

WINTER 2003-2004

Neighborhood News

IN THIS ISSUE

Articles will update you on **2004 Zoning Issues, Rider House, Robert E. Lee Park, Light Rail Double Tracking, MTA Parking Lot and Ruxton Heights Development.**

GIVING BACK

Carroll Tree Service donated the removal of a huge dying silver maple tree at Rider House. Robert L. Nelson, Jr. and Steven R. Mays, Sr. said it was the least they could do for a community that has given their company so much over 50 years.



Their reputation is based on the philosophy of excellent client service, superior workmanship, and integrity.

Dennis Graul of **Graul's Markets** is a perennial donor of refreshments for community events—from pastries for annual meetings to cider and cookies for the bonfire. **Lawn Doctor of Towson** RRLRAIA member Clark Parriott continually donates the services of his company. **Quantum Yoga** owner and board member, Mona Hoff, surprised Dumpster Day and Plant Exchange volunteers with coffee and sweets. **Stain Lifters Carpet Care, Inc.** Ron Curland has donated the services of his company. ■

CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEB SITE

www.rrlraia.org

Thanks to Mike Regan for all his hard work putting this together. We welcome your suggestions. ■

RIDER HOUSE RESTORATION UPDATE

by Joseph M. Coale

While most were away enjoying vacations, work began in earnest this past summer to restore the 1880s Rider House on Bellona Avenue as the Association's headquarters. Why preserve this old Victorian cottage? To many it may not appear very practical or efficient to do so. However, one can argue, that in this case, it is both. But the obvious reasons are to preserve something of value from the past in that it gives us a physical sense of history, continuity, time and place. The special character of our local surroundings promotes loyalty, appreciation, and a sense of community identity. Just as we are products of our family environment, so do our communities influence us. Consider one of your family heirlooms; the family bible, oil painting of an ancestor or books from your grandfather's library. What we may value in a family sense, we need to do in a community way as well. Our local Ruxton, Riderwood and Lake Roland history is unique and enriching to our civic spirit because it is here we raise our families and live most of our lives. Historic preservation is an enriching life style element and appreciation for it should be passed along to those who follow. If all communities looked like Home Depots or McDonalds and were indistinguishable from one another, then we as individuals would probably be about as interesting.

Despite a wet spring that held back progress for weeks, our restoration painter, John Thompson, worked diligently through July and August implementing the program of original colors so carefully researched by our paint consultant, Leslie Webb. The circa 1930s asbestos shingles were removed and in so doing revealed the largely preserved original Victorian ornamental siding. This was an exciting find for all of us working on the project. The Board of the Foundation was also fortunate to secure the services of Marty Azola, widely recognized and respected rehab contractor, to coordinate the various components of the project to include painting, siding restoration, electrical and roof work.

In May, the Foundation sponsored a mailing campaign that resulted in over 130 responses with donations amounting to \$16,000 to be used as matches for various county, state and private foundation grants. As activity picked up in the fall at the site,

...continued on page 3, Rider House



ROBERT E. LEE PARK UPDATE

The Lake Roland Committee of the RRLRAIA, in August 2003, invited heads of the Baltimore City Department of Recreation & Parks, Roland Park Civic League, Mt. Washington Association, Robert E. Lee Park Conservancy and Baltimore County Police Community Policing Division for a presentation and discussion of issues concerning the park. The purpose was to identify requirements to restore the park to its original purpose – a safe and beautiful park which everyone can enjoy. Issues included: soil erosion, criminal activity, homeless residents, buildings in poor condition, impact of off-leash dogs on park users and the land



and unauthorized trail cutting. The meeting was for informational purposes only. Now, Baltimore County is assuming law enforcement in the park and a city/county Concept Plan for the park with long and short term goals is being developed.

The footbridge below the dam will close in February for at least one year. Contaminated land on the peninsula will be restored and replanted.

