



# Message

Issue 233  
November 2005

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## Public Forum: Synopsis of Proposed Changes to the Gateway Arts District Zoning Standards

The Gateway Arts District Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment (SMA) that was adopted last year by the County Council affected the design standards and allowed uses of properties in the City of Mount Rainier. The City is now divided up into "character areas," including Traditional Residential Neighborhood (TRN) that roughly equates to the old R-55 standard.

The Mayor and Council are proposing to our County Councilman, Will Campos, that the City be able to opt out of some of the new standards in the Gateway Arts District Sector Plan. Below are the proposed changes. Copies of the present standards can be viewed at City Hall. [on the Web at <http://www.mncppc.org/cpd/gatewayplan.htm>]

The county issues building permits based on the adopted standards. A standard can be waived with what is called a variance. Variances from the standards are not uncommon. The Mayor and Council have many times had to vote on whether to allow a deck, fence, or house addition to violate the zoning standards. So even if we return to more

stringent standards, the variance process will exist. The difference is that the Mayor and Council will have a say in what is built rather than being left out of the process because more projects will need variances.

If the City opts out of specific Art Sector Plan standards, then the prior standards (in most cases R-55) would govern decisions.

Below are proposed opt outs for the residential neighborhoods in the City (Traditional Residential Neighborhood).

- 1) The Art Sector Plan now allows 45 percent of a residential lot to be covered with structures (house, deck, concrete driveway, sheds). The proposal is to return to the old standard of 30 percent.
- 2) Currently a residential lot can be as narrow as 20 feet at the street. Proposed is a return to the old standard of 65 feet. The old standard includes an exception for homes built prior to 1928.
- 3) Current Art Sector standards allow a house to sit as close as 20 feet from the

**Public Forum, continued on page 10**

### Notice of Public Forum

#### City of Mount Rainier and Gateway Arts District Sector Plan (Amended)

*Discussion Regarding the City of Mount Rainier Requesting to Opt-Out of Various Provisions of the Amended Gateway Arts District Sector Plan*

Date: Monday, November 14, 2005

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: City Hall - Upper Level, One Municipal Place, Mount Rainier, MD 20712

Invited to Attend:

- Design Review Board (DRB)
- Town Center Design Review Committee (MUTC TCDRC)
- Dineene O'Connor, MNCPPC Prince George's County
- All Residents, Concerned Citizens, etc.

**The deadline for submissions for the Message is the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. City Hall closed on November 11 for Veterans Day.**

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

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## Mayor's Report

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As always there is a lot going on in our City. As we move and grow, we expect problems to occur, however, working together we can surely resolve each and every one of them.

Your Mayor and Council has been busy over the past month, and the following highlights a few of the issues, projects, meetings or other activities that we have been involved in on behalf of the City and our residents.

**1. Artspace** – The most recent new building in the City has tenants worried about their safety and management's responses to their concerns. Since opening there have been a series of problems with the building including missing sections of wall that should have been completed; flooding; elevators out of order for days; and most recently displacement of residents because of a broken sprinkler that flooded several of the units. As a result of the many problems, the residents have come before the Mayor and Council with their concerns. Members of the Mayor and Council (Mayor Miles and Councilman Alta Morton), City Manager Wallace, along with Council Member Will Campos recently met with Artspace Management (Owners), Edgewood Management, and the Artspace Tenant Association to discuss and resolved the myriad of problems plaguing the building. As a result of the meeting, Artspace has agreed to make all of the safety repairs immediately, and to follow up with appropriate contractors to resolve other problems. The Tenant Association has agreed to stay on top of the issues and to work with Artspace and Edgewood Management to ensure that the problems are resolved, and better communications is established between the three stakeholders.

**2. Police Union** — Police Union Contract is ready for ratification by its members. Negotiations were completed a few weeks ago, and Chief Keeney has presented the contract to the Union for it to present to its members. A major issue for the Mayor and Council, and the Chief over the years has been the inclusion of the Sergeants (who are required manage

and evaluate other union members) in the bargaining unit. This is still a concern, but the Mayor and Council took this item off the table as a way of moving negotiations forward. Salaries were increased and the length of time needed before being eligible to retire was reduced pending discussions with our pension carrier LIGIT. Even with our increases in salary and reduction in pension requirements, the City will still have to compete with the County and other surrounding jurisdictions for competent and skilled police officers since many of the larger municipalities and the County pays more and offers more benefits. Health care continues to be an issue and the Mayor and Council are committed to looking for ways to reduce the cost of health care and improve our health care package for all employees.

**3. Berlyn Austin's 100<sup>th</sup> Year Celebration** – On Saturday, October 22, 2005, family, friends and elected officials from through out the County gathered at Rainier Manor to bring well wishes and greetings to one of Mount Rainier's oldest citizens, Mrs. Berlyn Austin. Ms. Austin, a native of Moncure, North Carolina turned 100 years young on October 20, 2005. When she was born, Washington DC was still largely unpaved with lots of mud every where; Mount Rainier had not yet been incorporated, Theodore Roosevelt was President of the United States, (1901-09), and Franklin D. Roosevelt and Anna Eleanor Roosevelt were married. Ms. Austin has lived through the reign of 18 presidents of the United States, and been a resident of Mount Rainier Maryland since 1992. Berlyn Austin lives in Rainier Manor Apartments, 3001 Queens Chapel Road, Mount Rainier, MD (Ward One). Amongst her guests were her only living brother, John Austin who celebrated his 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday a month earlier, Councilman Will Campos (with a proclamation), and **Michael D. Herman** representing County Executive Jack Johnson presented Ms. Austin with a proclamation. Greetings and a proclamation were sent to Mrs. Austin from President George W. Bush.

Congratulations Aunt Beryl on 100 years of good living!

**4. Neighborhood Watch** — Members of the board of the "Mt. Rainier Community Watch" are Ophelia Baxter, President, Greg Welter, Vice President, Stephen Brundage, Treasurer, Kelly Moser, Co-Secretary, Jennifer Teel, Co-Secretary, and Joe Robbins, Asst. Secretary. Community Watch signs are being put up around the City. If you have a location that should have a neighborhood Watch sign, PLEASE contact Chief Keeney. In addition, the Mt. Rainier Community Watch Board is planning an activity to increase its membership. One of their goals is to increase participation, so if you wish to make a difference in your community and provide first-line support to our Police Department, please contact one of the members of this very important Board. (**NOTE:** In order to qualify for funds for this program next year, we must be fully functional and residents must be participating. This year, we received more than \$3,000 in start up money for the program. We want to increase that amount so that we can fund activities various safety activities throughout the City year-round.) Email the president ([orbaxter@comcast.net](mailto:orbaxter@comcast.net)) for more information on how you can get involved.

**5. Tool Shed visited by County Executive** — Gorgeous Prince George's Day was celebrated in Mount Rainier with a visit by County Executive Jack Johnson who visited our Tool Shed, the Gazebo behind Mount Rainier Elementary and Mount Rainier Elementary. The Mount Rainier Tool Shed is a product of County Executive Jack Johnson's Livable Communities Project, and is the only one of its kind in the County. After visiting the Tool Shed on Saturday October 15, 2005, County Executive Johnson used it as an example of unique projects in the County, and encouraged other municipalities at the Council of Governments (COG) meeting to follow in Mount Rainier's foot steps. He also promised to donate two or three bicycles to the Mount Rainier Bicycle Workshop that will be opening

soon and housed in the Garage behind City Hall.

**6. City Investigating Hiring a Lobbying Firm** – As many of you know, the Mayor and Council has been holding discussions with G. S. Proctor and Associates, a lobbying firm here in Prince George's County. Some of you have had an opportunity to review and comment on this issue. Others have not. I am taking this opportunity to say that a lobbyist for the City would be a welcomed addition to our staff's efforts to find new moneys for the City. (No, a lobbyist is NOT needed to find or get bond money. We have our elected officials and Prince George's County Delegation to do that, and the guidelines, fact sheet and sponsor information can be found at <http://mlis.state.md.us/bondbillsub.htm> on the Maryland General Assembly web site.) However, other municipalities, Capitol Heights, Glenarden, Seat Pleasant, and District Heights have successfully used lobbyist to identify, lobby for, and receive funds that were not even on the radar screen of other municipalities.

