



# T H E MAYFIELD NEWSLETTER

A Hamlet in the Heart of Town

2023 | Issue Two

## Mayfield General Membership Meeting

Thursday, May 18  
7:15pm  
St. Francis of Assisi  
Burke Hall

*Enter from door off the  
parking lot*

### CONFIRMED GUESTS:

Major Johnathon Amey,  
Baltimore Transit Coalition,  
Councilperson Odette Ramos

New Developments,  
Community Business



## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Neighbors,

At last October's General Membership meeting, Councilman Dorsey gave us some information about his bill, the "Abundant Housing Act." The purpose of the bill is to increase the rental stock in the city by removing the prohibition on converting single family houses in residential districts into multi-family. This ordinance would apply to detached, semi-detached, and row houses in all residential zoning districts, and would effectively eliminate single-family residence zoning. There is no requirement that the converted houses be owner occupied, and there are no limits to the number of houses an outside investor could buy and convert. It would also, under certain circumstances, allow for the construction of Additional Dwelling Units (aka "little houses"), as well as remove off-street parking requirements for multi-family housing.

There will be a hearing on the bill before the Planning Department on 18 May at 1:00. It is an open meeting, and I urge anyone who has an opinion on the bill to attend and make their voices heard. I will attend on behalf of the Board, and present testimony in opposition to the bill. After careful consideration of the bill, we believe that it would do far more harm than good for many reasons. I want to take this opportunity to explain the Board's position to you.

- **There is no evidence to support this radical change to Baltimore's zoning law.** Getting rid of single-family housing upends residents' expectations that their investments in their homes and neighborhoods would be secure. Unlike other cities that are experimenting with removing single family zoning, Baltimore's population is shrinking, resulting in the swaths of vacant properties that already scar our neighborhoods. Yet, there is no empirical, research-based evidence that this revolutionary scheme would benefit Baltimore or if it would actually provide "abundant housing."

*(continued on page 2)*



[www.mayfieldassociation.org](http://www.mayfieldassociation.org)

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- **There is no guarantee that any housing created through the bill would be desirable and affordable.** Anyone who has put in a new bathroom or kitchen knows how expensive it is to rehab an older home. An investor would have to charge sufficiently high rent to cover these costs and make a profit, making the new apartments too expensive for many of the people the legislation is intended to help. But if investors try to cut corners on the renovation work, what would be the impact on the quality of the apartments? Baltimore already has more than its fair share of substandard apartments; the city needs increased powers to police landlords before embarking on this kind of experiment.
- **This bill is inconsistent with the city's many policies to attract and support home ownership and stabilize neighborhoods.** The Banner recently reported Black families are the largest group leaving the city, and the mayor is committed to attracting new Black middle-income families to the city while retaining legacy residents. These questions need to be answered: how would this bill convince Black families to remain in or come to the city? Is renting a unit from anywhere between 350 and 750 square feet in a converted house truly attractive to families? Do legacy residents want to stay when their neighbors' houses have been bought and converted by speculators and absentee landlords? What will happen to the Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative's goal to support home-ownership when single family homes are converted to rental properties?
- **Infrastructure questions need to be considered.** What would the impact on the infrastructure be if there were more apartments and additional dwelling units? How would removing the requirement for parking spaces for new units affect residents who already struggle to find adequate parking?
- **This bill, despite the good intentions of its author, would have a substantial disproportionate and negative impact on the city's Black neighborhoods.** Unlike Mayfield, many historically white communities such as Guilford, Roland Park, and Homeland, have restrictions on converting single-family homes into multi-family residences, either in their deeds or in their home owners' association agreements. Under

State law, these restrictions are enforceable by the neighborhoods. Therefore, these communities would be effectively exempt from the bill, even though, in general, they have larger homes that might be suitable for conversion.

In contrast, there are many Black residential neighborhoods throughout that have houses that could be converted to multi-family use if this bill passes, but no covenants or deed restrictions that would protect them from the consequences of this bill. Many of these neighborhoods, including CHM and Belair Edison, are part of the Healthy Neighborhoods initiative, and are encouraging home ownership as a tool for stabilizing their community. However, the bill does nothing to protect these struggling neighborhoods from predatory investors or substandard rental units. How is this equitable?

