

Tavistock Civic Association Annual Meeting
Minutes of March 14, 2016
Talleyville Fire Hall 7:30 pm

President's Welcome

Michele Borzio began the meeting began at 7:31 pm.

Community crime and safety report

Corporal Kristen Hester, New Castle County Police provided the community with an update on crime in the community.

Cpl. Hester said that crime in the community has been low over the past year, with the exception of repeated eggings that have occurred on Taunton Road. She noted that there is little residents can do to address such incidents other than being vigilant, and recommended reporting irregular situations such as groups of juveniles or unfamiliar cars to the non-emergency police number (302.574.2800). Certain incidents can also be reported through the New Castle County PD mobile app.

Cpl. Hester also said that video surveillance systems can also be a useful resource, and asked that if residents have video surveillance systems, they inform the police. The police are creating a database of video surveillance, so that they can reach out to those residents to ask them to look at footage for suspicious activity. Corporal Hester suggested forming a community watch as a way to show that the community is working together to address crime, noting that police will provide training.

Cpl. Hester then addressed some county-wide crime trends, and made suggestions for prevention:

- **Distraction burglaries:** Someone comes to the door and attempts to distract the resident so that an accomplice can enter and burgle the home. Cpl. Hester said to acknowledge that you are home, and let the person know you are not interested, and call the police if it seems suspicious.
- **Vacant properties:** These can be an attraction for copper burglaries. Cpl. Hester encouraged residents to report vacant properties in the neighborhood.
- **Vehicle/home break-ins:** With the heroin epidemic, heroin addicts are breaking in to homes and vehicles in hopes of stealing articles that they can sell to buy drugs. Cpl. Hester encouraged residents to keep vehicle doors and homes locked, in particular to keep first floor windows closed and locked.
- **Speeding:** Cpl. Hester noted that speeding is an important issue for the community, and that the NCCo traffic service unit is aware of the community's concern. The unit was in the community last week with a radar gun, and will be back next week. Cpl. Hester added that residents should be aware that much of the time, violators tend to be people who live in community.

Treasurer's report

VP Margaret England reported that the projected balance for 3/31/2016 is \$6,647.93. Revenues for the FYS 4/1/2015 were \$11,352.80, and expenses were \$15,026.17. Margaret noted that the shortfall was covered with existing funds, but that the board will be discussing a dues increase in order to address increasing expenses.

Margaret thanked Annie Baker for agreeing to serve as the new Treasurer.

Dues increase for FYS 4/1/2017

Area rep Dave Gazzillo provided attendees with information regarding the need for a dues increase next year.

Dave noted that dues have not been raised in 10 years, and that the board expects community expenses to increase. He noted in particular the rising costs of tree maintenance, at a time when grant money for tree work is becoming less available. He also noted that dues in Tavistock are much lower than in nearby communities.

Dave said that the board will evaluate projected expenses and make a recommendation for next year, noting that he does not expect it to be a drastic change. He added that the variance for dues for residents on Mt. Lebanon and Garden of Eden Road will continue.

An attendee asked whether there are many residents who have not paid dues, and Dave responded that the number is very low, he believes as low as three.

Deed restrictions update

Dave Gazzillo reported that a resident is currently doing a home expansion to accommodate a disabled family member. The appropriate county permits have been secured and the Tavistock board has approved the project.

Columbia Place update

Frank Maderich reported that construction of the new Pilot School is well under way on Woodlawn Road. According to Frank, Pilot says it will be ready to occupy the school in September. If not, surely by winter.

Once the Pilot School moves into the new location, Reybold will move ahead with plans to develop a senior community on the current Pilot School site. Frank said that there is no final design yet. He expects that within the next 12 months, demolition and new construction will start at the Garden of Eden Road site.

501 Mt. Lebanon Rd update

Frank Maderich also addressed the issue of the vacant home at 501 Mt. Lebanon Road. Frank reported that the owner hasn't resided there for years and the property has been left to run down. The county has assumed some maintenance, and is running up an expense. Taxes haven't been paid, and there is a tax lien on property. There has been some interest to take down the old building.

The historic home is zoned NC 15. It is a 1.1 acre lot. CCOBH is involved. Woodlawn Trustees held a deed restriction on the property, but because they were not successful in communicating with the owner, they assigned the deed over to CCOBH.

Frank noted that at this point it is difficult to say what will happen with the property. Some people have expressed interest, but the owner is difficult to reach. CCOBH and Tavistock will continue to monitor the situation.

Snow removal, fire hydrants

Michele Borzio reported that she and area reps received numerous complaints about unshoveled and icy sidewalks after the winter snowstorm, and asked residents to collaborate to make sure that sidewalks be cleared so that children could walk safely to bus stops and residents could walk through the neighborhoods, and the fire department would be able to find hydrants in case of fire. She suggested that residents not home or able to shovel their own walks reach out to neighbors and look for other solutions, such as hiring kids listed in the directory to shovel.

Dave Gazzillo also encouraged residents to keep cars off of the street so the snowplower could plow the streets effectively.

A neighbor asked what instructions are given to the plower, noting that his street was plowed far from the curb, making it impossible for him to reach his driveway.

