

The Message



Issue 299

June 2012

Council Contemplates Tax Increase

The City Council is considering raising the current Real Property Tax Rate to mirror that of the Constant Yield Rate for the Fiscal Year Budget 2013. Many residents are asking, "Why is the Council considering an increase now?" Funding cuts from both the State and the County to the City has been eliminated since 2009. The City has a \$260,000 structural deficit due to a loss of funding from the State for Police services and Highway User Fees. The City also has to comply with State mandated increases in retirement contributions for staff. The tax increase will allow the City to maintain current service levels, maintain the reserve fund and establish a fund for future Capital Improvements throughout the City.

The City Manager submitted a proposed budget to the Mayor and Council on March 5, 2012 for the Fiscal Year 2013, commencing on July 1, 2012 and ending on June 30, 2013. The budget proposed the elimination of two positions, one code enforcement officer, and one administrative assistant position within the Department of Public Safety, in order to offset the deficiency in anticipated revenues from the State and County. A public hearing was held on May 1,

2012 which was followed by a first reading of the budget ordinance setting the tax rate and anticipated revenues and expenditures for Fiscal Year 2013. The Mayor and Council have held several work sessions on the proposed budget.

A second public hearing is scheduled for 7:00 pm, June 5, 2012 in the Council Chambers in the Municipal Center, One Municipal Place, Mount Rainier, Maryland 20712. The council is considering the following options for the Fiscal Year 2013 Budget:

- * Raise the current Real Property Tax Rate from \$0.79 per \$100 of Assessed Valuation to the current Constant Yield Rate of \$0.81 per \$100 of Assessed Valuation;
- * Maintain the code enforcement officer position and the administrative assistant position within the Department of Public Safety;
- * The Police Officer position that is currently vacant will remain unfilled for the Fiscal Year 2013.

The question is how will these increases impact residents? Property assessments occur every three years, and current property assessments are set through 2013. For example, a property assessed at \$250,000 in 2011 will pay an additional \$50.00 annually in property taxes though 2013 should the proposal to raise the Real Property Tax Rate \$0.02 to match the Constant Yield Rate of \$0.81 pass.

Call for Teen Artists

DEADLINE FRIDAY, JUNE 8th & SATURDAY JUNE 9th

The Brentwood Arts Exchange announces a call for entries for its first youth show, *Express Yourself! A Teen Juried Exhibition*, on display in the gallery from June 25–August 10, 2012.

Open to young artists ages 13–18 with a passion for creating visual art, *Express yourself!* invites teens living or attending school in Metropolitan area to submit one original artwork in any media, including drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, digital media and/or video.

Those chosen to exhibit, three will have a chance to win one of three cash awards of \$500, \$300 and \$100. Works submitted for entry will be selected and judged by Artist and Corcoran College of Art and Design Associate Faculty member, Joey P. Mánlapaz.

Exhibition-ready artwork must be delivered in person to the Brentwood Arts Exchange, 3901 Rhode Island Avenue, in the Gateway Arts Center on Friday, June 8 and Saturday, June 9, 2012 for exhibition consideration. For more information contact the Brentwood Arts Exchange at 301-277-2863.

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MRTV Programs appear on Comcast 71, Verizon 21, and "On Demand" daily.

MRTV now provides a 24/7 programming schedule. Watch for the daily Program Guide for a list shows and times. **LIVE Programs – City Council Meetings and Work Sessions – 7 pm the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month.**

For MRTV comments, suggestions and show ideas contact staff at mrtvchannel71@yahoo.com or call 301-985-6585.

PEPCO Work in the City

As many of you are aware, Pepco is involved in an on-going Reliability Enhancement Work project in the city replacing many of the older utility poles in what PEPCO classifies as the southern section of the city from Bunker Hill Road to Arundel Road.

Each year Pepco selects feeders across Maryland that are determined to be the least performing feeders. Those feeders designated as such are called priority feeders and are replaced first. Pepco determined that the city's utility poles (feeders) in the aforementioned areas were performing at lower than 4% capacity which contributes to many of the power outages during inclement weather conditions and torrential rainfall and storms.

Pepco routinely performs detailed investigations to determine the cause of outages and necessary corrective actions to reduce the number of outages. A feeder is one electric distribution line that supplies electric power to up to 1,100 customers within a specific geographic area. A total of 100 utility poles are scheduled for replacement during this project which is estimated to take up to eight (8) months to complete.

