

ECA Newsletter

December 2019

Happy Holidays! Here is the December 2019 issue of the ECA Newsletter. I hope you find this monthly news and information helpful. If you have any comments or suggestions about the Newsletters, please drop me an email at President@EdgemoorCitizens.org.

Topics in This Issue

1. Don't Miss the 2020 ECA New Year's Brunch
2. Councilmember Friedson Introduces Bill to Limit Construction Sidewalk Closures
3. Montgomery County Council Seeks Applicants for Senior Fellows Program
4. ECA Boardmember Joyce Gwadz Appointed to Bethesda Downtown Plan Implementation Advisory Committee
5. Neighborhood Traffic Studies
6. End-of-Year Reminders
7. Edgemoor Tip of the Month – New Montgomery County Pesticide Law in Effect

Don't Miss the 2020 ECA New Year's Brunch

The annual ECA New Year's Brunch will be held on Sunday, January 5 from 10:30 AM until 12:30 PM at the Edgemoor Club. This year we will have activities for younger kids, plus food and drinks for everyone, including champagne to toast the New Year.

Bring yourself. Bring the kids. Bring a dish to share if you'd like. I look forward to seeing you there.

Councilmember Friedson Introduces Bill to Limit Construction Sidewalk Closures

On December 3, Montgomery County District 1 Councilmember Andrew Friedson and At-Large Councilmember Will Jawando introduced legislation (Bill 38-19) to limit the closure of sidewalks adjacent to construction sites and require the County to create standards for maintaining pedestrian access.

If passed, the new law will:

- Require the County Executive to draft a regulation for permits to close sidewalks in the public right-of-way that will limit the closure to the minimum time necessary;
- Require the Department of Permitting Services to regularly review right-of-way permits to determine if the permittee must immediately reopen the sidewalk or begin to provide a safe alternative path on the same side of the street – such as a covered walkway or protected pathway in a parking lane or curb lane;
- Specify the standards a permittee must meet to demonstrate that maintaining pedestrian access is an extreme hardship; and
- Require the County to publish right-of-way permit applications and permits online.

A public hearing on the bill is scheduled on January 14 at 1:30 p.m. Additional information about the hearing will be posted the day before the hearing on the County Council website [HERE](#). Members of the public who are interested in testifying at the hearing can sign up online [HERE](#) or call 240-777-7803.

Montgomery County Council Seeks Applicants for Senior Fellows Program

The Montgomery County Council's Senior Fellows Program allows retired residents of Montgomery County to bring their knowledge, experience, and perspective to the offices of the County Council. Senior Fellows serve on a County Councilmember team, assisting with ongoing projects, policy analyses and community outreach. Fellows can expect to interact directly with elected officials, senior management staff, local civic organizations, advocacy groups, constituents and business leaders. Specific training and responsibilities will vary depending on which Councilmember the fellow works in. This is a part-time, volunteer position, from January through December 2020, with specific hours and schedule to be determined. The Council will provide a stipend of \$4000 for the year. Retired Montgomery County senior residents who are interested can find more information, contacts, and a link to an online application [HERE](#). The application deadline is January 3.

ECA Boardmember Joyce Gwadz Appointed to Bethesda Downtown Plan Implementation Advisory Committee

On December 19, the Montgomery County Planning Board appointed three new members to the Bethesda Downtown Plan Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC), including our own ECA Boardmember Joyce Gwadz.

The IAC is an important component of the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan (the Plan) and it:

- Provides community and redevelopment expertise to the Planning Board, the County Council, the County Executive, and their staffs on Plan implementation;
- Serves as an interface between developers and County agencies;

- Monitors the progress of development and addresses implementation of the recommendations in the Plan; and
- Helps provide transparency and accountability in the implementation of the Plan.

You can learn more about the IAC [HERE](#).

Joyce's presence on the IAC will ensure that our community's interests and concerns are represented in Downtown Bethesda development activity. Congratulations to Joyce on her well-deserved appointment!

Neighborhood Traffic Studies

As you may remember, this past summer, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation agreed to conduct several traffic studies in the neighborhood at the ECA's request (based on suggestions from area residents). Unfortunately, it looks like some DOT staffing changes resulted in these studies being delayed. ECA Vice President Jeffry Drichta has been working to get those studies back on the schedule. DOT now says it will conduct the studies ASAP and report back to us by the end of January. The studies are:

- A parking evaluation along Elm Street, between Arlington Road and Clarendon Road to determine if pavement markings (the center line) should be moved to make more room for westbound traffic passing the parking spaces that are along the north side of Elm. Residents who drive this route are well aware that the center line is painted too close to the parking spaces to allow cars get by without swerving into the oncoming traffic.
- An "all-way stop warrant" analysis to determine if 4-way stops are needed at five different intersections (Exeter Road at Moorland Lane, Glenbrook Road at Moorland Lane, Hampden Lane at Fairfax Road, Hampden Lane at Exeter Road, Hampden Lane at Denton Road). As you may know, all these intersections now have two-way stop signs, and drivers with stop signs frequently think that the cross-traffic is also supposed to stop. This makes the intersections dangerous. The current configuration also leaves long segments of both Fairfax and Hampden with nothing to slow cars down as the travel through the neighborhood.
- A speed study along Fairfax Road between Manning Drive and Bradley Boulevard to determine whether some traffic calming measures are warranted.