Several long range items in the Concept Plan have raised community concerns and need our input. Now the lines of communication are open between RRLRAIA and the City Department of Parks. ■

MAIL YOUR DUES IN NOW

Watch for the RRLRAIA membership solicitation mailing. Your support enables us to address important community issues. To help us save time and postage, please mail your check for \$55 to: RRLRAIA P. O. Box 204
Riderwood, MD 21139

LIGHT RAIL DOUBLE TRACKING

Have you noticed brush clearing along the light rail line in preparation for the double tracking project? RRLRAIA has been in



contact with the MTA and elected officials to provide more information and to communicate our dissatisfaction. The MTA has scheduled a meeting in early February to furnish the community with plans and ideas. ■

TRUE COLORS REVEALED

Part-time teacher, part-time preservationist Leslie Webb volunteered countless hours this past year to the Rider House painting project. Initially it began as a simple color selection task, but unexpectedly boomeranged into a full-blown historic preservation project.

When Leslie agreed to lend her expertise to the RRLRA Foundation, the goal was to find exterior paint colors that were historically appropriate for the late 1800s when Edward Rider built the house for his daughter Mary Rider Worley.

Determining *paint histories* can involve expensive, highly technical chemical analysis of paint layers, however Leslie was able to uncover a reasonably accurate accounting by carefully rubbing away decades of previously applied paint and primer layers to expose the original colors. This process worked well for the woodwork: sills, sashes and shutters. But what color lay hidden beneath the yellow asbestos shingles which enveloped the main body of the house?

With Leslie's encouragement, a yellow shingle was removed in the hopes of revealing some portion of the original wood siding and color. Initially, black tar paper greeted the curious investigators. What lay beyond was anyone's guess. Certainly no one expected to uncover a rare *novelty log cabin* wood siding the likes of which few had ever seen or even heard of. Further investigations revealed perfect, intact crenelated shingling on the second story peaks. It was clear that a precious Victorian house stood awaiting discovery.

The remarkable find created quite a stir as debate ensued over removing the yellow shingles to reveal the surprising discovery. Original paint colors were at last within our grasp, however, a Pandora's box had indeed been opened.

Thanks to Leslie's dedication and tireless efforts, the 'Yellow House' has revealed more than its true colors. After many decades, the Rider House has been released from its silent yellow cocoon revealing secrets of a past life. As we embark on this historic journey, we are indebted to you for having so freely shared your expertise, vision and enthusiasm for the Rider House unveiling. ■

FALLS ROAD MTA PARKING LOT

MTA plans to increase parking spaces at the Falls Road Light Rail lot from 100 to 200. RRLRAIA and representatives from other communities have been meeting and negotiating with the MTA. Our main priorities are that everyone is involved and that the environmental integrity of this area not be compromised. ■

RRLRAIA BOARD OF GOVERNORS 2003-2004

Fran Anderson ■ Jeffrey Budnitz ■ Jamie Cahn
■ Michael Chasney ■ Sibley Classen ■
Ty Cook ■ Tom George ■ Joe Gerlak
Christine Hanley ■ Eric Hanson ■ Biff Hearn
■ Louise Hildreth ■ Aviva Hord ■
Neil Meyerhoff ■ Andrew Murray ■
Michael Ragan ■ Janet Reynolds
■ Tate Showers ■ Michael Sicher ■
Snowden Stanley ■ Kimberly Warren ■

by Sophie Gerard



Preservationist Leslie Webb unearthed the colors.

...continued from page 1 *Rider House*

many residents expressed their interest and curiosity about the house, its history and its future. The house was built for Mary Rider, the daughter of Edward Rider. She served for many years as the Riderwood post mistress from this house. Scheduled for demolition once the Arden Court project was complete, it presented the opportunity for both a permanent home for the RRLR Association while answering a critical need for a visible presence in the community to provide a meeting place, office and archives for expanding our activities. Both the Association and the Foundation have worked closely together to develop the project.

If a building rich in history or architecture can be adaptively restored to fit a contemporary need then so much the better. Such is the case for the Rider House. The Zoning Commissioner used the expression "win, win" for everyone when granting the zoning approval. The quaintness, charm and antiquity of the house will continue to serve the community as it has in the past.

Look for activity to increase this spring with a new standing seam metal roof, full siding restoration, and an exciting land-

scaping plan.