We do not want any new taxes. We are well aware that homeowners carry the lion's share of all taxes in our City, and we want to see growth! It takes money to do those things. Over the past 20 years, the City's revenue stream has not kept up with its growth. Limited new money has been found, and very few new tax bases have been identified. A lobbyist could help the City find other moneys (private, County, State and Federal). G. S. Proctor and Associates have been successful in other municipalities and I believe they would be an asset to Mount Rainier. They have a good reputation in Annapolis. They have worked with most of our legislators. They know county and municipal government needs. They know private funding sources. If engaged by us, they could, they will easily pay for the cost of their services in a year.

For the record, Mount Rainier's revenue has not grown much beyond \$3 million dollars in over 15 years! Yet we have incurred millions of dollars in debt for our City Hall, Police Station – both of which have serious flaws. City Hall has no kitchen and no storage for City records.

It is in serious need of repair since no moneys have ever been set aside and used for annual maintenance and upkeep. Our Police Station cannot pass inspection to get a Use and Occupancy Permit because of the incomplete work done in the construction of the building. Yet tax dollars continue to go out in payment of this building. In addition, this \$3 million plus building is totally under-utilized! In its initial conception, it was to house and dispatch area police and eventually return Mount Rainier's dispatching operation (\$64,000 annually) back to the City. Currently, our police station houses approximately 15 police officers (rotating shifts), the Chief, Lieutenant and two administrative persons. The building is open at 9:00 a.m. and promptly closed at 5:00 p.m. unless there are meetings held after those hours by special arrangements.

Homeowners are paying a lot for these grand buildings. Over the years we have cut back on services (reduced trash pick up to once a week, added a cost for bulk trash pick up, reduced our pick ups of yard waste, etc.). We are doing a better job of billing and collecting our revenue from businesses, absentee landlords, and others that receive services from the City. The problem seems to be a catch 22 — we could get new revenue, if we could finance some of the economic development needs of the City, but we can't finance the economic development needs of the City because we don't have anyone to concentrate on finding the revenue. One way of getting those new revenue sources is through the help of a paid lobbyist.

Other lobbyist are out there, however, the time for looking for them has come and gone. We need someone working on our behalf now, and G. S. Proctor and Associates are a known entity with a good reputation and a successful track record. I strongly believe that the City should engage their services on a trial basis for this fiscal year to see what they can do for us and our revenue stream.

I also believe that the Mayor and Council should sit down and complete its development of particular priorities for the City. Give two or three of these priorities to Proctor and Associates to concentrate on for identifying and seeking

the necessary funding to make those priorities a reality.

A first step on this chain of priorities would be the development a City-wide strategic plan that provides direction for the City now and in the future. If you are interested in receiving a list of the priorities that are under discussion, please contact James Booth (301-985-6585).

**7. Arundel Arms Apartments** – Over the past two weeks, the City's Code Enforcement team has been working very diligently to bring this apartment complex into compliance. Residents of this facility recently started speaking out about the conditions under which they were living and asked the City to step in. The building was infested with roaches and had numerous violations that are currently being corrected. If you are renting or leasing in this City, you have the right to have your rented facility inspected annually/biannually to ensure that it is in compliance with City Ordinances. Your building should be posted with its latest/most recent Use and Occupancy (U and O) or the U and O should be available to you from the rental office for review along with the date of the last inspection by City inspectors. Please contact Code Enforcement (301-985-6583), if you are living in rental units that are roach infested and are out of compliance with your lease agreement. You should also report your concerns to your Councilmembers (Gandee and Morton, Ward One; Knedler and Briones, Ward Two). Their contact information is in each issue of the City's newsletter "The Message."

**8. Maryland Municipal League Fall Conference** – The fall conference of the Maryland Municipal League (MML) was held October 20-22, 2005 in Ocean City. MML featured nine workshops that addressed lots of issues affecting municipalities in the State of Maryland. As an attendee at the Conference, I participated in Impact Fees. Excise Taxes and Special Taxing Districts: What's Right for you?; Services and Staff Sharing-Maximizing Municipal Resources; Municipal Cable Television Franchise Agreements. I also attended the Maryland Mayors Associa-

**Mayor, continued on page 8**

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## City Manager's Report

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### Capital Improvement Plan/Capital Budgeting

As was indicated during last month's report, the City Manager reported on the need for the City Council to establish a capital improvement policy and set priorities for a capital improvement plan for the Fiscal-Year 2007 budget and beyond. This will enable management and council to establish an overall comprehensive plan for two, five, and ten-year intervals. The Department of Public Works has submitted a list of priorities for the Council to consider. The departments of administration and public safety will be submitting priority lists during the remaining weeks in October. The Mayor and Council have committed to dedicating at least one entire work session around this issue.

In order to facilitate a comprehensive capital improvement plan, one has to take a look at what the priorities have been over the past decade, and weigh the priorities over the next 10 years as they relate to public safety, health, environment, parking, public services, vehicles and equipment. For example, it is estimated that vehicles have served their life capacity at eight (8) years and a replacement scheduled should be in effect after five (5) years. Vehicles within the city's fleet will be put on a replacement scheduled based upon this time frame.

In terms of what the Capital improvements during the past 10-13 years, a partial list includes:

- **Facilities:** Mount Rainier Police Station (CDA Infrastructure Bonds annual budget). City Municipal Building (CDA Infrastructure Bonds annual budget)
- **Vehicles:** (1) PW Dump Truck, (1) PW Trash Truck, (1) PW Pick-up Truck. (all new) and (1) used CE vehicle (annual budget)
- **Vehicles:** 6 Police Cars for MRPD (all new) (annual budget)
- **Equipment PW** – Leaf Machine, (3) Salt Spreaders – (2 in 1994), (1 in 2004) (2) computers, (4) printers, (1) fax machine, 2 snow plows, (1) trailer
- **Equipment PD** – computers/printers (grant supported)
- **Equipment City** - Richardson Park (grants supported)
- **Traffic Circle City** – SHA/MTA (Grant Supported)
- **Streetscape City** – Rhode Island Avenue – (grant supported)
- **Equipment City Hall** – Copier (annual budget supported)
- **Equipment MRPD** – Copier (annual budget supported)
- **Streetscape Municipal Plaza** – MTA grant supported
- **Street Repair City** – CDBG funding
- **Curb Repair City** – CDBG funding

### Code of Ordinances

The City Manager has updated the following chapters of the City Code of Ordinances:

- Chapter 1 (Administration), Chapter 2, (Assessments and Taxation), Chapter 3, (Building Code), Chapter 3B, (Vacant Buildings and Vacant Lot Registration), Chapter 3C (New Chapter, Unsafe Buildings – Public Nuisance), Chapter 6, Health and Nuisances, [Municipal Infractions], Chapter 7, (Licenses and Permits) Chapter 11, Refuse Collection Service, Chapter 12C (New Chapter), Specification for Utility Installation and Maintenance Permits, Chapter 13, (Traffic), Chapter 13A (Snow Removal), and Chapter 14, (Animal Control). City attorney and Council member Knedler are currently reviewing additions, deletions, and corrections.

### Problems

During the past two weeks the City has received numerous complaints regarding living conditions at the Artist Apartments on Rhode Island Avenue and Arundel Arms on Arundel Road. The Mayor and City Manager attended a meeting with representatives from Art Space, residents, and property management for the Artist Apartments. The meeting focused on

problems as well as solutions which are to be addressed by management and the building contractor. Please refer to attachments referencing the list of items to be corrected in the building as well as correspondence exchanged between the tenant committee and management. There were questions during the meeting held at the Artist Apartments as to whether proper inspections were conducted. Code Enforcement inquired and was presented with copies of the County Use and Occupancy Permit and certification by the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation for the apartment elevator. These documents are attached as well.

At the Arundel Arms apartments, the City has withheld the rental license on this facility and issued a Notice of Violation in April of this year. An extension was granted, however, recent inspections by the division of Code Enforcement revealed that there are additional violations. The apartment management has ten days to correct the violations or citations will be issued. Code Enforcement met today with management and a sub-contractor to address the complaints about rodent infestation. The plan is to clean various apartments and proceed with the extermination procedure within (7) seven days. If compliance is not reached, the City may pursue denial of the rental license and court adjudication which is also a DER recommendation.

A property on 35<sup>th</sup> Street is also being addressed by code enforcement in reference to possible criminal activity. Code enforcement is pursuing condemnation in court for health and safety violations. Public works will proceed with cleaning exterior and boarding property this week.

The City has installed portable toilets in two locations. There have been a few problems associated with misuse, however for the most part they seem to be working.

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## Police Chief's Report

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### Projections

During the next 2-3 weeks, management will schedule meetings with METRO Transit Police concerning increased patrols due to loitering, open drinking, public urination and debris on the municipal plaza. A meeting was scheduled the week of October 10, 2005, however it was canceled by METRO in efforts to obtain the appropriate personnel to attend the meeting.

