



T H E MAYFIELD NEWSLETTER

A HAMLET IN THE HEART OF TOWN

WINTER/SPRING 2011

MAYFIELD GENERAL MEETING

MAY 19TH 7:15 PM
AT MARYLAND STATE BOY CHOIR – GYM

- ◆ Refreshments. Come meet your neighbors.
- ◆ Special guests: Greater Baltimore Realtors Assoc, Vice Pres, Jody Landers
- ◆ Invited: Major DeSousa, Northeast District Commander, Baltimore City Police, Del. Curt Anderson, MD House of Delegates, District 43; and Meditation Garden at St. Francis of Assisi presentation.

A special note about this issue of Mayfield News:

Our homes are likely our most valuable asset. Preserving the value of our homes in Mayfield is in part an individual responsibility and a collective one. When a home is left to deteriorate, it not only affects the value of that home, but other homes of Mayfield. Banks look to “comparables” to reveal the range of home values. Values are influenced by market forces and the condition of the neighborhood. The Baltimore City Housing code uses

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The President's Letter

Mayfield on Sale! Mayfield is not accustomed to homes lingering on the market for a long time. The credit crisis and the economy in general are major causes. Mayfield remains a good and affordable neighborhood. The Mayfield Improvement Association board wanted to know what proactively can be done to help sell Mayfield to potential home buyers. In February several board members and other residents met with real estate professionals who live in Mayfield to discuss ideas of what the community can help to sell Mayfield. The wide-ranging discussion led us to some ideas. What do you think about them?

Word of mouth marketing. Among the 10 residents who met in February, all found out about Mayfield from someone they knew who lived here already. This clearly indicated that asking Mayfield residents is a key ingredient to spread Mayfield's value. We discussed how that could be 'made easy.' Developing a new printed brochure with real resident quotes would be a good beginning. The last time the brochure was developed was over 20 years ago. A pdf version would be given to Realtors for use in their online communications with prospective buyers and we'd have it on the website for download. We want the quality of Mayfield as a community to come through as well as the quality of the homes for sale.

Signage. As we have discussed for years, Mayfield needs a sign. MIA submitted a grant for the one we previewed at past meetings. We should know soon whether we will receive the grant.

Home and Garden Tour. The H & G Tour is one of the best events that shows off Mayfield's charm. The next tour will include homes for sale along with homes currently lived in. Curb appeal is good for every home in Mayfield for welcoming possible new neighbors. Richard Smith and Emily Chalmers have volunteered to co-chair the next event in 2011 or 2012. Additional committee members and show homes to be open that day are needed.

Website enhancements. Add some interior views of our charming older homes that have been updated, so that home shoppers can imagine our 1920's vintage homes can look in the early 21st century. Our homes have many unique features - stained glass windows, architectural details, fireplace mantels, doors/transoms etc. We could produce a portion of our current website or the new Facebook fan page (under construction) to show off our bounty of charming details.

Welcome packets. We would create a welcome packet for any Realtors to give to prospective buyers at an open house or when they inquire about a property. Stephanie Buttner assembled welcome packets for all the open houses held on the same day as the Yard Sale Day – April 30th. The Realtors liked having something to share with potential buyers.

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www.mayfieldassociation.org

President's Letter

(cont. from pg. 1)

What do you think? Do you have additional ideas? For the updated brochure on Mayfield we would like to have comments about why you decided to buy a home in Mayfield, or what you have come to value about Mayfield as a place to live, raise a family etc. Mayfield is a great place to raise a family and many families have several generations living here. Was it St. Francis of Assisi school and parish that convinced you to buy here? Was it the commute or the proximity to the parks and Lake Montebello? Was it friends and family in the area? Something else? Send your comments to mayfieldupdate@gmail.com or come to the Block Party and tell us in person.

*-Janelle Cousino, President,
Mayfield Improvement Association*

Meditation Garden

As an Eagle Scout project from Troop 87 of the St. Francis of Assisi parish, Jacob Schwartz and Vincent Padden want to convert an unused space on the SFA campus to become an outdoor classroom and meditative garden. In late June, they plan to install a series of custom-built benches that can be used in flexible ways, and by building native plant gardens. The advent of this outdoor classroom, meditative garden and celebratory gathering for the school, church and community and surrounding neighborhoods near Herring Run and Lake Montebello will be a permanent installation. Padden, formerly of Mayfield Avenue, and a senior at Loyola High School and Jacob Schwartz of Lavarville and a senior at Baltimore Poly-Tech, are both parishioners at SFA, and lifelong residents of the City. The project is also intended to bolster the science curriculum at SFA School, including an addition of a renowned butterfly garden, and the proposed Herring Run Master Plan. They are both very grateful for the technical guidance from Mayfield resident Paul Voos. On May 19, they look forward to previewing the schematic for the project. Both Scouts can be contacted via sfaeagle@gmail.com