Special thanks again to those who responded to last year's community appeal that has given us such leverage and standing in applying for matching grants. Also to those individuals and companies who have contributed through donations of products or services at cost to this effort such as paint consultant Leslie Webb, Kim Coale Interior, Dial America Marketing, Lawn Doctor of Towson, Chasney & Company, Manor Care, Preservation Maryland, Baltimore County Office of Community Conservation, the Maryland Historical Trust and the France-Merrick Foundation. ■

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Volunteers from the Association were on hand to help area residents unload their cars at the **Fall Dumpster Day** in October. Again, it was a success—we filled six large dumpsters in four hours. A **Plant Exchange** was added to Dumpster Day. Residents traded with each other as well as purchased plants from New Edge Design.

The **Holiday Bonfire** was fun. This much-anticipated event was cancelled the last few years due to weather. Since this is Michael Chasney's last year as Events Committee chair, he was determined that it was going

to take place regardless of the weather. His crew cut down tall grass and overgrowth on the old rugby field off L'Hirondelle Club Road. The evening was cold with a threat of snow—a perfect night for a bonfire. Hundreds of people mingled with friends and neighbors. Cider and cookies donated by Graul's Markets and hot dogs and soft drinks from RRLRAIA added to the holiday atmosphere. Efforts will be made to have the party yearly. Ideas for events and volunteers to help with them are always welcome. ■

(Note: In early October postcards announcing Dumpster Day were mailed to all members. Due to reasons unknown, many people did not receive the postcard until after the event. If you have an email address please provide it to RRLRAIA.)

RUXTON HEIGHTS DEVELOPMENT

A developer purchased the 1.1 acre property at 1401 Berwick Road and planned to replace the 90-year-old American Bungalow with four new houses. As a result of the tireless efforts of many people, there is now a written and signed agreement between the community and the developer.

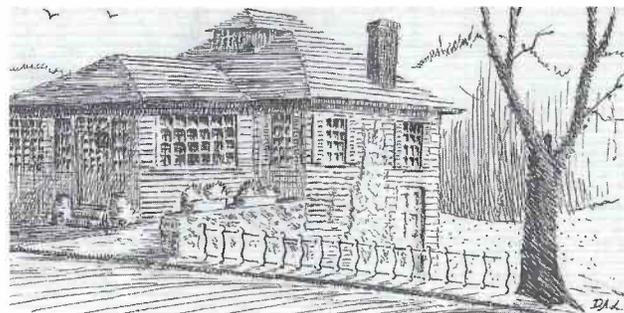
The developer agreed to reduce the density from four houses to three (one is built and occupied). The original house will be historically deconstructed and materials salvaged for use in the reconstruction of an historically accurate replication.

Modifications to the original house will be permitted in a slightly relocated position, but important characteristics will be preserved. The builder can eliminate past poor renovations and add to the historic house in keeping to his goals and the historic character of the house. Schematic plan designs and specifications were developed by architect Frank Lucas, a Ruxton Heights resident. The Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Improvement Association has agreed to act as a party to this agreement, but will rely on a committee of the immediate Ruxton Heights neighbors to monitor the terms of the agreement. ■

DO YOU REMEMBER THE BLUEBIRD SCHOOL?

by April I. Smith (parent)

Driving along Berwick Road, you have probably seen the charming iron sign hanging on the vintage bungalow at 1402. In the late seventies, it changed its name to Ruxton



Country School and eventually outgrew its coy location. Ten years ago, it moved to Garrison Forest Road.

Started in 1913 by Miss Therese Waelchi of Switzerland on the porch of Sam Wiley's home at 1505 Berwick. Originally called the Frau-

lein School, its nurturing mission statement has remained the same for 90 years. A gala, planned for May 1, 2004, will include a comprehensive display of its history. Can you help? If you only attended briefly or have another connection, we want to hear from you. Memories, mementos, and descriptions are avidly sought. This fascinating little school is one of many things that makes Ruxton unique. We want to make sure that its story is not lost. Please call Glenn Singer at the Ruxton Country School Development Office 410-356-9603 or email gsinger@ruxtoncountryschool.org

2004 COMPREHENSIVE ZONING MAP PROCESS (CZMP)

THE PROCESS

SUMMARY The CZMP takes place every four years on an exact schedule set forth in the Baltimore County Code. The process covers a period of 12 months. It began with issue filings on September 2, 2003. An issue can contain one parcel of land or several contiguous parcels of land. An issue can also encompass hundreds of acres—often the case when a community association seeks to down zone a large area or when the Office of Planning raises an issue.