Management is awaiting approval from the Maryland Board of Public Works for the proposed corrections to the generator and concealed combustible space at the Mount Rainier Police Department.

Follow-up will be conducted with the Department of Environmental Resources concerning corrections required for the Bunker Hill Fire Station.

In response to citizen complaints and MRPD concerns about criminal activity in the Kaywood Garden Apartments, management has requested a meeting with the Regional Director to address lighting conditions in the area. Management anticipates that this meeting will occur within the next 2-3 weeks as well.

Management has consulted with City engineer for CDBG bid specifications and recommendations for storm drainage improvements on Tilden and 35<sup>th</sup> Streets. Proposals will be submitted within the next 2-3 weeks.

### Public Works

The Department of Public Works has submitted its leaf schedule for the months of October through December by ward as well as a priority list of capital improvement vehicle and equipment needs. Priority has been placed on tree removal land trimming in those areas affecting residents. Please refer to the attached schedule and priority lists.

The department has also completed re-lettering of the call-a-bus to "CITY" of Mount Rainier.

### How To Reach Us

For police service calls  
(24 hours a day) 301-985-6565/66  
Administrative Offices ONLY  
(M-F, 9A-5P) 301-985-6580  
[www.mountrainiermd.org/government/mrpd/index.html](http://www.mountrainiermd.org/government/mrpd/index.html)

Please cut and place on or by your phone

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### Sex Offender Registry

The Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Service maintains a website of registered sex offenders in the State and our City. Anyone can obtain this information through their website at [www.dpscs.state.md.us](http://www.dpscs.state.md.us) or if you do not have a computer you may call 410-585-3600.

### Vacation Check For Your Home

When you go on vacation are you concerned with leaving your home unattended? Why not notify us so we may check on it from time-to-time? If you plan on leaving on a short or long vacation and would like us to check your property, please call 301-985-6566 or 6580 to be placed on our house checklist. We will need your address, if you have a car where will it be parked; on the street or driveway and it's tag number and the length of visit. We also will need a number to contact you at in case the need arises.

### Neighborhood Watch

The resident-based group has selected their officers and have been meeting regularly every Monday night at the police station. We will be providing the group some training to assist in making the group successful. The name of the group is the Mount Rainier Community Watch. Our Public Works Department has installed some Neighborhood Watch group signs on several streets.

### New Hires

Our two new officers: David Powers and Robb Caplan have been assigned to field training. We anticipate their release from training at the end of November.

### Collective Bargaining Negotiations

Management (the City Manager and I) and the FOP negotiating teams have met several times during the end of August and September and discussed each other's proposals regarding changes to the existing agreement between the City and the Mount Rainier Police Association and the FOP 85. The current agreement expired December 31, 2005. Management forwarded the final approved proposals to the Mayor and Council for review and approval.

### Grants

C-Safe Youth Prevention. We no longer are able to use the Mount Rainier Elementary School for our C-Safe Program. We are currently looking to possibly move the program to Thomas Stone Elementary School. We will keep you posted.

### Policing and Enforcing Initiatives

On Sept. 23, our staff conducted a focused enforcement initiative on the 3100 block of Queens Chapel Road. We focused our efforts on pedestrian safety and complaints about drug activity in the park at the rear of Rainier Manor. There was one adult arrest (red light violation, fleeing and eluding, resisting arrest, assault on a police officer). No injuries occurred to our officers. Three red light citations were issued. One citation in lieu was issued for open alcohol. As a followup to this initiative, officers assisted the MOU partners with a DWI check-point in Hyattsville, which resulted in four arrests.

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## November-December Leaf Schedule

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Full leaf vacuuming started Tuesday, October 25, 2005. The schedule below will be followed weather permitting. In order to have your leaves vacuumed, please follow the schedule and rake your leaves to the curb. Here are a few reminders.

- Rake your leaves at least 24 hours before the crew is expected to begin on your block.
- Rake your leaves to the curb without blocking the roadway.
- Please keep rocks, bricks, branches, brush, metal, or any other objects away from raked leaves.
- If leaves are in bags, they will **not** be vacuumed.

The Public Works Department will make an effort to stay on schedule, and you can help us by following the reminders above.

El plan por abajo se va a seguir dependiente an el tiempo, Para que se limpian sus hojas, sigan al plan y rastrillen las hojas al encintado 24 horas antes de la llegada de los trabajadores.

### Area 1

Nov. 15 & 17, Dec. 15 & 20  
3700 34<sup>th</sup> Street  
3700 35<sup>th</sup> Street  
3700 36<sup>th</sup> Street  
3700 – 3800 37<sup>th</sup> Street  
3400 – 3600 Eastern Avenue  
3500 37<sup>th</sup> Street  
3200 Varnum Street  
3400 – 3600 Perry Street  
Wells Avenue  
Newton Street  
Oak Lane

### Area 2

Nov. 8 & 10, Dec. 8 & 13  
4000 – 4200 28<sup>th</sup> Street  
4000 – 4500 29<sup>th</sup> Street  
2800 – 2900 Shepherd Street  
2800 – 2900 Taylor Street  
2800 – 2900 Upshur Street  
2800 Webster Street

### Area 3

Dec. 29  
3800 – 4600 30<sup>th</sup> Street  
3800 – 4500 31<sup>st</sup> Street  
3000 – 3100 Perry Street  
2900 – 3100 Bunker Hill Road

### Area 4

Nov. 1 & 3, Dec. 1 & 6  
3800-4500 32<sup>nd</sup> Street  
3800-4100 33<sup>rd</sup> Street  
3200 – 3300 Perry Street  
3200 – 3300 Bunker Hill Road  
Rainier Avenue  
3100 – 3200 Arundel Road  
3100 – 3200 Varnum Street  
3100 – 3200 Upshur Street  
3100 Webster Street  
3100 Windom Road

### Area 5

Nov. 22 & 28, Dec. 22 & 27  
3800 – 4200 34<sup>th</sup> Street  
3800 – 4000 35<sup>th</sup> Street  
4000 36<sup>th</sup> Street  
4000 37<sup>th</sup> Street  
3400 – 3700 Bunker Hill Road  
3400 – 3700 Shepherd Street  
3400 Taylor Street  
3400 Tilden Street

3000 – 3100 Shepherd Street  
3000 – 3200 Taylor Street  
3000 Upshur Street

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## Youth Recreation Programs

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### Hyattsville-Mount Rainier-Brentwood Boys & Girls Club

The PG County Boys & Girls Club offers boys & girls ages 5–18 opportunities to participate in baseball, basketball, cheerleading, football, soccer, softball, and track.

- 301-864-1112; Carrol McLaurin, 301-422-3141; Basketball: Jeffrey Lindsey, 301-559-0602
- [www.pgiparks.com/things/pgcbgc/contacts.html](http://www.pgiparks.com/things/pgcbgc/contacts.html)

### Boys Scouts Troop 224

Meets in St. Jerome's Church, Hyattsville

- Thursday evenings, 7:30–9 p.m.
- 6th grade through high school
- [users.erols.com/wthomas/troop224.html](http://users.erols.com/wthomas/troop224.html)

### Cub Scouts Pack 224

Meets in St. Jerome's Church, Hyattsville

- Tuesday evenings, 7–8 p.m.
- 1st grade through 5th grade
- Ages 6th grade through high school
- [users.erols.com/wthomas/troop224.html](http://users.erols.com/wthomas/troop224.html)

### Girl Scouts

- Mount Rainier E.S., Tues., 2 p.m.
- Thomas Stone E.S., Tues., 2 p.m.
- Hyattsville Middle Sch., Fri., 6 p.m.
- Tiffany Lathan, 301-449-5690

### Boys and Girls Club, Northwestern H.S.

- 301-985-1423
- M-F, 3:30 to 8 p.m.

### Joe's Movement Emporium

- After-School Programs
- 3802 34th St., 301-699-1819
- [www.worldartfocus.org/youth.html](http://www.worldartfocus.org/youth.html)

### Mount Rainier Nature Center

- 31st and Arundel Rd.
- 301-927-2163; TTY 301-699-2544
- [www.pgiparks.com/places/nature/rainier.html](http://www.pgiparks.com/places/nature/rainier.html)

The Nature/Recreation Center is a unique facility which operates as both a nature center and a recreation center.

### Nature Club for Kids

Bladensburg Waterfront Park, 4601 Annapolis Road, Bladensburg. Kids, learn about nature and ecology through games, crafts, stories, and other nature-themed activities. The club meets the first Sat. of each month.