A special note about this issue: (cont. from pg. 1)

a regulatory and enforcement approach to keeping properties and communities in livable condition. Homeowners and communities can take action so that city enforcement is a last resort, not a first response. In this issue there are articles on keeping our houses in good shape, advice on curb appeal, a checklist of items to assess the condition of your home, and resources for paying for improvements/repairs for those that cannot afford the repairs needed. Mayfield Improvement Association has invited speakers who can address housing issues from various angles, including the Greater Baltimore Board of Realtors, a state legislator and city agencies. Any question on housing and real estate will be fair game.

What's curb appeal got to do with it?

Mayfield is beautiful this spring; the azaleas, dogwood, daffodils and tulips are spectacular. Our mature trees and attractive landscaping give a special appeal to the community. But when someone considers buying in Mayfield, they look at the house for sale AND the neighbors, the block and the general neighborhood before buying. We all have a role in keeping Mayfield looking good.



Walkways, the entryway to the actual building, lead people to the view of a house. This fact makes cleaning and updating walkways, porches and parking areas an important task when improving curb appeal. Clearing grass and weeds from cracks in a sidewalk and framing driveways and walkways give an appearance of sharper lines and angles. First impressions are often the most important factor in deciding on a home.

Here are 10 simple ways that you can add curb appeal landscaping:

1. **Make sure that the front yard is neat and clean.** The front yard is the most important part of your home and needs special attention. Make sure that your lawn is neat and clean, and any leaves or unwanted plants are cleaned up. Also make sure bushes or hedges in your front yard are neat and trimmed.
2. **Plant some colorful flowering plants.** A beautiful garden enhances the beauty of any home. Adding some flowers will add a nice burst of color to your home. If you don't have any garden beds, consider a container garden to beautify your front entrance.
3. **Pay special attention to your driveway.** A driveway, it is the entryway to your home. If it is in great shape, you've got a strong first impression. Renew the look of an old, worn driveway and fill in small cracks.

4. **Remove weeds.** A yard full of weeds gives the impression that the owner of the house is careless. Strive to be weed-free!
5. **Clean up the sidewalk.** Dirt and algae can settle on sidewalks giving the wrong impression about your home.
6. **Add a small patio.** A simple flagstone or paver brick patio in the yard can add beauty to your home. It is a great solution for avoiding growth of unwanted grass.
7. **Paint your front door.** Pay special attention to your front door as it is the entrance and focal point of your home. Giving your front door a fresh coat of paint can do wonders. Consider color carefully, your front door is a great place to express a little personality! Give the same attention to your shutters and garage door.
8. **Update your lighting.** Lighting plays a vital role especially during the nights. Having an outdated light fixture beside your front door gives the impression that the house has never been updated. Landscape lighting along your front walk can give your home an enhanced look.
9. **Add your house number:** A thin brass or nickel house number plate can be fixed on the door or on the garage and will serve the practical purpose for new visitors. Make sure that your house numbers are clearly visible from the street.
10. **Replace a mailbox.** A new mailbox which is stylish can easily serve the purpose, and adds curb appeal to your home.

Other things to consider:

- Paint the exterior of the house
- Replace the front door
- Paint or replace the garage door

Housing Resource Corner:

Maryland State Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Program: This program, administered by the Maryland State Historical Trust, provides an income tax credit for eligible renovation to historic structures.

What are the benefits?

An income tax credit equal to 20% of the qualified renovation costs, where you can receive a maximum of up to \$50,000. (With a qualified \$250,000 historic renovation to your home, you would earn the \$50,000 credit.) This credit is applied toward any income taxes that you owe. You would receive a check for any amount that exceeds your required taxes.

What else do I need to know?

This program applies to residential and income property.

Properties located in national register and/or locally designated historic areas are eligible. Mayfield is designated an historic area. A minimum of \$5,000 of renovation work must be done.

All work plans must be approved by the Maryland Historic Trust BEFORE beginning any work.