The Office of Planning and other county agencies review each issue and prepare recommendations that form the Log of Issues. This Log of Issues is then submitted to the Planning Board for public hearings at which testimony is taken. The Planning Board then holds a vote on the staff recommendations. The Planning Board's resulting recommendations form the next version of the Log of Issues which is then presented to the County Council. The County Council holds public hearings and then votes on each issue. This vote will create the zoning map for the County for the next four years.

The County Council vote (which must occur by September 16, 2004), concludes the 12 month process. Thereafter, the official amended Zoning Maps are prepared and the final edition of the Log of Issues, showing how the council voted on all of the issues, is published.

NOTIFICATION The Office of Planning will provide notification to each property owner whose land is within an issue or whose land is contiguous to an issue. The notification provided is in the form of a letter to the impacted owners and a post card to the contiguous owners. Additional notification will be provided through property sign posting, newspapers, the County web page and the public libraries. ■

(Source: Booklet prepared by Whiteford, Taylor & Preston L.L.P. for CZMP Seminar held on July 14, 2003)

RRLRAIA LETTER MAILED TO ALL RESIDENTS (OCTOBER 2003)

In 2001 the Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Improvement Association (RRLRAIA) developed a Community Plan which was voted on by the County Council and was adopted as part of the Baltimore County Master Plan 2010. As an integral part of developing input for the community plan, the RRLRAIA undertook a mail survey among all households identified in the Association's defined area. The results of the survey were very clear: there was a strong consensus that the rural character of the community be preserved.

However, due to the lack of developable land, the popularity of this area, and poor zoning decisions of years ago, the community is increasingly vulnerable. "Infill" development, the process of filling in any lot that is capable of being developed, is running rampant and threatening the very special nature of our community. In fact, according to the Baltimore County Office of Planning, there has been a significant increase in development plans and/or permits over the last several years. I know that some of you are aware of, and have expressed outrage at, some of the recent developments.

The Board of the Association believes our community is at a significant crossroads. Either we act together to curb infill development or we let the issue pass and see the character of this area change. If we do not act decisively, infill development will not go away and will only accelerate with time. Attempting to firefight each of these skirmishes as they come is impractical and usually in vain. We need to take a step back and look for a long-term strategic solution. It is a solvable problem and we must be proactive in dealing with it.

As one important step in this process, the board recently voted to file the following zoning issues during the current Comprehensive Zoning Map process:

1. Request that all properties currently zoned above DR2 be down zoned to DR2
2. Request that all properties currently zoned DR2 be down zoned to DR1
3. Request that Robert E. Lee Park property be considered for an RC7 zone that would permit one house per 25 acres (it is currently DR1 – one house per acre).

Once this is filed, there will be opportunity for input from individuals, neighborhoods, and community associations to us (RRLRAIA), the Planning Board, and the County Council.

Down zoning is not a panacea. Although it will limit the density of future subdivisions, it will not prevent the development of lots that have already been subdivided. That issue will be addressed separately and is not applicable to the Comprehensive Zoning Process.

However, we do feel that down zoning is a measure that will help to preserve the long-term value of our properties by maintaining the unique and open space quality that is so greatly prized and sought after by those wishing to live here. We believe most of our residents are here for the long term, appreciate the quality of the Ruxton, Riderwood, Lake Roland area, and will welcome the down zoning option.

The RRLRA Foundation (as opposed to the Association) will shortly offer another alternative by being able to accept outright land donations or development rights in return for significant tax deductions to property owners. This option will also help to preserve the open space that we treasure.