To be clear, Mayfield is not against multi-family housing. We realize that not all residents can be homeowners, nor should that ever be the case. Our neighborhoods are enriched when they are diverse, and purpose-built multi-family housing can provide exciting opportunities for the city and its citizens. Perhaps the city could use the many tools at its disposal to convert blocks of vacant row-houses into new and vibrant communities with a variety of multi-family and single-family housing opportunities, for both renters and home owners.

However, we also believe that subdividing houses on an improvised basis is not a sound plan for creating the kinds of housing that will attract new families, protect the interests of elderly homeowners, or persuade legacy owners to remain. Instead, the city should work to make all neighborhoods safe, strong, and attractive to new and current and prospective residents—like Mayfield!

Best regards,

*Deborah Mason*

President

Mayfield Improvement Association





**Open to 6th – 8th grades  
Middle School  
and  
9th – 12th grade  
High School**

**Students living in Mayfield or  
going to a school in Mayfield**

Eligible youth are middle or high school students that live in Mayfield or go to a school that is in Mayfield, including St. Francis of Assisi and Montebello Middle School. Entrants are invited to submit their ideas to the Mayfield Improvement Association for consideration.

**Expectations: Answer 1 of the 2 questions below for your entry.**

**Question 1.**

*"If I were the Mayor of my Neighborhood, I would propose ....."* (in order to make the neighborhood an even better place to live).

**Question 2.**

*"What measures would you propose to Mayfield residents to address climate change and environmental issues."*

Go to: [www.mayfieldassociation.org/news](http://www.mayfieldassociation.org/news) for the full description and required cover sheet for your entry. If you have questions, send an email to [mayfieldupdate@gmail.com](mailto:mayfieldupdate@gmail.com)

**Entries are due on  
or before June 30, 2023**



## Be a Welcoming Neighborhood to Everyone.

Would visitors say, "What a beautiful neighborhood!?" The daffodils and crocuses along our medians are a spring treat. Many lovely flowering trees on neighbors' properties make things glisten. The colorful tulips and azaleas dazzle. Here are few additional reminders to help Mayfield stay beautiful:

- Regularly pick up litter on your property
- If your recycling bin isn't large enough, use any other bin you may have, or a paper bag or cardboard box. NO plastic bags, PLEASE!
- Raked leaves & yard waste can be left on trash day for DPW pickup — preferably in paper yard bags
- Secure trash and recycling bins to not blow around, when it isn't the DPW pick-up day.
- Remove litter in the street that would travel to the storm sewer
- Clear storm sewer entries from leaves and debris that may cause a back-up.
- Report illegal dumping, street light outages, overflowing public trash receptacles to 311. Give a location address.
- Don't leave debris, tree branches, dead bushes on the medians in Mayfield or along the park edges or near Lake Montebello on DPW property.
- Prune or trim branches of trees that overhang the sidewalk that may impede pedestrians
- Maintain lawn and area in alley behind your yard .
- Leave porch lights are on when it is dark (police recommend this).
- Street Sweeping Days are the-3rd and 4th Wednesdays in our area. Move your car to give the street sweeper access to the curb. (3rd Wednesday = odd-numbered side; 4th Wednesday = even-numbered side of street to be swept).

**See the enclosed Home Security Checklist inserted in this newsletter. The recommendations are reminders and best practices for each of us to keep in mind to maintain a safe and secure neighborhood, and to avoid any unfortunate events as much as possible.**

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# IN AND AROUND MAYFIELD

## IS YOUR GARDEN PET FRIENDLY?

Many of us love our gardens and enjoy working in them all year-round. They provide opportunities for exercise and relaxation, and the beauty of a changing landscape throughout each season. Additionally some of us are enthusiastic indoor gardeners who faithfully tend to a myriad of houseplants. However, many popular plants, are not friends to our pets! If your dog or cat likes to chomp on vegetation it's worth it to be informed.