- 301-779-0371; TTY 301-699-2544
- Ages 6–12
- Fee: \$1, Non-Resident \$2

## Parking Task Force Committee Meeting

When: Monday, November 21, 2005  
 Time: 7:00 p.m.  
 Where: City Hall – Upper Level

- I. Call to Order
- II. Review Agenda
- III. Review Parking Report from 2004
- IV. Discussion on existing and proposed parking permits policy
- V. Follow up on proposed City parking lot/garage FTA funded parking facility
- VI. Other Discussion Items
- VII. Set next meeting date
- VIII. Adjourn

The Mount Rainier Parking Task Force will reconvene on Monday, November 21, 2005 at 7 p.m. to begin discussions on the City's efforts to address parking issues within the City of Mount Rainier.

In December 2004, the Parking Task Force issued a report to the Mayor and Council outlining issues and addressing concerns identified through monthly meetings, public forums, and staff research. The Mayor and Council have directed the Committee to reconvene to address specific issues related to parking permits, funding from FTA for a proposed parking lot within the MUTC/ Downtown Mount Rainier area, and future strategic plans related to increase parking needs within the City.

Residents, property owners, business owners, and interested individuals are invited to attend this important meeting to discuss strategies, develop recommendations, and help the City move forward in addressing and resolving issues regarding parking within Mount Rainier.

Please contact Assistant City Manager James Booth at 301-985-6585 to RSVP your attendance at the November 21, 2005 Parking Task Force Meeting. Your input is needed to insure the City develops a parking plan that meets the needs of the Mount Rainier community.

## Our Fate is Your Fate

Avondale is the unincorporated area bordering on the West side of Mount Rainier. This community is comprised of 450 detached brick homes, apartment buildings and Giant Food complex on Queen Chapel Road, and the commercial areas along Chillum RD. We are the next door neighbor of Mount Rainier, so what happens in and to Avondale, definitely has an impact on our neighbors.

A very significant Avondale issue at the moment is an effort by the Washington Gas Company to construct a liquefied natural gas (LNG) processing and storage plant at its property on Chillum Road. According to our research into the dangers of LNG, it is suspected that Avondale residents would suffer death and burns from thermal radiation heat if the LNG comes into contact with a flame or live electrical wire. These fires cannot be extinguished with water.

More than 65,000 residents of Hyattsville, Mount Rainier NE Washington, and other communities within 5 miles of this site, would also be at risk from migrating explosive vapor clouds if the LNG is ever exposed to air or water. The proposed facility is also only 1,500 feet from the West Hyattsville Metro stop, and threatens the hope of positive development around that station. This plant would be a highly visible and vulnerable target for terrorists.

We believe this type of potentially hazardous activity is inappropriate in the midst of a densely populated area. We were, therefore, pleased that the Prince George's County Planning Board agreed with this notion by voting to deny the Gas company's zoning request on September 22. Citizens from this entire area testified at a public hearing on that day, joined by three city mayors, three state delegates, Gas company union members, fire

fighters and an aide to Congressman Van Hollen.

Notwithstanding the victory of September 22, the struggle is **far from over**. There additional steps in the zoning process, e.g., another hearing will be conducted by the Zoning Hearing Examiner on Wednesday, December 7 at 9:30 a.m. Another hearing may follow before the County's District Council (which is actually the County Council in this context). Furthermore, there will now be state legislation designed to develop controls over the siting of LNG facilities within the entire county.

What's unfortunate is that Washington Gas has vowed to continue its attempts to by-pass the County's zoning structure altogether. The Company has restated its intention to seek approval for the siting of the plan from the State's Public Service Commission. It intends to challenge an opinion written last April by the State's Attorney General which assured our state lawmakers that LNG siting decisions rest with county zoning officials. An expensive court battle is very possible.

Several Mt. Rainier officials and residents have already been fully involved with this fight. They include Mayor Miles and former Mayor Fred Sissine. Clearly we will need the continued participation of our Mount Rainier neighbors in the weeks to come as we seek to kill this proposal once and for all. We need all of our neighbors to understand that our fate is your fate. If we stand together, we can and WILL win this.

For additional information, you may contact Ms. Imani Kazana, LNG Action Group, 301-779-6948.

**Mayor**, *continued from page 3*

tion Meeting, MML's Business Meeting and General Session. I served as one of the facilitators for the workshop on Consensus and Team Building. In addition to presenting great workshops and setting its legislative agenda, the MML Board of Directors appointed your Mayor to fill the vacancy left by Bladensburg Mayor Robert McGrory as a Member-at-Large of the MML's Board of Directors.

**9. 2004 Financial Audit Complete** — Mock and Associates have completed the 2004 financial audit of the City. Although the audit shows great improvement and strides in the City's financial condition and recordkeeping, there is still a lot of work to be done. The City was once again in the red at the close of the fiscal year, but showed about \$100,000 recovery. Because of better budget projections, and leaner fiscal operations, it is anticipated that the City's finances will continue to improve; however, the increased gas prices are sure to have a serious impact on future spendings. Copies of the final 2004 financial audit may be reviewed and/or a copy provided by contacting our Financial Director, Mr. Vijay Manjani. Although a vote has not been taken, the Mayor and Council is considering retaining Mock and Associates for the 2005 financial audit since they are familiar with our books, and we believe that the audit can be completed within a three to four month period. An engagement letter from Mock and Associates should be received within the next few days.

**10. CERT Training a Success** — Regina Wardwell put on a fantastic training for those who signed up to become first-line responders to our fire and rescue teams and police department. This training was provided free to all participants. The class had at 25 participants, unfortunately only 9 of them actually lived in Mount Rainier. The class was conducted by the Delmarva Search and Rescue team recently back from a deployment at the Katrina and Rita areas. Their stories and videos were very moving. They all felt Katrina was a much worse disaster to work in than even the World Trade Center site in 2001.

It is anticipated that another CERT class will be scheduled and will include residents from Brentwood, North Brentwood and Cottage City. In addition, Chairperson Wardwell is in the process of scheduling a CPR and Safety Class for our CERT team. This class will be available to all whether or they took the first CERT class. If you are interested in becoming a first line responder in case of an emergency and/or disaster in our area, PLEASE contact Regina Wardwell at Regina and Bob Wardwell [[rbbbe@starpower.net](mailto:rbbbe@starpower.net)]. From watching the New Orleans disaster, we know that communications and a large number of trained volunteers are the most important goals for our emergency preparedness. This is one team that NEEDS your support and active involvement.

**11. Queens Chapel Road Red Light Working** — It took almost twenty years to get a crossing light on Queens Chapel Road, but we got it, and now it is working properly. Our seniors and others can safely cross this busy highway with some certainty that they can make it to the other side before the cars go flashing by. Thank you to everyone (Senator Nathaniel Exum, Delegate Carolyn J. B. Howard, Lt. Governor Michael Steele, Councilman William Campos, and all of the State Highway personnel and other elected officials) that worked on this project over the years. We will never know how many lives this light will save, but we already know that the light is doing the job it was intended to do — STOP cars so Queens Chapel Road can be safely crossed by our walking residents!

**12. Trees (Lots of issues with trees) limited funds** — Many of you have called me to discuss problem trees in City boxes throughout the City. I personally rode around with Mr. Paul Messersmith and Mr. Luther Smith to look at many of our trees and the condition that they are in. We just do not have the money to address all of our tree problems. I have been working on a list of trees to submit to the Tree Commission for their review and suggestions. I have taken emergency actions when there was a safety issue involved, and have tried to keep each of you informed of what was happening with your particular tree concern.

Winter is coming and we are aware of the dangers posed by some of the trees. We will try to minimize and/or remove the danger, but I am sure that we will not get them all. Keep in mind, trees hanging over your property can be trimmed by you, however, there is risk associated with trimming trees! You should call a tree expert to remove limbs. You should NOT go up on ladders, your roofs or other high locations to work on any tree.

Trees on private property are the responsibility of the owners. If your neighbor has a tree that is causing you concerns, PLEASE take a few minutes to talk with him/her about your concern and try to work out an amicable solution. None of us can truly control how our trees are going to grow, but we can work together to take corrective action when our trees encroaches upon our neighbors yard/property.