All inquiries and concerns related the Reliability Enhancement Work being done should be referred to Brooke Jeu, Construction Representative for PEPCO at 240-372-7143. Mr. Jeu will respond to you directly. Additional information concerning the PEPCO Reliability Enhancement Plan go to the following website: <http://www.pepco.com/energy/reliability>.

Questions, comments and submissions to the Mount Rainier MESSAGE should be sent to **Michael Jackson, Assistant City Manager, via mail at One Municipal Place, Mount Rainier, MD 20712 or via e-mail at mjackson@mountrainiermd.org.** All submissions for the April 2012 MESSAGE must be received by close of business on Wednesday, June 20, 2012. Submissions received after that time will be considered on a space available basis. The Mount Rainier Message is published monthly except for the combined July-August and December-January issues.

FIOS Rate Increase

In order to continue to bring you quality service and product innovation, at times we need to raise our rates.

Beginning July 15, 2012, the monthly rate for FiOS set top boxes, digital adapters, and Multi-Room DVRs in equipment packages will increase \$2 each.

If you are currently enjoying a promotional offer on these products, the new rate will not go into effect until after your promotional period expires.

As always, if you would like to review your current services and your equipment options, visit verizon.com/all.

CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS AND SPECIAL DATES
Unless noted all council meetings occur at 7 pm at City Hall
JUNE 6, 2012
JUNE 20, 2012

SAVE THE DATE!
Saturday, June 16 9 am to 1 pm
(Rain date June 23)

Mount Rainier Summer Yard and Crafts Sale
At Residents' Homes and a Central Location
Interested in selling?
Email MtRainierYard-Sale@gmail.com

Schools, Youth & Recreation



Principal Janet Reed with Mount Rainier Elementary students. Principal Helen Smith with staff at Thomas Stone Elementary (photos from school websites).

Local Principals and staff retire

For most children June brings with it the excitement of the end of the school year and the beginning of summer vacation, playing with friends, summer camp, long days at the pool, summer reading and more. This June Mount Rainier Elementary students and Thomas Stone Elementary Students will say farewell to their beloved principals and teachers.

Both Mount Rainier Elementary Principal Janet Reed and Thomas Stone Elementary Principal Helen Smith are retiring in June. Ms. Reed plans include a focus on her family and Ms. Smith plans include volunteering with local non-profits. Thomas Stone is also saying goodbye to Assistant Principal Joan Milliner and longtime teaching staff.

So to you dedicated educators, the Mount Rainier community thanks you all for your years of service and dedication to our children! Our best to you in the next phase of your life. Enjoy!

Visit the Mount Rainier Library

Public libraries are the place to join a free summer reading club that offers programs and reading for fun to children and teens from birth through high school. Last summer more than 150,000 children and teens in Maryland participated in the Summer Reading Club. This year's theme is **Imagine the Impossible! Summer Reading@your library.** There are programs for Preschoolers, Children, Tweens / Teens and Adults. Registration begins June 1 online and at all branch libraries. Program ends August 31.



Teen Exhibit to Open

THE BRENTWOOD ARTS EXCHANGE IS HOSTING a small reception and awards ceremony, Saturday, June 30 from 4pm-7pm, as to celebrate the opening of our first teen juried exhibition, *Express Yourself!* and award cash prizes to three lucky teens. Judged by Artist and Corcoran College of Art & Design Associate Faculty member, Joey P. Mánlapaz, *Express Yourself!* features artwork in all media by teens from across the region. Guests will have the opportunity to meet with the artists and judge while partaking in refreshments compliments of the Brentwood Arts Exchange. All ages welcome, this event is free.

Community Happenings

June 2nd, LillyVonn Dance presents Women of Strength. Conversations and stories depicting women winning triumph over insecurities, relationships and everyday battles. To see this performance, come to Joe's Movement Emporium, 3309 Bunker Hill Road, Mount Rainier, MD 20712, 301.699.1819 on Saturday, June 2 at 8pm. Tickets can be purchased at the door.