As this is an historic preservation program, rehabilitation work must conform to historic standards. Projects such as painting, sanding, installing plumbing, air conditioning, re-working foundations, and more are eligible for this credit. There are projects, like removing historic components of the house and installing vinyl windows or siding, that are NOT eligible. It is recommended that you contact the Maryland Historic Trust or a consultant to determine project eligibility. The Maryland Historical Trust will charge a fee of 1% of the amount of the tax credit.

For more information, contact: Maryland Historical Trust, Office of Preservation Services, phone: 410.514.7628; 410.514.7628 Website: mht.maryland.gov. Bonnie Baden at bbaden@mdp.state.md.us or (410) 514-7628

Baltimore Heritage has a very helpful website and exten-

sive information on the sustainable community tax credit program. Their website at <http://www.baltimoreheritage.org/> or call them at 11 West Chase Street ; Baltimore, MD 21201-5438; (410) 332-9992. Mayfield is a qualified community for this tax credit.

Baltimore City Deferred Loan Program for rehab and critical repairs: This program, offered by the Baltimore Housing Office of Rehabilitation, provides rehabilitation loans for critical repairs to properties owned by very low income households.

What are the benefits?

A loan of up to \$10,000 at a 3% interest rate. No monthly payments are made, and all payments are deferred until after the sale or transfer of title to the property.

What else do I need to know?

The combined yearly household income for the homeowner must be less than 50% of the Baltimore City median income level.

Eligible repairs can include accessibility improvements for elderly/handicapped homeowners.

Eligible homes may not exceed 2 dwelling units, but can include condominiums.

Eligible homes must be occupied by the owner.

Application fees and closing costs can be included in the loan amount.

For more information, contact:

Baltimore Housing, Office of Rehabilitation, 417 E. Fayette Street, Suite 1125, Baltimore, MD 21202; Phone: 410.396.4151; 410.396.4151; Website: www.baltimorehousing.org/ps_rehab.asp

Home Improvement Loans - Neighborhood Housing Services of Baltimore offers a home improvement loan for low income Baltimore area residents, to assist with

structural or appliance repair- such as roofing, plumbing, heating/air conditioning, window replacement, and energy efficiency, as well as other refurbishments. We want to make your home a safe and comfortable place to be. Participants can receive a loan of up to \$80,000, depending on the level of work needed for the home, with as little as 3 % interest. Qualified applicants will have the option of full payment deferment while they continue to live in the home.

Program Features:

- Technical advice on how to approach home improvement
- Written specifications for both small and large scale renovations
- Assistance with the contractor bid process
- Assurance the work is performed according to professional standards
- Special financing available to low income homeowners in Baltimore city and county
- Caring, personal counseling that walks you through the home improvement and loan process

Green Features:

- Energy efficient windows
- Rubberized roofing
- Low Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) paints
- Tankless water heaters
- Green heating system options
- Energy star appliances
- Compact fluorescent lighting
- Low flush toilets

Eligibility: To qualify, you must reside at or below 80% of the Area Median Income and live in Baltimore city (AMI) and submit to a credit check. Go to: <http://www.nhsbaltimore.org/resources/home-improvement-application.php> For more information, call Robert Horton at 410-327-1200 - Ext. 108



EASTER BUNNY & SPRING FLING

Mayfield was busy – Having fun, raising funds and supporting the play lot.



SOLD OUT! Mayfield first Spring Fling was a ringing success and full of fun. Live music, fabulous food, great silent auction items, friends and neighbors together – and all to raise funds to improve the play lot. The playground committee is already at work deciding what the proceeds can allow for purchase with the almost \$5000 raised to date. The generosity of all the donors and especially the silent auction bidders made this event a bigger than expected success. Next on the to do list: new play lot mulch in June and a ribbon cutting for the new equipment at the Block Party in July. Come to the general membership meeting for a full update on play lot news.

Easter Bunny and Egg Hunt big hit with kids. So much for them to do – decorate cupcakes, dye eggs, plant flowers, and search for eggs full of surprises! Thank you to the volunteers who put on this egg-cellent event.

Short Tidbits:

Top Mom: Congratulations to Stephanie Buttner for being selected one of Baltimore's Top Moms. Mayfield nominated her and Mayor Rawlings-Blake agreed and honored her and other Top Moms at a luncheon at the Baltimore Zoo on May 3rd. Stephanie's work in Mayfield with kids activities and her service to St. Francis of Assisi School, even when her children had graduated, are just two of the reasons why she is so deserving of this recognition. Way to go, Stephanie!

Bridge, Art and Herring Run: Believe it or not - they are all related. Herring Run Advisory Committee is forming a committee to work with the City on the selection of the artist for the public art for the Harford Road Bridge project, with the 1% set aside of funds.