I'll keep you posted on future developments.

End-of-Year Reminders

Area residents frequently ask me to pass on reminders about actions or activities that adversely affect quality of life in our neighborhood. I try to keep these kinds of

reminders to a minimum to avoid sounding like a pious nag. But, here are three that come up frequently.

1 – Noise Disturbances

Montgomery County's [Noise Ordinance](#) prohibits high levels of noise between 9pm and 7am on Weekdays, and between 9 pm and 9am on weekends and holidays. It also prohibits “nuisance” noise at any time. In addition, [Animal Control Regulations](#) prohibit noise disturbances by pets (e.g., persistent barking dogs) at any time. So, please be considerate of your neighbors and ensure that contractor who work for you (construction, yard maintenance, etc.) do the same.

If noise gets out of hand and you are unable to resolve the issue with a neighbor, you can report most noise disturbance by calling 311 or submitting a request through the online 311 service [HERE](#). However, complaints about animal nuisance noise are handled by the Montgomery County Police Animal Services Division, and can be reported using the Police non-emergency number 301-279-8000.

2 – Where to Place Leaves for Collection

You probably know about the County's residential [Leaf Collection Program](#). County crews collect leaves at the curb twice each season. Each year I try to send out a reminder about the collection dates when they are posted, along with a reminder about where to place the leave for collection. This year, I forgot the part about where to place the leaves, so I'm passing it on now:

- Do not put leaves in the roadway. There is an extensive discussion on the leaf program website (link above) about why this is important, so I won't repeat it all here. But, there are many excellent reasons, including safety. Please keep the leaves on the grass. Yard maintenance companies should know this rule, but please ensure that yours follows it.
- Do not block the sidewalk with leaves. Curiously, there is no mention of this on the leaf collection website. Maybe they think it's so obvious that it doesn't need to be said. But, it does. Keep leaves off the sidewalk.
- Do not put your leaves on a neighbor's property, a nearby vacant lot, or an adjacent County right-of-way.

NOTE: This year, the County came through our neighborhood a third time to collect leaves, but without providing any advance notice. They did the same in 2018. I don't know why, but you can't count on that happening every year. So, please make sure you get your leave out to the curb in time for the 2nd and “final” collection date.

3 – Where to Place Trash and Recycling

Most of you probably hearing about a 17-year old student who was killed this past August when riding a bicycle on the sidewalk along Old Georgetown Road near Beech Avenue. What you may not remember is that one of the primary

causes of the accident was that the bicyclist apparently lost control of his bike when swerving to avoid trash/recycling containers blocking the sidewalk.

When putting out trash and recycling for collection, residents are required to put the items out without interfering with traffic, sidewalks, or mailboxes. Complete instructions are [HERE](#).

So, please remember to keep the items you put out for collection off the street and off the sidewalk. The safest location for these items is on your lawn or in your driveway, within 10 feet of the curb or street.

Edgemoor Tip of the Month – New Montgomery County Pesticide Law in Effect

Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection recently mailed out a flyer notifying all residents about the County's new pesticide law. The changes to the law have significant implications for homeowners.

The County Council passed the new law in 2015, but implementation was delayed when opponents of the law filed suit. In May 2019, the Maryland Court of Special Appeals ruled in the County's favor. The new law bans the use of most synthetic pesticides on lawns (as well as playgrounds, mulched recreation areas, and childcare facilities). The ban includes many products that have been widely used in the past by both homeowners and lawn care companies, including "weed and feed" products and other pesticides with an EPA Registration Number. The ban applies to the use of these products in Montgomery County, but it does not ban their sale – the products may still be used in other local areas. There are requirements for retailers to post signs about the ban. Do not assume that a product is permissible just because it is for sale in a local store.

The County's information website [HERE](#) has extensive information about the law and about alternative organic lawn care products and techniques.

Do you have a tip you'd like to share with your neighbors? Please email me your suggestions [HERE](#).

The ECA Newsletter is a compilation of information relevant to Edgemoor area residents. It is distributed on an occasional basis on the EC-Net email list.