**13. Problems with lighting in Kaywood area** — This continues to be a major concern for residents in the Kaywood Apartments. The City is working with Kay Management and PEPCO to improve the lighting. One suggestion that is being pursued is the placement of lights on the apartment building by Kay Management. This is a matter of safety, not cosmetics since there has been an increase in crime in that area, and residents feel unprotected and afraid when they have to come home late at night. Meetings are being scheduled with Kay Management and PEPCO over the next few weeks to seek resolution to this standing problem. NOTE: The lighting system in the area is very old and costly to repair; however, it is a top priority for the City and residents.

**14. Potty Johns** — The City has placed two potty johns in the down town area to help with some of the problems experienced by the City with bus drivers, bus passengers, homeless persons, and others that find themselves in immediate need of a rest room or toilet. This is a pilot project for the next six months. The City will be checking to see if it makes a difference, and if it is cost effective to continue with the potty johns. So far, it appears that they are making a difference and many of those who have needed it, have stopped by City Hall to thank us for

our consideration. Mount Rainier is unique in that we have no fast food places, restaurants or other public businesses that have public bathrooms. Nearly all of our businesses have rest rooms for their employees only, yet we seek to entice new business, and foot track in the down town area. It is hoped that the potty johns will not become permanent fixtures in our City, and that in our not so distant future, we will have businesses that provide public rest room facilities.

**15. Liquid Natural Gas Storage (LNG) Legislation** — Montgomery and Prince George's delegations are introducing legislation regarding location of these facilities. We do not want or need such a facility in our densely populated neighborhoods (Avondale, Chillum, Mount Rainier Hyattsville, Brentwood or North Brentwood). Contact the 47<sup>th</sup> delegation and let them know you do not want the Chillum station used for storing liquid natural gas. During the past month I appeared before the Prince George's County Planning Board and testified on this issue. The Planning Board denied Washington Gas Company's request to use the Chillum site for storing liquid natural gas. Washington Gas has gone to court to argue that the Planning Board does not have the authority to regulate where they locate their liquid natural gas storage tanks, yet they applied to them for a special exception contending that it would be the same use as previously held. Our response is that it did not make sense to store such a volatile chemical in a heavily residential area then, and it doesn't make common sense to do so now! September 11 has proven that terrorists' attacks are real. Call/Email your legislators. We need to make sure that they pass legislation regulating and controlling where LNG should be stored, and that they say no to Washington Gas Company on the Chillum site.

**16. Call – A – Bus** – The City's new Call-A-Bus is up and operating. It is larger in capacity, and more comfortable. The County provides the Call-A-Bus, but the City must maintain it and provide the driver. Through rider ship and use, we can offset the cost of the Call-A-Bus, so the next time you need to keep a regularly scheduled appointment, book it with the

Call-A-Bus. It will provide you with door-to-door service, help us with the cost issue, save gas, reduce wear and tear on your vehicle, provide an opportunity to meet some of your neighbors, and help our environment. The Call-A-Bus is not just for seniors or the dissimilarly-abled — You can use it too!

**17. Katrina Family** – The City of Mount Rainier and neighboring communities have continued to respond well to the Walker Family from New Orleans. Two of the Walker families now live in Mount Rainier and were donated "new" furniture by the Strong Families. One of the family members is temporarily working at City Hall assisting Mr. Manjani in our Finance Department. Other family members are teaching school in the County and/or driving school buses. In addition, Mount Rainier Gateway Child Care Center is providing day care services to another Walker family member. Day care services are still needed, and one family is still in need of a three bedroom apartment or house.

Kudos and thanks are due to the good people who have stepped forward and helped me with furniture, dishes, and other items for this family. We scheduled pick up of furniture for last Saturday and it rained all day long. Many of you still have items to be picked up, however, Mr. Louis Walker who has been assisting his family financially with truck rentals etc. for picking up furniture and other items is unable to provide the pick up service needed to get the remaining items. If you still have items to donate, please contact him directly so that arrangements can be made to either pick up your items or you can drop the off. Mr. Walker's number is **202-497-9642**. The Walker family is continuously grateful for your support in their time of need.

**18. GFS cleans lots on Varnum** – Have you noticed that the large lot next to the old Good Food Services business has been cleaned up? Well, if you have not, go by and see what a difference the removal of all those old trucks, buses, cars, and other junked items has made. Coming soon in GFS old surroundings will be a Family Dollar. Yes, we will have three Family Dollar stores within walking distance of most of us, but it should help

to draw new customers to that area of our City. Your Mayor and Council are beginning to work on a strategic plan to help guide the development of our business areas, and the kinds of businesses we wish to attract. Stay tuned for further development and information on this process.

**19. Amber Alert System** –The wireless industry has officially partnered with the **National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC)** to distribute AMBER Alerts to wireless consumers who opt in to receive geographically specified messages on their wireless devices through an AMBER Alert wireless messaging system.

Subscribers capable of receiving text messages, and whose wireless carrier participates in the Wireless AMBER Alerts Initiative, may opt in to receive alerts by registering at [www.wirelessamberalerts.org](http://www.wirelessamberalerts.org) or their wireless carrier's website. Users can designate up to five ZIP codes from which they'd like to be alerted in the case of an AMBER Alert activation. This system and your participation may save a child.

**20. Emergency Alert Systems** – The District of Columbia has set up an emergency alert system that will send an immediate alert to your cell phone and/or email address in case of an emergency. The Alert DC system uses the Roam Secure Alert Network to provide immediate text notification and update information during a major crisis or emergency. This system delivers important emergency alerts, notifications and updates on a range of devices including your e-mail account [work, home, other], cell phone, pager, Blackberry, and wireless PDA (Palm, iPAQ, etc.)

When an incident or emergency occurs, authorized DC Emergency Management personnel can rapidly notify you using this community alert system. Alert DC is your personal connection to real-time updates, instructions on where to go, what to do, or what not to do, who to contact and other important information.

Alert DC is available to citizens of the District of Columbia as well as individuals traveling to or working in the District.

**Mayor, continued on page 12**

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## Councilmember Knedler's Report

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Public Hearing on Zoning Standards. As you will see elsewhere in this issue, the Mayor and Council will hold a public hearing on Mon. Nov. 14 to hear comments on proposed changes to zoning standards in the residential areas of the City. The Council has been following the debate regarding the trend in some suburbs for developers to buy small houses, tear them down, and build what are termed "mcmansions." We have already witnessed at least one "tear-down" of a small house to be replaced by a 3-story house with 5 bedrooms and 3 full baths. While this might sound good for our tax base, the problem of affordable housing is greatly impacted by such tear-downs. Developers can afford to buy our small affordable bungalows, tear them down, and rebuild a huge house that can be sold for \$500,000 or more. So we end up losing small homes that would have been affordable for low and middle income families.

Another problem is that if you live in a small bungalow and the equally small bungalow next door is replaced with a huge 3-story home, you lose privacy in your backyard as well as being in the shadow of the new home.

The loss of green space when larger homes are built contributes to water pollution in the Anacostia and Chesapeake because the rain can no longer soak into the soil so more water flows into the storm drain system.

As a historic district, we have had a goal of preserving our bungalows and foursquare houses.

Even if we change the standards, the Council can support a variance request for situations where an addition or new house are appropriate for the site.

**REHABILITATION LOANS.** The state is offering low interest loans to homeowners who seek the state historic

tax credits for approved rehabilitation. Most (not all) homes in Mount Rainier qualify. For information, call Richard Brand, Office of Preservation Services, at (410) 514-7634. Or go to:

[www.marylandhistoricaltrust.net/loans.html](http://www.marylandhistoricaltrust.net/loans.html)

**BONUS BUCKS FOR KIDS.** Time to sign up with the A+ Bonus Bucks program at Giant. Giant gives money to the schools you designate every time you use your Giant bonus card. Go to:

[www.giantfood.com/aplus/aplus\\_pin.html](http://www.giantfood.com/aplus/aplus_pin.html)

**SUMMER READING PROGRAM.** The Washington Post listed the winners in the summer reading program. As in past years, libraries around the county used a themed program to entice children in preschool through high school to visit their local libraries during the summer break to check out books and record their selections in a log in exchange for prizes. This year's themes were Reading Ever After, for young children; Wild About Reading, for elementary students and preteens; and Just Read It, for teenagers. Readers who completed the program, which ran from June 1 to Aug. 31, were given prizes, among them Bowie Baysox tickets, coupons for pizza and used library books. Congratulations to the following children who participated at Mount Rainier Library:

- Reading Ever After: Jenny Chen, Yocelin Gomez, Teshawde James, Keke Reese.
- Wild About Reading: Lin Chen, Dajona Cook, Dantae Cook, Claudia Gomez, Dina Gomez, Robert Greene III, Apha James, Fidel Kangara, Breana Washington.
- Just Read It: Jerome Nelson, Courtney Tobias

**Public Forum, continued from page 1**

street, and a front porch is not included as part of the "house" so it can be even closer to the street than 20 feet. Proposed is a return to the old standard that the house and porch must be at least 25 feet back from the street. A variance would be needed from the standard to build closer to the street.