### A partial list of commonly planted species that can cause problems are:

- American Holly
- Apple
- Begonia
- Caladium
- Dieffenbachia
- Elephant Ears
- Gardenia
- Hosta
- Lavender
- Leek
- Lenten Rose
- May Apple
- Narcissus
- Oregano
- Peony
- Rhododendron
- Tomato Plant (leaves)

**DON'T** rip out your existing garden and throw all your indoor plants away! **DO** keep an eye on your pets. and notice what they may be eating that's inappropriate. Use fencing, relocation of plants, correction, and

behavior modification training with your pets to discourage them from eating ANYTHING unsuitable.

For a complete list of poisonous plants and their symptoms visit:  
[https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/toxic-and-non-toxic-plants?field\\_toxicity\\_value%5B%5D=01](https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/toxic-and-non-toxic-plants?field_toxicity_value%5B%5D=01)

If your pet has eaten something and has a troubling reaction call this number:

**ASPCA**  
**Animal Poison Control Center**  
**Phone Number: (888) 426-4435**

## Mayfield For All Ages

### How can we help you?

Mayfield has a group of volunteers that have said they would help other residents that may need help with a task, a ride or some other matter. Access to volunteer help is available to all residents as we check with some of the 2 dozen volunteers who have joined this effort.

How can you ask for help? Start with an email to [MayfieldUpdate@gmail.com](mailto:MayfieldUpdate@gmail.com). In the subject line put:: Mayfield For All Ages Request. Include the support you need in the email. You will receive a reply with information for next steps.

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## MAYFIELD SPRING YARD SALE

**Saturday, June 10 – 9am - 1pm**

**A huge thanks to John Mason** for again volunteering to help with map and directory, signs and posting it in common locations for yard sale notices. To be included in the directory and map, let [mayfieldupdate@gmail.com](mailto:mayfieldupdate@gmail.com) know your address and a short description of the items you intend to sell. Deadline for inclusion in the directory is Tuesday, June 6th. (For those receiving the E-newsletter you may insert your information on the google sheet linked there. We will keep it in the E-news until then). Every household that registers will receive the location map and directory electronically to share with friends and family. You will also receive printed copies, to give any customers that come to your home. For anything else you may need to know, contact [mayfieldupdate@gmail.com](mailto:mayfieldupdate@gmail.com)

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## OUR 59TH ANNUAL MAYFIELD BLOCK PARTY

**Friday, September 8 – HOLD THIS DATE**

The weather and the venue were perfect for last year's block party, so we are hosting it again in September to take advantage of cooler evenings and everyone more likely to be around to participate. Details are under development for music and food/beverage options and figuring out a hybrid system for cash and cashless payments and possibly purchases in advance. We will need volunteers, of course, so helping out for an hour is a both a fun experience and a great way to meet visiting former residents, new residents and neighbors from other blocks. **We'll have more details to share in August.**

## VISIT MOTHERS' GARDEN

**Mothers' Garden is a quiet and peaceful place to explore.**

Nestled in the northwest corner of Clifton Park across the street from the Montebello K-8 School., Mothers' Garden is bounded by Harford Road to the west, Erdman Avenue to the north and 32nd Street extended on its south edge. There is a small parking area off 32nd Extended for a few cars, especially if anyone has mobility issues. Parking also exists on Erdman's north parking lane, 32nd street near the school, some areas on Harford Road and nearby streets. You'll see the Mothers' Garden sign at the intersection of 32nd Street Extended and Harford Road. Another landmark is the stone pergola along Harford Road.



### **If you missed this Very Special Event:**

Here's how you can make your own creation to enjoy. For inspiration, a fairy garden or gnome home, can be found at this website with instructions and ideas to create. Check out FairyGnomeHouse <https://mygarden-life.com/how-to/make-a-fairy-house-from-natural-materials>

**In case you have not yet paid your dues, the form is inserted in this issue for your convenience. You can also pay at the General Meeting on May 18.**

## Attention Homeowners

**Maryland has a worthwhile program to help your home keep up to date.**

The Maryland Historic Tax Credit program assists homeowners living in older homes in designated historic areas like Mayfield. This tax credit reimburses 20% of approved expenses for necessary repairs (roofs, floors), replacement or install of essential mechanical functions (furnace, air conditioning) and maintaining the original features of the home (windows, doors, exterior and walls). There are many more aspects to this program, but this is a short explanation for you.

