candidates were impressed by turn out of the Aspen Hill community to listen to them. Perhaps ours were the best attended forums of the election season.

Our forums were co-sponsored by Strathmore Bel-Pre Civic Association; Friends of the Library, Aspen Hill Chapter; and the Aspen Hill Library Advisory Committee.

**ASPEN HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION
MEMBERSHIP COUPON**

NEW MEMBER: ___ RENEWAL: _____ DATE: _____ CHECK #: _____

PLEASE PRINT:

NAMES: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____ E-MAIL: _____

Do you want the Newsletter by email? Yes ___ No ___

Would you like to volunteer?

Join the Board ___

HELP WITH THE NEWSLETTER ___

CALL ME FOR SPECIAL PROJECTS ___

DUES ARE \$7.00 PER PERSON OR \$12.00 PER HOUSEHOLD

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: ASPEN HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION

MAIL TO: DAVID POLINSKY 13401 DOWLAIS DR. ROCKVILLE, MD 20853