June 23rd – July 1st, Joe's Movement Emporium is one of the venues hosting the **DC Black Theatre Festival**. The DC Black Theatre Festival is a week-long festival celebrating extraordinary stories told by people of African descent and features an exciting menu of more than 120 provocative works by local and national artists, writers, producers and theater companies and is the first festival of its kind to recognize the importance of both urban and traditional theater. For more information, a listing of performances and venues, please visit www.dcblacktheatrefestival.com.

Mount Rainier Christian Church, 4001 33rd St. Mt. Rainier, MD 20712, at the corner of 33rd St. and Bunker Hill Road, is hosts a new exercise and nutrition program, that includes professional fitness instruction from University of Maryland students and a nutrition program through the University of Maryland extension. The program has a supportive environment, intended for people of all ages and all fitness levels. Join us every Saturday at 10:30AM. All are welcome! FREE!

First Baptist Church of Mount Rainier, 3103 Shepherd Street. Vacation Bible School (VBS) "*Amazing Wonders Aviation*". Watch amazing things happen as we explore God's word!! -- June 10th -

June 15th VBS kickoff is Sunday, June 10th at 1:30pm. Join us for food, games, and paper airplane contest. Monday through Friday 6:30pm-9:00pm. FREE All are welcome. Call the Church at (301) 927-6655 or go to fbcmr.com.

CLASSES & CAMPS @Brentwood Arts Exchange Photoshop 2, Ages 13 – Adult, **Tuesday, May 29 – June 19**, SMARTlink # 905366 **6:30 pm – 8:30 pm** Taught by photographer Alison Duval., learn hands on using the namesake software of contemporary image editing. Create and build skills utilizing the computer as an art photography tool.

Creative Expressions Art Camps

Session 1: June 25 – July 6 SMARTlink #813966

Session 2: July – July 30 SMARTlink #813968

Session 3: July 23 – Aug 3 SMARTlink # 813969

Discover a world where your child can create fun art projects that expand their imagination, express their creativity and sharpen their learning skills. Each camp will pursue a variety of artistic media integrated with such themes as fantasy, animals, nature and adventure. New projects are offered each session, so come for one session or all three! A visit to a swimming pool and an exhibition with a punch and cookies reception will round out each exciting session. Ages 6-12, Before and After Care Offered.. Fee Assistance Available

Gateway CDC Update

There is much afoot at Gateway CDC. Here is a brief report as to what we've been up to in May. The Open Studio Tour is annually our best opportunity to draw potential homeowners and business owners to our community, and we had record numbers this year: more artists, more locations, and more visitors than ever before. All three of our municipalities were well represented. Several of our visitors are looking to buy a new home in one of the three municipalities and are excited about what is happening in the Gateway Arts District community.

Congratulations to Joe's Movement Emporium, Mount Rainier Business Association, and the City of Mount Rainier for an exciting and fun Better Block Project. There was a good crowd, lots of paint being put on buildings (and

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YOU MAY BE A LOTTERY WINNER!

The Prince George's County Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) will hold a house lottery for eligible applicants to purchase a home for below market value. DHCD will provide a 5% down payment and closing cost for the home.

This Lanham home will meet Energy Star standards and will be fully rehabilitated, landscaped and fenced. Only pre-qualified applicants will be entered into the Lottery.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: MAY 18, 2012

For MORE INFORMATION, CALL 301.883.7321

To apply, download application at: WWW.PRINCEGEORGESCOUNTYMD.GOV/DHCD/HOUSELOTTERY

The name of the winner of the House Lottery will be drawn at the

2012 PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY HOUSING FAIR

SATURDAY
JUNE 9, 2012 • 9AM - 3PM

SPORTS AND LEARNING COMPLEX, LANDOVER, MD

You must be present to win!
(One winner and two back-up winners will be chosen)

Home tours will be available on the day of the Housing Fair or prior to the Fair by appointment only for qualified applicants.

SPONSORED BY: PG, NBC 4, Prince George's County Government, etc.

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT • ROBERT L. BAKER III, COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Prince George's County House Lottery Application Deadline Extended New Deadline – June 7, 2012

The Prince George's County Department of Housing and Community Development announces the extension of the deadline for applications for the House Lottery that it will hold at its 2012 Housing Fair. The new deadline date to submit qualification documentation to become eligible for the House Lottery is now June 7, 2012.