Please let us hear from you: e-mail the Association, write your comments/concerns or speak to your area board member. We need and want your input. The process itself will take a year to complete but it begins now. The Ruxton, Riderwood, and Lake Roland area community, once harnessed, can be an effective player in its own future. ■

2004 COMPREHENSIVE ZONING MAP PROCESS (CZMP)

TIMELINE

LOG OF ISSUES-PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS *December 1, 2003 – February 27, 2004.*

Each of the Issues raised during the filing periods is analyzed by County staff. Summary data about each Issue, along with the preliminary staff recommendations, are published in the "Log of Issues." The Log and the accompanying maps comprise a report of the County Planning Board for the purpose of public hearings in March 2004. Also during this period, notice is mailed to the owners of those properties which are listed in the Log but which were not filed by the owner or the owner's agent.

PLANNING BOARD SPECIAL HEARINGS *March 1 through March 31, 2004.* The Baltimore County Planning Board schedules a public hearing in each Councilmanic District during the month of March. Testimony is limited to those Issues within the district for which the hearing is held.

PLANNING BOARD REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS *April 1 through May 15, 2004.* At a series of work sessions, open to the public, the Planning Board reviews and discusses the various Issues. A recommendation on each Issue must be formally adopted by the Planning Board before May 16.

TRANSMITTAL PERIOD *May 16 through June 1, 2004.* The Planning Board's recommendations on each Issue must be transmitted to the County Council within 20 days after the Board's vote; a revised edition of the Log of Issues is published to serve as the basis for the Council's public hearings in June 2004.

COUNTY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARINGS *June 2004.* The Council schedules a public hearing in each Councilmanic District during the month of June. Testimony is limited to those Issues within the district for which the hearing is held.

COUNTY COUNCIL REVIEW *July through September 15, 2004.* The County Council has sole authority to determine the final zoning on each property. The Council may accept, reject, or modify the recommendations of the Planning Board. These options include retaining the existing zoning or applying to a property any zone or combination of zones.

COUNTY COUNCIL DECISIONS *September, 2004.* The County Council vote on each Issue must occur before September 16, 2004. As adopted by legislative action of the County Council, the revised Comprehensive Zoning Map takes effect 45 days after being signed into law by the County Executive.

FINAL MAPS AND LOGS *November, 2004.* After the Council's vote, the Office of Planning prepares the final official copies of the amended zoning maps and publishes the final edition of the Log of Issues containing all of the decisions of the County Council. ■

ISSUES WITHIN RRLRAIA

No. 2-003 1427 Clarkview Road (Falls Road area-backs up to I-83)

Size: 29 acres

Requested Change: From MLR to ML

Filed By: Owner

No. 2-010 6080, 6081, 6083 Falls Road, north of Lake Avenue

Size: 4.086 acres

Requested Change: From BM, DR2, DR 5.5, BL-AS, BL to DR 5.5 and BL

Filed By: Office of Planning

No. 2-015 East and west sides of Falls Road, between Old Pimlico and Copper Hill Roads

Size: 21.681 acres

Requested Change: Remove AS (auto services) zoning from this area

Filed By: Office of Planning

No. 2-017 6102 Falls Road – Eastern Sales and Engineering Co.

Size: 1.689 acres

Requested Change: From DR2 to BM

Filed By: Owner

No. 2-032 West side of Charles Street to I-83 to the City Line (2nd district)

Size: 385.993 acres

Requested Change: From DR2, DR3.5, DR5.5, DR16 to DR1 or DR2

Filed By: RRLRAIA

No. 2-033 West side of Charles Street, north of Woodbrook Lane to I-83 (2nd district)

Size: 1,366.376 acres

Requested Change: From DR2, DR3.5, DR5.5, DR16 to DR1 or DR2

Filed By: RRLRAIA

CONTACT INFORMATION

Baltimore County Office of Planning

WEB SITE www.co.ba.md.us/Agencies/planning/zoning/index.html

401 Bosley Avenue
Towson, MD 21204
PHONE 410-887-3480

Diana Itter, Community Planner
2nd District (west of Charles St.)
ditter@co.ba.md.us

Karin Brown, Community Planner
5th District (east of Charles St.)
kbrown@co.ba.md.us

Baltimore County Council

400 Washington Ave.
Towson, MD 21204

Councilman Kevin Kamenetz,
2nd District (west of Charles St.)
bccdistrict2@comcast.net

