

# **ECA Newsletter**

**October 2019**

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## ECA Fall Membership Meeting and Board Election

A final reminder that the Fall ECA Membership Meeting will be Tuesday October 15 at the Edgemoor Club. Stop by to share a glass of wine and some snacks with your neighbors at 6:30 PM. The meeting itself will start at 7:15. The two main agenda items are:

1. ECA member Oliver Carr, Chief Executive Officer of Carr Properties will discuss and answer questions about the The Wilson and The Elm, the 23-story office and residential complex they are building above the new Purple Line station at the corner of Elm Street and Wisconsin Avenue (The former location of the Apex building, which contained the Regal Cinema.)
2. We will hold the semi-annual election of the ECA Board. All current board members (listed [HERE](#)) are running for reelection, unopposed.

We may add other topics if appropriate. You'll also have the opportunity to raise any community-related issues you'd like to discuss.

## ECA Halloween Parade and Party

Don't forget the ECA's annual free Halloween Party and Parade on October 31st. The costume parade starts at 5 pm at the intersection of Elm and Exfair. We'll march from there to the Edgemoor Club for a pizza party.

This is a great way to get your Halloween started before trick-or-treating begins so we hope you can join us. Last year, we had more than 100 children and adults attend, and we hope its popularity continues to grow this year—please spread the word!

If you're interested in helping with setup, cleanup, keeping kids safe along the parade route, or judging the best costume contest, contact ECA Vice President Jeffrey Drichta at [drichtaj@mac.com](mailto:drichtaj@mac.com)

### USPS Mail Delivery Complaints

Many area residents have experienced problems with mail delivery service by the US Postal Service—late mail, no mail, mail delivered to the wrong address, held mail not delivered timely, etc.... Earlier this year, the ECA Board collected a long list of service complaints from ECA members and board member Huda Montemarano took that list to Ron Kelley, the supervisor of our Post Office branch, for a face-to-face conversation. Ron was cordial, and agreed that there was room for improvement in the quality of the mail service. He said he'd work to implement changes. She subsequently spoke with his office twice more about specific complaints, and they were receptive and followed up with her by phone.

Despite these positive interactions, service complaints continue. I know from speaking with my mail carrier that there are staffing shortages, and there also seems to be a lot of turn-over in management at the branch. I don't believe Mr. Kelley is there any longer, and neither is the former postmaster or the former customer service manager.

If you experience a service issue with mail delivery, I encourage you to report it to the Postal Service so there will be a record of the problem, and to ensure that management there knows about all the issues. There are several ways to go about filing a complaint:

1. You can either call or visit our local Post Office. Currently, the Acting Manager of the office is Troy Dabney and the Officer in Charge is Theodore Harris, although you don't necessarily need to speak with one of them. Remember that our post office is not the one on Wisconsin Avenue—it's the one near Montgomery Mall:
  - 10421 Motor City Dr. Bethesda MD 20817. Phone 301-767-1742
2. You can do it online [HERE](#). The online process is not perfect, and can be frustrating, but with a little persistence you should be able to get through it.
3. You can call the USPS National 800 number (800-275-8777). That process is also frustrating, but I was able to get through the voice response system by selecting #4 (or say "carrier") from the first set of options, then #2 (or say "carrier" again) from the second set of options, and then say "connect to an agent" from the third set of options.
4. You can skip the Postal Service and report a service issue to the Postal Regulatory Commission [HERE](#). The Commission helps resolve nearly any concern or issue a customer has with the level of service from the Postal Service.

Please note that these procedures apply only to mail delivery service complaints. To report mail theft, mail fraud, or other mail-related crimes, contact the United States Postal Inspection Service [HERE](#).

## Residential Parking Permit Update

As you probably know, Montgomery County launched its new online parking permit portal a few weeks ago. There were several problems with the new site, which I wrote about in the August ECA Newsletter [HERE](#). The County has made improvements to the site, and they now believe that users should be able to use it to obtain Residential Parking Permits and Visitor Permits, and obtain help if they encounter difficulties.

I was able to renew my own permits, and I've talked with several others who were also successful. The process is far from perfect, but give it a try.

Go to the new Residential Parking Permit online portal [HERE](#) and log in using your username (usually your email address) and the password you were assigned (or you created) back in August, when the new online system became effective.

If you have trouble logging in or any other problems using the system, here are some ways to get help:

1. Online chat. Click on "Contact Us" and then "Live Chat" to start an online chat session.
2. Phone support. Call 855-510-3995.
3. Email. Send your questions/issues to [permits@thepermitportal.com](mailto:permits@thepermitportal.com) to get an answer. One neighbor told me that the email help was very good and they solved the problem quickly.

Due to the new website roll-out problems, the Division of Parking Management has temporarily relaxed enforcement of expired Edgemoor parking permits. I've had only limited success in learning the exact details of this relaxation, or how long it will last, but here is what they said:

"...we continue to conduct only a focused enforcement of parking violations other than expired permits in those areas that we know did not receive their renewal notices. This includes Edgemoor. This means that while we are patrolling for violations, if a vehicle is found with an expired permit in your area, officers will either bypass or issue a warning. If a citation has been issued due to an expired permit, and we can confirm in our back-office that the permit holder failed to be sent a notification, we have taken steps to accommodate this concern. We at the Division continue to stand by the neighbors during this transition and understand that mistakes can be made on both sides and these are easily remedied."

Parking Management also told me that they are attempting to equip the parking offices (e.g., the one in the Cheltenham Parking Garage) so that individuals can get their parking permits renewed in person.

[New Maryland Laws Effective October 1](#)

On October 1, hundreds of new laws took effect in Maryland, covering a wide range of subjects. A few examples:

- An increase (from \$500 to \$1000) in the maximum fine for drivers who fail to stop for pedestrians;
- Changes to the way electric low-speed scooters and electric bicycles are categorized and their use is regulated;
- More severe penalties for drunk and drugged driving offenses;
- An increase in the minimum age for buying tobacco (including “vapes”) from 18 to 21 (except for active duty military members);
- A ban on the sale of “bump stocks” in Maryland;
- Decriminalizing gambling, which is now a civil (rather than criminal) offense with no possible jail time; and
- It is now illegal to threaten hate crimes — not just to commit them.

For an article about the changes, look [HERE](#). For a more comprehensive summary of all the changes, go [HERE](#).

#### Edgemoor Tip of the Month – Lawn Care

Here are two great sources of information about lawn care, transitioning to an organic lawn, responsible pesticide and fertilizer use, weed management, and the many challenges of growing a healthy lawn in our region. Thanks to Ben Beach for (indirectly) suggesting this topic.

[Taking Care of Your Lawn](#) – From Montgomery County, with a focus on going organic and ways to reduce the environmental impact of your lawn care practices. Lots of helpful tips and best practices.

[Lawns](#) – A more comprehensive guide to lawn care in Maryland from the University of Maryland Extension. Why is it so hard to grow a lawn in our area, and what can I do about it? What kind of grass seed is best for our area? What’s that weed, and how can I get rid of it? Find out at this site.

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.*