Block party

Michele reported that the Tavistock/Edenridge Block Party will be held on Saturday, September 17, and noted that a new committee will coordinate the event this year: Denise Root, Heather LaScala, Sandy Chesire, Victoria Conn, Kate Collins (Edenridge 3) and Kerri Fauerbach.

Michele encouraged residents to contact her or a committee member if they are interested in helping out or contributing goods and/or services to the event.

Community traffic safety/speeding

State Senator Greg Lavelle and State Representative Deborah Hudson attended the meeting, and addressed the issue of community safety/speeding in the community.

Sen. Lavelle said that a traffic study will be conducted from March 31 to April 7 on Severn Road and compared to previous studies in order to determine the traffic impact of Wawa and CVS. Road tube counters will be used to gather data on the number and speed of cars traveling on Severn Rd. If the data indicates that a certain percentile of volume and speed set by DELDOT are met, then the state agency will consider traffic calming measures such as speed humps. (Rep. Hudson explained that “humps” differ from “bumps”—they are longer and flatter, so that all four tires fit on at once, so that the cars don’t scrape and make noise as they travel over them.) Sen. Lavelle said the humps would be paid for out of his and Rep. Hudson’s discretionary budget. He said that stop signs would likely not be considered, as DELDOT does not like to use these as a traffic calming measure.

Rep. Hudson also noted that people curious about the road tube counters could damage them if they pick them up or shake them, etc., and advised the community to make all residents aware

of the tubes to avoid damage. She added that during lunch with the governor, she brought up the topic and that the governor was glad to know that the issue is being addressed.

An attendee asked whether the community would be asked to weigh in on traffic calming measures, and Sen. Lavelle explained that it would likely only be those directly affected by the measures, rather than the entire community.

Another attendee expressed a concern that speed humps on Severn would divert the traffic onto Taunton Road. Sen. Lavelle said that DELDOT limited the traffic study to Severn and Garden of Eden, despite the community's request to include Taunton and Burnley.

Rep. Hudson also asked residents to report missing or damaged street signs. One resident mentioned the sign on the corner of Burnley Rd. and Mt. Lebanon Rd.

Additional items from State Representatives

Rep. Hudson announced that DSWA will be holding a recycling event on Saturday April 2 from 8 am to 2 pm at the Dupont Barley Mill site. The drive-thru event will include shredding, electronics, and household hazardous waste. Rep. Hudson noted that access to the event will be via the entrance at the intersection of Barley mill and Route 141. For more information, see attached flyer or visit the DSWA website at www.dswa.com.

With regard to activity in Dover, Rep. Hudson reported that Gov. Markell said he would let the legislature make a decision regarding a new gas tax, indicating that he would gladly sign one. She noted that there are many bills proposing changes to town charters, as well as a bill to make the golden retriever Delaware's state dog, and one to increase the fine for texting while driving.

Sen. Lavelle talked about legislation that was passed to keep Dupont in Delaware by providing incentives and improving the tax code. He said that similar legislation was passed in January to help keep Chemours and similarly-sized companies in the state. He said that there is ongoing budget pressure, noting that an initial reported \$150 million deficit has become a projected \$160 million surplus, although there are still some tenuous assumptions around that figure; legislators are discussing financing new and existing projects.

Rep. Hudson noted that during the last election cycle, she ran against Tavistock resident Jeff Porter, and had warm words for how he conducted his campaign.

Sen. Lavelle and Rep. Hudson said that they each publish an e-newsletter to which residents can subscribe. (Visit www.greglavelle.com and <http://www.repdeborahudson.com> to sign up.)

Brandywine School District Referendum

Dr. Mark Holodick, superintendent for the Brandywine School District, addressed the community to ask for its support for the upcoming referendum. Dr. Holodick noted that the last operating referendum was four years ago, and explained that the new referendum would consist of the following:

add 28 cents to the district's current rate of \$2.1835 per \$100 of assessed value.

- An operational component, which would allow the district to continue to provide schools with needed resources, programs, instructional materials and training;
- A capital component, which would be used to support renovations and upgrades at several district schools, and to demolish the vacant Burnett building on the grounds of PS Dupont Middle School;
- A temporary (3-year) increase to finance the installation of artificial turf fields at district high schools.

The proposal would add 28 cents to the district's current rate of \$2.1835 per \$100 of assessed value. An additional five cents per \$100 would be added for three years to pay for the turf fields.

Dr. Holodick noted that the 28 cent increase would be used to finance only the operational component; the capital tax is not increasing due to old debt that is being retired.

The referendum will be held on Wednesday March 23 from 10 AM to 8 PM. A list of polling places and additional information on the referendum can be found on the Brandywine School District website, www.BrandywineSchools.org, or by emailing referendum@bsd.k12.de.us or calling 302.793.5000.

Attendee Questions and Comments

A neighbor asked about the dead deer in the field on Mt. Lebanon Road. Michele said that the deer had been hit by a car, and police subsequently put the animal down and left it in the field. Michele explained that the police said at the time that if they received complaints they would remove the deer. She noted that there is not much left of the animal at this point.

Motion to pass the budget

Shawn Scarpaci made a motion to pass the FYS 4/1/2016 proposed budget, seconded by Dave Gazzillo. Attendees accepted the motion to pass the budget.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:44 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,
Meg Campbell
TCA Secretary