Dave & Stephanie Buttner on Chesterfield found the program to be very much worth the time it took. Stephanie Buttner reported that the Return on Investment (ROI) from their work resulted in a nearly \$8000 tax credit for about 10 hours of work on the application and photographs! That's a very good deal!

Thomas Spring, who lived on Pelham shared his experience and lessons learned to help you. "My experience with the Homeowner Tax Credit Program has been enjoyable and rewarding. I was introduced to the process by Johns Hopkins (the man, not the institution), who helped train me along with a gaggle of Mayfielders at an event not long after we moved to the neighborhood. The benefit of the program is a tax credit covering 20% of the cost of qualifying rehabilitative work, less application fees. 'Burdens' are outlined in the full article."

### **The Process — The application process consists of three parts.**

**Part I:** The applicant must demonstrate that the building to be renovated is a historic structure. Because Mayfield is a historic neighborhood,

its houses are de facto — with few exceptions — historic structures. So this step of the application was very easy.

**Part II,** the applicant describes the work to be completed and explains how that work will preserve and/or enhance the historic features of the structure. The proposed work needs to satisfy the Standards for Rehabilitation, outlined fairly clearly on the Program's website ([https://mht.maryland.gov/taxcredits\\_homeowner.shtml](https://mht.maryland.gov/taxcredits_homeowner.shtml)) and needs to be completed by a licensed contractor. In addition, the expenses must exceed \$5,000 per application. Work that gets approved must be completed in two years. If the 2 years isn't enough time for the project you can reapply. The only hard part of this application is photos must be taken of every room in the house from every angle, and pictures of all angles of the exterior. Photos must be printed and labeled in a particular way (outlined on the website) and submitted with the application and \$10 review fee. The review process takes anywhere from 60 to 90 days. Once approved the work can begin.

**Bottom line:** An applicant who completes \$10,000 in qualifying work stands to gain a \$2,000 tax credit, less the 0.6% review fee of \$60, for a net benefit of \$1,940. In effect, that means that an applicant could get \$10,000 worth of work done for \$8,060 — a helpful discount with a tight budget. If you have any questions about the application process, please do not hesitate to reach out. [Mayfieldupdate@gmail.com](mailto:Mayfieldupdate@gmail.com) will connect you with someone who has used the tax credits to guide you.

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## CALENDAR

Check [www.mayfieldassociation.org](http://www.mayfieldassociation.org)  
[mayfieldupdate@gmail.com](mailto:mayfieldupdate@gmail.com) or  
[www.Facebook.com/mayfield.update](http://www.Facebook.com/mayfield.update) for  
updated calendar and other events  
worth noting between newsletter  
deliveries.

Event announcements are also in  
Mayfield E-newsletter, issued weekly,  
with community and nearby news.

**Saturday, May 13 – HARBEL Spring  
Fling Flea Market 8 am – 3pm**

**Thursday, May 18  
Mayfield General Membership  
Meeting – 7:15PM St.  
Francis of Assisi Burke Hall**

**Saturday, June 3 – Mayfield Dumpster  
Day #2, morning 2400 block of  
Mayfield Avenue**

**Saturday, June 10 – Mayfield’s Com-  
munity Wide Yard Sale Day with map  
& directory.**

**Friday, June 30 – Deadline for Youth  
Vision Prize entries – bring to 2410  
Mayfield or email to  
[Mayfieldupdate@gmail.com](mailto:Mayfieldupdate@gmail.com)**