- 4) Currently the distance between the house and side lot line must be 8 feet on both sides, and that can be reduced to 4 feet on each side if the resulting building would be less than 14 feet in width to comply with the 8 foot standard. Proposed is a return to the old 17/8 standard that said the total of the widths of both side setbacks had to equal at least 17 and one side had to be at least 8 feet.
- 5) Current standards require that a sidewalk from a home's front door to the sidewalk along the street must be a minimum of 5 feet wide. There was no prior standard width for such a walk and it is proposed to opt out of this minimum.
- 6) Parking and loading standards set requirements for the number of parking spaces required for a house IF a parking district is established by the county or city for the residential area. Proposed is to opt out of these standards, but leave the standard in place which says that parking for at least 1 and a maximum of 2 on-site spaces must be provided per lot, but if the house has at least 20 feet of street parking in front of it, then the minimum of 1 space on-site is waived.
- 7) Currently, an accessory structure (garage, studio, shed) can be built as tall as the ridgeline of the house. A 2 story house could have a 2 story garage, for instance. Proposed is a return to the old standard which was a maximum of 15 feet high (or get a special exception).

## Mount Rainier Community Tool Shed Information

The Mount Rainier Community Tool Shed is located at 3601 Bunker Hill Road. For information, call 301-779-0133. The new hours are Saturdays 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

The Tool Shed has a collection of hand and power tools available at no charge for use by residents, businesses, and community groups of Mount Rainier.

An application must be completed prior to borrowing. Call City Hall or download an application at [www.mountrainier.org/community/toolshed](http://www.mountrainier.org/community/toolshed).

### November Tips

- Clean your gutters. Power washers and ladders are available at the toolshed.
- Rakes, chippers, and blowers are available for the leaves
- Dig gladiolus bulbs and store in dry place for the winter or mulch with a straw bale. The toolshed has shovels and forks.
- Time to tile your kitchen, entry, or bath. The toolshed has wet and dry tile cutters.
- Fertilize for next year's lawn 10-10-10. The toolshed has spreaders.
- Fix your molding with a hand or power miter.

## First Baptist Church of Mount Rainier

The first Baptist Church of Mount Rainier located at 32nd and Shepherd Streets in Mount Rainier invite you to come and worship with us on Thursday, November 24, 2005 Thanksgiving Day at 8 a.m.

Marcus N. Tillman, Pastor  
301-927-5565

## Mount Rainier's Response to Hurricane Katrina Relief Efforts

**Helping the Walker Family** — With one of the worst natural disasters in the history of our country, the Mayor and Council agreed unanimously to show our support by identifying and providing housing to Katrina Victims. An appeal is being made throughout the City of Mount Rainier for residents to open their doors to victims that are in need of housing. One of our businessmen, **Mr. Louis Walker** has more than 40 family members affected by this crisis. For the past two weeks, we have been working together to get his family members to the Washington metropolitan area. Several have arrived, but the greater majority should arrive over this weekend.

To date we have identified

- One house for a family of four (Patricia Fenn) – received long-term housing at Queenstown Apartment on 9/10
- Shared housing for a family of three (Mother is also pregnant) Nneka Barnes
- Housing for 6 family members (Malinda Miles)
- Day care for two family members (Gateway Child Development Center and Mount Rainier Learning Center)
- Assisted in job placement for several teachers and bus drivers
- Received a sofa and dresser (More furniture is needed. Furniture should be in good condition and immediately usable)
- Received \$100 in donations for food
- 25 boxes of clothes, diaper, baby clothes, blankets, and other supplies have been received and passed on to the Walker family

Discussions were held with all of our apartment complexes inviting them to join our housing effort by providing one apartment each to the families. Most had to consult with their corporate offices, but were hopeful that they would be able

to help us with housing. Unfortunately or fortunately, HUD sent out an emergency request for all apartment owners with vacant apartments to file them with HUD for a coordinated housing assignment process. This resulted in Queenstown Apartment making 20 of its units available and so far two of our families have received housing in Queenstown.

Food and furniture are priority needs now. If you are unable to open up your home for housing these families, please provide a bag of food and/or furniture. Whatever contribution you make will be most appreciated.

To make a donation, house a family or family member, offer child care services, provide furniture, or whatever your heart leads you to make available, please contact Malinda Miles at 301-699-1378 or [mayormiles@malindamiles.com](mailto:mayormiles@malindamiles.com). No contribution is too small. What is most needed: Furniture, Food, Housing, Transportation, Emergency Supplies and Employment.

If you are worried about and interested in finding loved ones in the New Orleans/Mississippi area, please go to: [www.familylinks.icrc.org](http://www.familylinks.icrc.org). **There are other links, but this one has been kept fairly up-to-date.**

## HMB Basketball Registration

The Hyattsville-Mount Rainier-Brentwood Boys and Girls Club will hold basketball registration from 6:45 to 8 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays through Nov. 18 at McGruder Park on Hamilton Street. Call Tracy at 301-931-2727.

Mayor, continued from page 9

Sign up for an account to receive alerts and emergency notifications today.

This is a free service. You may register for this service at <https://textalert.ema.dc.gov/index.php?CCbeck=1>.

**Note:** Subscribers may be charged, as set forth in their wireless provider's contract, for messages delivered to their wireless devices.

**20. Used Computers** – As part of an effort to help small municipalities with their computer needs, Homeland Security has donated four used computers to the City of Mount Rainier. Two of the computers will be housed at City Hall, one at the Community Tool Shed, and the fourth one at the City garage for the Bicycle Repair Shop.

**21. Design Review Committee Vacancy** — The Town Center Design Review Committee (TCDRC an advisory committee to the county Planning Board) reviews all proposed exterior changes to properties within the mixed use town center zone (business district along Rhode Island and 34<sup>th</sup> St.) in Mount Rainier.

The TCDRC is a committee of six people — two representatives City residents, two representatives for City businesses, and two representatives from City government.

The committee meets monthly and its work has had and will continue to have a major impact on the business district in down town Mount Rainier. One example of what is considered by the TCDRC is signage used by businesses along Rhode Island Avenue and 34<sup>th</sup> Street.

If you are interested, contact James Booth (301-985-6585) at City Hall for how to be considered for this Committee. Bilingual applicants are welcome and encouraged to apply.

**22. Annexation** – Continues to be an area being explored by the Mayor and Council. However, there were no new developments during the past month. During the coming months, Mayor and Council along with City Staff James Booth will actively develop and annexation strategy for expanding the City's borders and tax base. The businesses along the west side of Queens Chapel Road and along Chillum Road remain primary interests. Preliminary exploration is underway and will become a major thrust

for the Mayor and Council in the coming months.

**23. Mount Rainier Giving Project** — It's almost that time of year again, and I would like to ask our residents to begin thinking about families in our community that might require an Extra Measure of Care. If you know of such a family (without a big to do) please give their name to any member of the Mayor and Council. We will work together to make their holiday season a little better. MRGP members, if you are still out there and taking this project on again this year, PLEASE let me hear from you. Last year this group served more than 18 families right here in our City. If called upon, please pitch in and help make this a wonderful holiday season for every one.

**24. Mount Rainier Business Association (MRBA)** – The Mount Rainier Business Association meeting was cancelled in October. It will resume meeting on the third Wednesday of each month with the next meeting scheduled for November 16 at 6:30pm at the Mount Rainier Police Station. Mark your calendars. Nominations will also be taken for persons interested in serving on the Mount Rainier Business Association's Board of Directors. All offices will be open. Current officers are eligible to run again. So, please come to the meeting prepared to make nominations or be nominated for office.

**25. Mount Rainier Cable Commission** – The Mount Rainier Cable Commission continues to meet and make progress in their deliberations about better programming for our cable channel. They are also attending Prince George's County's Cable Commission meetings, and looking into one legislative proposal to allow Verizon to provide cable services in the County and State. Our State legislators and Federal legislators are also looking into this request from Verizon. Verizon is proposing to take away municipal rights to have a voice and say in the right of ways that are used by utility companies. Currently, Comcast pays the City more than \$64,000 in franchise fees for using our public right of ways. They also provide grants for our cable equipment and our free cable channel. If we want to keep these services and fees for the City, we need to let our County, State and Federal officials hear from us ASAP. The Cable Commission meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> and

4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at Mount Rainier City Hall.