"We were getting calls from interested people about delays in paperwork from their banks, among other things, so we decided to extend the time to June 7th to give people a little more time to assemble their paperwork," said Eric C. Brown, Director of the Prince George's County Department of Housing and Community Development.

Interested applicants should visit the county website at: www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/dhcd/houselottery to download an application to enter the House Lottery. The application outlines what documents applicants need to submit to be considered eligible for the drawing on Saturday, June 9th at the 2012 Housing Fair. For more information, call (301) 883-7321.

Summer Camps in Mount Rainier

Little Friends For Peace offers two Summer Peace Camps in Mount Rainier. August 6-10, Leaders Camp for ages 8 to 14 at the Mount Rainier Christian Church. August 13-17, Peace Explorers for ages 4 to 11 at the Mount Rainier Nature Center. For more information contact MJ at 240 838-4549 or visit www.LFFP.org

ARTWORKS Studio School, 3711 Rhode Island Avenue, offers three summer sessions, Teen Camp, ages 13 and up, June 18- June 22; Camp for ages 9 to 12, June 25 - June 29; Camp for Ages 5 to 8, July 9 - July 13. For more information contact 301-454-0808 or visit artworksnow.org

Joe's Movement Emporium offers five summer arts camps, from Fine Arts, Dance, Culture & Creative Movement, for various ages, June 18 – August 17. Financial aid available until May 18, 2012. Contact Ms. Robinson at 301-699-1819 or visit joesmovement.org.

Mount Rainier Nature/Recreation Center, 4701 31st Place, Offers five Specialty Day Camps and serves as a Summer Playground location. Summer activities serve pre-school ages to teens. Contact the Nature Center staff for more information, 301-445-4500, or visit www.pgparcs.com

How to Join the Mount Rainier Listserve

The Mount Rainier Yahoo Groups Listserve *is not an official communication outlet for the City of Mount Rainier*. However, City staff are often asked how to join. Moderator Joe Robbins suggests the following simple steps to subscribe to the Mount Rainier listserv via email:

1. Send a blank email to MountRainierMD-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
2. To activate your subscription, just reply to the confirmation message you receive from the group.

Creative Expressions Art Camps



Ages 6-12
Jun 25 - Aug 3
301-277-2863
arts.pgparcs.com

at the Brentwood Arts Exchange

Summer Crime Prevention

Criminals are *never* on vacation. Please take the time to protect your property and valuables against warm weather scammers, con artists, thieves and opportunity criminals.

Deception Burglaries: Suspects, posing as legitimate workers, approach elderly homeowners with the intent of gaining entry to their home under a seemingly legitimate role: local gas company, water department, Cable Company, tree trimmers, pavers, government inspectors or officials. One suspect will distract the homeowner while a second suspect will enter the home and search inside for valuables and cash. Another ruse used to gain entry into the home is for a suspect to knock on the door and ask for a pen and piece of paper to leave the victim's neighbor a note. The suspect may appear to have difficulty writing the note, and will ask to come inside the house. Once inside the victim's house, the suspect will ask the victim to help write the note. As the suspect keeps the victim occupied, others enter the residence to remove money and valuables. Be particularly alert to anyone in your neighborhood looking to perform home repairs, or asking to gain entry into your home. Be sure to ask to see identification and let them know you are going to call and get authorization from their company before allowing them access. If they are legitimate, they won't mind the wait. Remember, do not intervene, but call police immediately and report suspicious activity.

Home Improvement Scams: To prevent the chances of being victimized, residents are urged to observe the following precautions:

- * Keep doors (including patio doors) and windows locked - even if you will be out for only a short time.
- * Request identification from utility representatives. Legitimate representatives carry it, and will gladly show it to you. Call their company for verification.

gitimate representatives carry it, and will gladly show it to you. Call their company for verification.

* Rarely will legitimate home improvement companies solicit door-to-door. They usually distribute fliers or make phone calls - it's more cost effective for them.

* Never pay in cash. Using a check keeps a record of the transaction and often provides identification of the person cashing the check.

* Beware of excuses such as "We just finished a job around the corner and had extra materials that we could offer you at a discounted price." Professional companies do not operate in that manner.

* Be aware of various ruses that have been used to gain entry, including posing as utility representatives, asking for a drink of water, looking for property that is for sale, or selling home improvement services.

