

**Neighbors of Northwest Branch  
Minutes of Board Meeting  
March 2, 2021**

1. Welcome.

In attendance on Zoom: Anne Ambler, Kem Morawski, Kristen Backert, Michael Evans, James Graham, Ed Murtagh.

2. Treasurer's report(from Larry Hush).

We took in \$295.00.

Disbursements were \$395.97.

Our balance is \$4,686.31.

Our income tax papers were filed by our treasurer. The treasurer's report was approved by the board.

2021 Dues are due.

3. E-Tapestry (Blackbaud) update.

Because we didn't realize E-Tapestry required 45 days advance notice of cancellation (changed from 30 days, but we didn't meet that either), they wanted the fee for the whole year. Anne appealed and the resulting negotiations mean we only have to pay for one month this year. However, the treasurer got an invoice from them that said nothing was due so Anne will inquire further.

4. MailerLite.

We are switching to MailerLite which doesn't cost anything. We lost the ability to track people's donations over the years, but Anne extracted the names and addresses of our members and has put them into MailerLite. For a monthly fee they do have options such as newsletter templates which we might want to try if we do a newsletter. Liability is Zero.

5. Advocacy (relevant state issues: balloons, plastic bags, plastics by request only, beverage container deposit).

Balloon: SB 716/HB 391

Last year this bill got through the House and the Senate but because they had to close early last year due to Covid-19 they had to start all over. We are now waiting to see what happens. It should pass.

Plastic Bag ban: SB 223/HB 314

Last year the bill included a 10 cent fee on paper bags but it, along with the study committee, was stripped out. Bill got stuck due to Covid-19 and there is so far no movement in the Senate. Plastic bag bans are being put in place all over the U.S. so it is possible this will pass.

Plastic by Request: HB 69 (no Senate sponsor)

This bill would have restaurants serve plastic straws and utensils only if requested. The restaurant industry withdrew their opposition but the plastic industry still opposes. There is no Senate sponsor and the bill is stuck right now, but it may be able to pass.

Beverage container deposit: HB 99 (no Senate sponsor)

This will probably not happen but Anne thinks Montgomery County did drop its opposition.

6. Website Review.

Kristen pointed out there was a lot of information on the home page and asked if we could simplify. Anne will put the events on the homepage under the Events heading and remove some other website items. We decided to consolidate the dues levels from 6 levels to 3 and change the heading so that membership information was more obvious. Michael pointed out a mistaken picture on the Sightings tab.

7. April 6 meeting – Paula Wang, Spring in the Woods.

There was a discussion about whether April 6 was too late to be speaking about spring ephemerals. Anne said that Paula suggested we change the meeting to March 30. She is to talk to Paula about whether or not the earlier date is necessary. [The date was moved to 3/30.]

8. Trails: problems for walkers with multi-use--Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan.

There was discussion about walkers vs. cyclists. Cyclists seem well organized and vocal and there is a lot in the Wheaton Master Plan for them. We agreed that pedestrian's needs should have more a voice. There is a problem with unleashed dogs and older walkers who are not as steady on their feet trying to get out of the way of cyclists and dogs. Should we try to organize walkers to advocate both in connection with the Wheaton Park Master Plan and generally in the parks? Ed pointed out how difficult and time-consuming this

would be. James made several suggestions: 1) Ask Montgomery Parks for a variance of the current plan. 2) Have a pedestrian only time. 3) Piggyback on another group involved in walking/hiking. We need to think about this.

9. PLANNING CLEANUPS & other activities?

A Woodmoor resident will be leading a clean-up of the Burnt Mills site on the Woodmoor side during that neighborhood's beautification date on 4/10. April 24 is Earth Day. Michael and Kristen will lead a clean-up in the park along Bonifant Rd, (meeting site: Alderton Rd.), 10-noon, and get their supplies from Montgomery County. Anne to contact Montgomery Parks regarding pick up of trash and recycles there. James and Kem will lead a clean-up in Hyattsville that day in association with the Anacostia Watershed Society.

10. Board election procedure? Additional members?

The board agreed to the board election by mail ballot as we did last year. Ballots should be in by the May meeting. The officers will be elected at the May meeting.