**26. Mount Rainier Police Department** — Members of the Mount Rainier Police Department conducted a Focused and Rigorous Enforcement Operation on Friday, October 10.

Our after school program was dealt a small set back because we will not be able to use the Mount Rainier Elementary School (MRES) for the after school program this year. MRES will be operating two after school programs (they operated one last year) this year. Our after school program will be moving to Thomas Stone Elementary. Dr. Ruth Hodges has agreed to allow our program to operate out of this location and we are happy to be there. Our program usually begins the 1st-2nd week of October.

The Department is sponsoring a Gang Awareness Seminar for our residents on October 26, from 7 until 10 p.m. Due to the anticipated size of this event; we are looking to move the seminar to a larger room perhaps at Artspace. This training is sponsored by the Maryland Crime Prevention Institute and will use local talent to share the message.

Our two new officers; David Powers and Robb Caplan have been assigned to field training. We anticipate their release from field training by the end of November.

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## Mount Rainier Community Craft Sale

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The 11th Annual Mount Rainier Community Craft Sale will be held Saturday, December 3, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Cedar Lane Methodist Church.

Handcrafted items by local artists include stone stamps, soaps and balms, textiles and needlework, paintings, photography cards, pottery, jewelry and woodwork. There will also be a children's craft corner where children can make holiday gifts. The sale would not be complete without freshly made food, baked goods and ice cream. Don't miss out on this wonderful event. Bring yourself and a few friends too. Cedar Lane Methodist Church is located on the corner of Bunker Hill and 35th Streets.

## Nature Center Programs

4701 31st Place (Arundel and 31st)  
301-927-2163  
Center is open Tues. to Sat. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

All programs require reservations.  
After School Program, Off the Couch and Off the Hook (ages 8-12)  
Every Thurs through Dec. 22, 2 to 4 p.m.

*Mystery Trip and Potluck Lunch*  
Weds., Nov. 2  
Washington DC, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. (free)

*Kukwva Dance Workout (ages 16 and up)*  
Sat., Nov. 12 to Dec. 17  
10 to 11 a.m. \$20/4 classes

*Mount Rainier Puppet Theater*  
Sat., Nov. 19, "Short Stories"  
11 to 11:45 a.m.

*Craft-a-Rama*  
Sat., Nov. 5 and Sat., Nov. 12, 2 to 4 p.m.  
(\$2 fee)  
Fabric crafts (please bring a tshirt, bag, etc.) to decorate with paint.

*Adult Trip to Blackwater Nat'l Wildlife Refuge*  
Sat., Nov. 12, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., \$10 fee.

*Birding Trip to Bombay Hook Nat'l Wildlife Refuge*  
Sat., Dec. 10, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., \$10 fee

*Santa Jam (ages 13 to 15)*  
Fri., Dec. 16, 7 to 10 p.m. (\$5 fee)

*Campfire Event*  
Sat., Dec. 17, noon to 1:30 p.m. (\$2 fee)

*Mount Rainier Puppet Theater*  
11 to 11:45 a.m.  
Sat., Dec. 17, "Night Before Christmas"

## Home Buying, Ownership, and Improvement Workshop Series

The City of Mount Rainier hosted its first in a series of workshops on home ownership. As part of Mount Rainier's Community and Economic Development program, a series of monthly workshops will be held to address topics on home buying, programs for first time home buyers, home ownership, home improvement and property maintenance, debt/ credit management and wealth building.

On October 13, 2005, the City of Mount Rainier partnered with Washington Mutual Home Loans to provide an introductory workshop on the basics of home buying from the initial stages of credit assessment, selecting a bank or financing institution, and refinancing options. Refreshments and informational packages were provided by Washington Mutual Home Loans.

Washington Mutual Home Loans representatives Sherifah Munis and Patrice McLean provided an excellent overview of the home buying process. Both Ms. Munis and Ms. McLean are Loan Consultants and they walked workshop attendees step by step through the ABC's of home buying, determining the right mortgage package, personal budgeting and improving your credit, and finding the right financial institution to finance your home.

Council Member Alta Morton (Ward 1) shared her expertise in the area of affordable housing, federal and state low income home buying programs, community development, and home ownership. Council Member Morton was excited about the opportunity to help Mount Rainier residents that are interested in transitioning from renters to home owners.

County Council Member Will Campos (District 2) attended the event and commended the City of Mount Rainier for providing the information to the residents of Mount Rainier. County Council Will Campos indicated that he was in the process of purchasing a home and asked the workshop panelist for recommendations that he can apply as he goes through the various stages of the home buying process.

Resident Robert Taylor thanked the panelist for providing him with insight on

how to seek alternative funding for individuals and seniors that may have special circumstances that are not addressed by traditional lenders and the larger banks. Mr. Taylor was grateful for the opportunity to talk one on one with loan consultants and specialist in the area home buying.

Prince George's County Department of Housing and Community Development provided information brochures on the County's first time and low income home buyers programs. County Executive Jack Johnson and Prince George's County have made affordable housing and home ownership one of the County's top priorities. The County Office of Housing and Community Development has offered to provide technical assistance, additional information and is interested in participating with Mount Rainier on future workshops related to home buying and ownership.

Several residents commented on future workshop topics and stressed an interest in discussions related to home improvement. Future workshops will cover home improvement and the City will invite local area contractors, County and municipal representatives as well as home improvement specialist to serve as panelist for the next scheduled workshop.

The workshop was taped was shown several times throughout the month on Mount Rainier Cable Channel 71.

If you are interested in participating as a panelist for a future workshop or would like to reserve your seat in advance, please contact Council Member Alta Morton at 202-309-5455 or James Booth, Assistant City Manager at City Hall at 301-985-6585.

Please RSVP for this event by calling

The next Home Improvement Workshop will be held during the month of December 2005.

Details will be provided in the December 2005 *Message*.

Stay tuned and stay involved.

City Hall at 301-985-6585

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## Gang Program a Success

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By Donald Bell, C-SAFE

The Mount Rainier Police Department held a successful seminar on Gang Violence and Awareness at the Mount Rainier Elementary School on Wednesday night October 26. The event was cosponsored by the Maryland Crime Prevention Institute and hosted by Acting Sergeant Victor Kenworthy who welcomed invited speakers and residents, including Council Member Bryan Knedler. County Council Member Will Campos (Dist. 2) stopped by briefly to support the event and emphasize the importance of the initiative.

The message was clear from speakers that the obvious and clear signs of gang activities are everywhere, including our community. According to Hyattsville Police Corporal Michael Rudinski, the presence of gangs is something the entire community needs to recognize and help police address the issue of gang presence in your neighborhood. No neighborhood is exempt and it's everyone's responsibility to report and cooperate with police and other agencies by reporting suspicious activity before it becomes a major problem. Speaker Anne Thacker of the Maryland Crime Prevention Institute talked about how bullying in and out of schools also leads to young people being drawn away from school and sometimes forced into lives of violence.

Chief Keeney has announced that crime prevention and gang awareness will continue to be one of the important strategies for the police department and he encourages residents and parents to talk to one another through schools forums, neighborhood watch groups, social events, and networks to keep our community free and safe. Everyone is invited. Stay tune for more.

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## Announcements

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The following web sites may be of interest to you.

Malinda Miles — [www.malindamiles.com](http://www.malindamiles.com)  
Historic Mount Rainier Maryland — [www.mountrainiermd.org](http://www.mountrainiermd.org)  
Mount Rainier Police Department — [www.mountrainiermd.org/government/mrpd/index.html](http://www.mountrainiermd.org/government/mrpd/index.html)  
Bunker Hill Volunteer Fire and Rescue Company — [www.mrvfd.org](http://www.mrvfd.org)  
Mount Rainier Elementary School — [www.pgcps.org/~mrainier/](http://www.pgcps.org/~mrainier/)  
Thomas Stone Elementary School — [www.pgcps.org/~tstone/index.htm](http://www.pgcps.org/~tstone/index.htm)  
Hyattsville Middle School — [www.pgcps.org/~hyattsms/](http://www.pgcps.org/~hyattsms/)  
Northwestern High School — [www.pgcps.pg.k12.md.us/~nwest](http://www.pgcps.pg.k12.md.us/~nwest)  
Prince George's County Municipal Association [www.mdmunicipal.org/chapterweb/pgcma](http://www.mdmunicipal.org/chapterweb/pgcma)  
Maryland Municipal League — [www.mdmunicipal.org](http://www.mdmunicipal.org)  
Friends of the Mount Rainier Library (FOL) — [www.mtrainierfol.org/](http://www.mtrainierfol.org/)  
Gateway Community Development Corporation [www.gateway-cdc.org](http://www.gateway-cdc.org)  
Washington Metro Area Transit Service [www.wmata.com/](http://www.wmata.com/)  
Mount Rainier Business Association (MRBA) [www.mrbassociation.org](http://www.mrbassociation.org)

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## Mount Rainier Bike Coop

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On Saturday, October 22, 2005m volunteers from the Mount Rainier Bike Coop and Trips for Kids Metro DC transported bike repair equipment and tools from Urban Rangers Recycle a Bicycle Program in Adams Morgan, to the Mount Rainier Bike Coop behind City Hall.