* When purchasing or installing a home alarm system, make sure that the company who installs the alarm, as well as the company that monitors the alarm, are licensed to do business in Prince George's County. If a sales person comes to your door he/she must have a solicitation permit from the City - ask to see it! Also, the police department recommends that homeowners who have residential alarms call their alarm monitoring company and request that the

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GATEWAY UPDATE *CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4*

some faces), several workshops and some great music. Our pop-up gallery at the Thrifty Truck Rental looked so good that the owner invited us to leave the art up for another week!

When we learned that we were not in the original Action Plan to receive Community Development Block Grant funds our membership and friends swung into action. We garnered a show of strong support with 226 names on our petition and 5 letters of support from some of our partner organizations and legislators. We are still waiting for a formal announcement of the results of our efforts.

Gateway CDC is advertising for a part-time Executive Director who can focus on resource development. Check out the job description on our web site at gatewaycdc.org.

As we move into this new phase for Gateway CDC we will be finishing our strategic plan. Our goal is to present it to our membership and each of our municipalities in August of 2012.

There is retail space available at a premium location in the EZ Storage facility on Rhode Island Avenue in Brentwood. Contact Gateway CDC at 301-864-3860 for more information.

SUMMER CRIME *continued from page 6*

Mount Rainier Police Department be notified first when the alarm is activated. Many alarm companies will hesitate to do this because they want to reduce the number of false alarms, especially where false alarms may result in fines to the homeowner. This is especially true with newly installed systems. However, if you are comfortable operating your system, a first notification to the police will get us there quicker in the event that a real burglary is in progress.

Lock your doors while working outside: When out working in your yard or garden, carry a key with you and lock your front and back doors. Some criminals specialize in stealing from homes when people are outside doing yard work. When you finish with that yard work, remember to clean up and lock up behind you. When you put your rake and other tools in the shed, garage or basement, don't forget to lock the doors. Thieves see an open door as an invitation. Deny criminals the opportunity to steal by securing your home and property.

The best crime prevention tool is a good neighbor! Take the time to reacquaint yourself with your old neighbors and meet new ones. Why not organize or participate in a neighborhood watch program to protect and watch out for one another's property? Let your neighbors know when a suspicious person has been spotted in your area. If residents see strangers sizing up their neighbors' home that could also be a sign something is wrong. In that case, a call to 301-985-6565 will get an officer to the scene to check things out. Residents can help their elderly neighbors by regularly checking in on them, and keeping an eye on them. If, for example, a neighbor sees an elderly resident in conversation with a stranger, they could politely inquire about what is going on.

Neighbors working together for each other's well-being are the foundation of a healthy community. Caring and personal involvement builds stronger bonds between neighbors, and helps maintain safe neighborhoods. **“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not.” - Dr. Seuss**

**Department of Public Works
RECYCLE, BULK TRASH AND
YARD WASTE COLLECTION**

All recyclables (aluminum cans, bottles, paper and cardboard) can be put in the same yellow recycle bin which will be picked up Friday of each week. These items will be taken to the County recycle plant as they now have the capability to separate the items.

All BULK TRASH appointments must be made before 12 Noon on the Friday preceding the pick up day. All bulk trash items must be set out before 7:00 AM on pick up day.

PUBLIC WORKS CALENDAR

DATE	PARTICULARS
June 1	Recyclables Pick Up
June 4	Bulk Trash Pick Up (by appointment only, call 301 985 6558) Yard Waste Pick Up
June 6	Regular Trash Pick Up
June 8	Recyclables Pick Up
June 11	Yard Waste Pick Up
June 13	Regular Trash Pick Up
June 15	Regular Trash Pick Up
June 18	Bulk Trash Pick Up (by appointment only, call 301 985 6558) Yard Waste Pick Up
June 20	Regular Trash Pick Up
June 22	Recyclables Pick Up
June 25	Yard Waste Pick Up
June 27	Regular Trash Pick Up
June 29	Recyclables Pick Up
July 2	Bulk Trash Pick Up (by appointment only, call 301 985 6558) Yard Waste Pick Up
July 4	July 4th Holiday City Hall and Public Works Closed
July 6	Recyclables Pick Up
July 9	Regular Trash Pick Up
July 11	Recyclables Pick Up

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