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Calendar

Check www.mayfieldassociation.org and mayfieldupdate@gmail.com for updated calendar between scheduled newsletter distributions and other events worth noting.

Board Meetings – Third Thursdays of January, February, March and April, June, July, Sept, November; 7:15 p.m.

May 19th – **General Membership Meeting**, 7:15 p.m. at MSBC - 3400 Norman Avenue

Jun 11th – **Play lot Mulch Madness Day**

Mid-Jun – **New Resident Reception**

Mid-Jun – **Block Party committee**

Jun 16th – **Board Meeting**

Jul 8th – **Annual Block Party**, 6-10 p.m., 3400 Norman Avenue

Jun 21st – **Board Meeting**

Oct 8th – **Mayfield's Fall Fest**, 12-4 p.m.

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Short Tidbits:

(cont. from pg. 3)

Lake Montebello: The maintenance agreement among the City, Coldstream-Homestead-Montebello, Mayfield and Lakeside-Ednor Gardens for the median around the recreation lanes came to life on April 30th. The City approved a donation of 50 mature Pennisetum 'Karly Rose', an ornamental grass. The three neighborhood organizations provided volunteers to plant them along a patch that was left empty after the asters didn't thrive. Thanks to all the volunteers for their efforts to keep the Montebello median lookin' good!

Entry Walls: Mayfield volunteers maintain the gardens at the Entry Walls of Lake Montebello. Want to help? Send an email to mayfieldupdate@gmail.com or call JoAnn Trach Tongson on Pelham. Upcoming garden days in May and June.

Answer to the last issue's history question: War of 1812 troop encampment was nearby Mayfield at a location now known as Clifton Park.

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Mayfield Improvement Association

Officers

President – Janelle Cousino
mayfieldboard@gmail.com
 Vice President – Stephanie Buttner
 Secretary – JoAnn Trach Tongson
 Treasurer – Julia McDonald

Board Members

Gary Rahman
 Tim Schneid
 Emily Chalmers
 Courtney & Jim Bartlett (share)
 Paul White

Committee & Project Leaders

Housing – Gary Rahman
 Greening – JoAnn Trach Tongson
 Welcome Baskets & Yard Sale – Stephanie Buttner
 Kids Parties & Spooky Playground – Courtney & Jim Bartlett
 Playground Committee – Courtney Bartlett
 Block Party – Maria Lukianczuk
 Fall Fest – Gary Rahman
 House & Garden Tour – Richard Smith & Emily Chalmers
 NOGLI Board representative – Gary Rahman
 Communications (Mayfield listserves; newsletter copy) – Janelle Cousino

Newsletter graphics and layout – Marisa Schleiter

Webmaster – Brian Baughn

All committees are open to more volunteers. Send an email of interest to mayfieldupdate@gmail.com to let board know you are interested in helping.

All board meetings are open. If you'd like to attend, we ask you let the President know so that the host of the meeting can make adequate arrangements. Interested in volunteering for a committee? Email mayfieldupdate@gmail.com to let us know. There are many ways to volunteer for Mayfield.

Have a question or want to be on the mayfield listserves? Send an email to Mayfieldupdate@gmail.com

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Link to City Zoning Regulations

Residents who have questions about fencing, signs, home improvements or other issues regulated by city zoning codes can log onto this website for answers:

www.ci.baltimore.md.us/government/legislature/zoning

Northeastern District Police

410-396-2444

Northeastern District Police

Community Relations

410-889-6449 (Non-emergency number)

It is time to pay dues for 2011

About 50 people have already paid dues, and several donated to scholarship fund as well. Thank you. Did you forget or lose the envelope? It's easy to pay the dues: You can use the envelope from last newsletter, come to the general membership meeting and pay there or mail in your own envelope to Mayfield Treasurer c/o 2201 Mayfield Avenue, 21213.

Dues for Mayfield Improvement Association are \$20/yr per household (\$10/yr for households headed by someone 62 or older). Dues support the expenses associated with the many projects done by volunteers: Mayfield News- printing expense, web-hosting expenses, flowers/bulbs/trees for beautification, children's holiday parties, welcome basket program, etc. Only dues paying members can vote in general membership meetings and elections. The special donation is dedicated to the Mayfield Youth Service Scholarship Fund.

Make checks payable to Mayfield Improvement Association or M.I.A.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

This represents dues of \$ _____

ADD: Scholarship Donation \$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____

Check one: Cash _____ or Check & Check # _____