Participants included Pat Childers, director of TFK Metro DC, PJ Park, organizer of the Mount Rainier Bike Coop, Ken Scott, TFK volunteer, Katie Davis, director of Urban Rangers, Mike Park, photographer, and David McKinley-Ward, volunteer. The coop is now equipped to work on bikes. The next step is to clean out and paint the interior to brighten up the place, and to arrange, inventory and organize the equipment.

For info on TFK Metro DC, go to: [www.tfkmetrodc.org](http://www.tfkmetrodc.org). The Mount Rainier Bike Coop is a new branch of the tool shed. Its hours will be the same as the tool shed, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday morning. All residents can become members for \$5 per family per six months. Members are required to volunteer in the coop—taking kids on mountainbike rides organized by TFK, supervising in the coop, serving as an assistant mechanic or head mechanic (head mechanics will teach assistant mechanics). Members can use the equipment and tools to fix and maintain their bikes, and to make bikes from donated parts (with help from mechanics).

Forward inquiries to [pauljosephpark@yahoo.com](mailto:pauljosephpark@yahoo.com).

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## Beautification Awards

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The Prince George's County Beautification Committee handed out the annual awards on Sept. 28. This year, as in years past, several of our local gardeners won recognition. Queenstown Apts and its professional gardeners, Bozzuto Landscaping were recognized again this year for its grounds. Kathy Shollenberger (30<sup>th</sup> and Shepherd) and Joanna Viudez (4100 block of 29<sup>th</sup>) won awards for a second year. And, Bryan Knedler, 3000 block Bunker Hill Rd., brought home a special award for "Perennial Victorian Garden."

**Council Meetings**

1st and 3rd Tues., 7 p.m., City Hall lower level

**Beautification Committee**—3rd Mon., 7:00 p.m., City Hall

**Cable Commission**—2nd and 4th Fri., 7:00 p.m., City Hall

**Friends of Library** ([mtrainierfol.org](http://mtrainierfol.org))—Mon., 7:30 p.m., Community Vision, 34th St.

**Gateway Municipalities CDC**—2nd Thurs., 7:00–9:00 p.m., 4102 Webster St.

**MRBA**—2nd Weds., 6:30 p.m., **Mount Rainier Police Station**

**Tool Shed Committee**—2nd Mon., 7:00 p.m., City Hall

**MUTC Town Center Design Review Committee**—2nd Weds., 6:15 p.m., City Hall

**Design Review Board**—3rd Weds., 7:00 p.m., City Hall

**Tree Commission**—2nd Thurs., 7:00 p.m., City Hall

Note: The above Committees are scheduled to meet according to the above schedule. Please check the City's website or contact City Hall to verify if a meeting is being held on a particular date. Meeting notices are posted at City Hall prior to the scheduled meeting.

## November–December calendar

Every Monday is yard waste day. No appointments necessary. Please have all bulk trash out by 7:00 a.m. on bulk trash day and all appointments made before 12 noon on the Friday preceding bulk trash day.

November 2	Regular Trash Pick Up
November 4	Recyclables Pick Up
November 7	Bulk Trash (By appointment only) Yard Waste Pick Up
November 9	Regular Trash Pick Up
November 11	CITY HALL CLOSED, VETERANS DAY No Recycling Pick up
November 14	Yard Waste Pick Up
November 16	Regular Trash Pick Up
November 18	Recyclables Pick Up
November 21	Bulk Trash (By appointment only) Yard Waste Pick Up
November 23	Regular Trash Pick Up
November 24	CITY HALL CLOSED, THANKSGIVING
November 25	Recyclables Pick Up
November 28	Yard Waste Pick Up
November 30	Regular Trash Pick Up

December 2	Recyclables Pick Up
December 5	Bulk Trash (By appointment only)
December 7	Regular Trash Pick Up
December 9	Recyclables Pick Up
December 12	Yard Waste Pick Up (By appointment only)
December 14	Regular Trash Pick Up
December 16	Recyclables Pick Up
December 19	Bulk Trash (By appointment only)
December 21	Regular Trash Pick Up
December 23	Recyclables Pick Up
December 26	CITY HALL CLOSED
December 28	Regular Trash Pick Up
December 30	Recyclables Pick Up

Starting December, every 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday will be Yard Waste Pick Up. Call (301 985-6558) to make an appointment. Please have all bulk trash out by 7:00 a.m. on bulk trash day and all appointments for both bulk trash and yard waste made before 12 noon on the Friday preceding pick up day.

www.mountrainiermd.org

**Mayor**

**Malinda Miles**  
301-699-1378

mayormiles@malindamiles.com

**City Manager**

**Jeannelle B. Wallace**  
301-985-6585, ext. 22

fax: 301-985-6595

jwallace@mountrainiermd.org

**Asst. City Manager**

**James Booth**  
301-985-6585

fax: 301-985-6595

jbooth@mountrainiermd.org

**Councilmembers**

**Ward 1**

**Carol Gandee**  
301-277-6377

gandydncr@aol.com

**Alta Morton**

202-309-5455

altaward1@hotmail.com

**Ward 2**

**Pedro Briones**  
301-277-1833

pedroeb@aol.com

**Bryan Knedler**

301-699-3134

bknedler@aol.com

**Message**

**Terry Kelly**

tkelly60@aol.com

## Important Numbers

City Hall open: Mon.–Fri., 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Police Department admin. offices open 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Public Works open 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

47th District Reps  
301-858-3745

Sen. Gwendolyn Britt

301-858-3326

Del. Doyle Niemann

Del. Rosetta Parker

Del. Victor Ramirez

Call-A-Bus 301-985-6586  
(hours M–F, 9 am–2 pm)

City Code Enforcement Office  
301-985-6551

City Hall

301-985-6585; fax: 301-985-6595

**City Police Department**

**FKeeney@mountrainiermd.org**

301-985-6565 (emergency calls)

301-985-6566 (nonemergency calls)

301-985-6590 (administrative)

City Public Works 301-985-6583,  
Bulk Trash Appts. 301-985-6558

Child Abuse  
and Neglect Hotline  
301-699-8605

Congressman Chris Van Hollen's  
Mount Rainier Office Information:

3409 Rhode Island Avenue

301-927-5223 (voice)

301-927-6122 (fax)

Monday–Friday 9:00 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

Consumer Affairs  
301-470-7534

County Animal Control  
301-499-8301

County Building Permits  
301-883-5784

County Executive

Jack Johnson

301-952-4131

County Councilman

Will Campos

301-952-4436

Energy Assistance

301-422-5110

Family Services

301-699-2680

Fire Department

301-985-5406 (non-emergency)

911 (emergency)

Gateway CDC

4102 Webster Street

301-864-3860

Gazette Circulation

301-670-7350

Health Department

301-386-0300

Library 301-864-8937

Hours: M–W 10:30 (closed 2–2:30)

Sat. 10–5

Landlord-Tenant Commission

800-487-6007

Mt. Rainier Nature/Rec Center

4701 31st Place

301-927-2163

M–National Capital

Park and Planning,

Park Permit Office

301-918-8111

North Brentwood Comm. Ctr  
4012 Webster St.

301-864-0756

Office of Handicapped Services  
TDD 301-627-3352

Park Police

301-459-3232 (emergency)

301-459-9088 (non-emergency)

Parks and Recreation

301-699-2407

Pepco

Lights Out

1-877-737-2662

(you must give the 10-digit phone  
number or 10-digit account number  
for location of outage)

**Live Wire, Other Emergency**

202-872-3432

Post Office

301-864-5168

Public Defender

301-699-2760

Public Schools

301-952-6000

State's Attorney

301-952-3500

Washington Gas Light

703-750-2500

WSSC

301-206-8000

301-206-4002 (emergency)

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Mount Rainier, MD 20712

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**November 2005 Message  
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