Councilman Vincent Gardina,
5th District (east of Charles St.)
bccdistrict5@comcast.net

No. 2-043 Robert E. Lee Park

Size: 391.841 acres

Requested Change: From residential zoning to resource preservation zoning

Filed By: RRLRAIA

No. 2-049 North/South sides of Lake Falls Road

Size: 1.126 acres

Requested Change: From DR5.5 to DR1 or RC7

Filed By: Lake Falls Association

No. 5-044 East of Charles Street to Charles Street Avenue north of Towson town Boulevard to the Beltway (5th district)

Size: 354.788 acres

Requested Change: From DR2, DR3.5, DR5.5 to DR1 or DR2

Filed By: RRLRAIA

No. 5-055 6305 Charles St. (Solely Property)

Size: 4.318 acres

Requested Change: From DR3.5 to DR10.5

Filed By: Contract purchaser

EXPLANATION OF ABBREVIATIONS

— **DR** (*Density Residential*)

Permits low, medium and high density urban residential development. Numeral in each classification indicates maximum number of units per acre

— **DR1**=1 unit per acre

— **MR** (*Manufacturing Restricted*)

The most restrictive industrial classification

— **MLR** (*Manufacturing Light Restricted*)

Permits industrial plants and offices with convenient access to expressways to serve as industrial employment centers

— **ML** (*Manufacturing Light*)

Permits light industrial uses such as assembly plants, processing, etc.

— **BL** (*Business Local*)

Small to medium scale commercial

— **BM** (*Business Major*)

Large scale commercial

— **RC7** *Resource Preservation*

— **AS** *Automotive Services*

TURN YOUR EXTRA TICKETS INTO A TAX DEDUCTION

Tickets to the symphony, operas, concerts, plays, ballets, and sporting events are often unused due to last minute circumstances. Put the tickets to good use—even at the last minute—and receive a tax deduction! Donate the tickets to the Ruxton, Riderwood, Lake Roland Foundation, a 501(c)3 organization. We will email members notifying them of the availability of discounted tickets.

Everyone wins – the donor receives a tax deduction, the recipient receives discounted tickets, and the Foundation receives funds for community projects. If you have questions or want to make a donation, please send an email message to ruxrider@bcpl.net or call our office at 410-494-7757. ■

VOLUNTEERS ARE ALWAYS NEEDED

Please give us a call – we can definitely take advantage of whatever amount of time you can spare! ■

BOWEN HOUSE: THE STEWARDSHIP OF KEN AND BEATTIE MARTY

The last newsletter failed to mention the significant contribution of Beattie and Ken Marty in preserving the Bowen House, circa 1750, on Bellona Avenue. Indeed, much of the early research and preservation done on the property began with their stewardship. Moving from Roland Park in 1962, the Marty's and their four young children came to what was then the country, but not until they had completed a major renovation even before the current popularity of historic preservation took hold. Beattie and Ken were ahead of their time in recognizing the importance of houses of this antiquity. Beattie had always been fascinated with old houses and had admired the Bowen House since she was sixteen. It was the perfect setting for her collection of early American antiques. The renovation work was carefully done to disturb as little of the character and historic fabric as possible, and the family made several vacation trips to Williams-

burg to study colonial details and interior painting schemes for the house. It was in those days a country estate with plenty of open space and a stream for the family's children, horses and dogs and provided about the best growing-up environment anyone could ask for. Carefully nurturing the house, grounds and stately Revolutionary War period oaks for 36 years, the property was sold, after Ken's passing in 1998, to the Halls who are now carrying on the same trusteeship. Placing the entire property in the Land Preservation Trust assures its continuation as one of the most historic structures in Baltimore County. ■

FULFILLING COMMUNITY SERVICE

Does your middle or high school child need community service hours? Let the Association know. We will call when we need help with various community projects. If you need volunteers, we will share our list with you. ■

**RUXTON-RIDERWOOD
LAKE ROLAND AREA
IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION, INC.**

P.O. Box 204 ■ Riderwood, MD 21139

PHONE 410-494-7757

Presorted
Standard
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Riderwood, MD
Permit No. 43