**Summer Social or Short notice Pop up  
events – see signs in medians and  
E-news or Facebook**

**Summer TBD – Volunteer Thank You  
and New Resident Party**

**Tuesday, August 1st  
National Night Out – always the first  
Tuesday of August.**

**Friday, September 8  
Mayfield’s 59th Annual Block Party  
across from 3400 Norman**

**Saturday, September 23 –  
Dumpster Day 3  
2201 Mayfield Avenue, morning**

**Thursday, October 19, 7:15pm  
Mayfield General Membership  
Meeting – Location TBD**

**Halloween events – Late October TBD**

**Saturday, December 2 – Mayfield  
Dumpster Day #4 2300 block of  
Mayfield Ave, morning**

**Holiday Events TBD - Santa Visit,  
Caroling Event, Holiday Decoration  
Judging**

## Mayfield Improvement Association Officers

President  
Deborah Mason  
Vice President  
Phaedra Stewart  
Recording Secretary  
Janelle Cousino  
Corresponding Secretary  
Stephanie Buttner  
Treasurer  
Julia McDonald

## Board Members

Mary Ann Dresler  
James Long  
Marie Lymon  
Jan Shipley  
Lisa Hansen Terhune  
JoAnn Trach Tongson  
Nina Tou  
Michael Wilson

## Committee & Project Leaders

Welcome Basket — Stephanie Buttner,  
Julia McDonald, Nina Tou  
Block Party — Stephanie Buttner and  
Phaedra Stewart  
Communications — Janelle Cousino  
Webmaster — Brian Baughn  
Newsletter Layout & Graphic Design  
Nina Tou  
Greening Activities —  
JoAnn Trach Tongson  
Children Activities — Parent Committee  
Playground Maintenance —  
Dave Hardy, JoAnn Trach Tongson  
Youth Scholar Vision Prize  
Committee — Deborah Mason  
JoAnn Trach Tongson Phaedra Stewart &  
Nina Tou  
Mayfield for All Ages — Deborah Mason  
Social Activities - Phaedra Stewart,  
Marie Lymon & Jami Dodson  
Traffic Calming Committee —  
**Chairperson role open**

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 commit-  
tee? Email [mayfieldupdate@gmail.com](mailto:mayfieldupdate@gmail.com) to  
let us know. There are many ways to  
volunteer for Mayfield.

## Link to Mayfield Policy for Zoning Variance Requests and Mayfield Mem- orandum of Agreement

Residents that want a zoning variance  
from the city, be sure to read this  
Mayfield policy. You will find it on the  
website at  
[http://mayfieldassociation.org/news/  
zoningnews/](http://mayfieldassociation.org/news/zoningnews/)

## Link to City Zoning Regulations

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

*Zoning:* [https://planning.baltimorecity.  
gov/programs/transform-baltimore](https://planning.baltimorecity.gov/programs/transform-baltimore)  
and what needs a permit?  
[http://www.baltimorehousing.org/  
permits](http://www.baltimorehousing.org/permits)

## Northeastern District Police

410-396-2444

**Mayfield Homes are eligible for the  
Maryland Historic Tax credits.** Go to  
[https://mht.maryland.gov/taxcredits\\_  
homeowner.shtml](https://mht.maryland.gov/taxcredits_homeowner.shtml) or Mayfield website:  
<http://www.mayfieldassociation.org>

## For an emergency dial: 911

## Are you new to the neighborhood or know a new resident?

Our welcome committee would like to  
know. Please send an email to:  
[mayfieldupdate@gmail.com](mailto:mayfieldupdate@gmail.com)  
Mayfield News is created by volunteers,  
printed and then distributed by volun-  
teers 3 or 4 times a year.

## Mayfield has a Weekly E News too.

If you are not receiving MayfieldUpdate  
E-newsletter — a weekly news update  
distributed by email, you can subscribe.  
Send an email with your name and  
address to [mayfieldupdate@gmail.com](mailto:mayfieldupdate@gmail.com)  
and say "Subscribe to E-news."

## Do you have a question about May- field, or want something placed in the weekly Neighbor to Neighbor section of the E-news?

To share an opportunity, help solve a  
problem, request a referral or find a  
service—if you need help from Mayfield  
for All Ages, want to sign up for the  
E-news or just about anything else —  
send a note to [Mayfieldupdate@gmail.  
com](mailto:Mayfieldupdate@gmail.com) —It will get to the right person.

**Mayfield News is created , printed and  
then distributed by volunteers 3 or 4  
times a year.**