



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Abell Community:

The summer has come to an end and we are all anticipating the rapidly approaching winter. For those of you who haven't heard: Charles Village was named one of America's Top 10 Neighborhoods by the American Planning Association. Some of the article highlights are the painted ladies and the Waverly Farmer's Market. Please check out the article: <http://www.planning.org/greatplaces/index.htm>. Next, I like to thank Paul Burk for another successful summer of movies. I know many of you enjoyed watching the movies and we are looking forward to next summer's movies. Third, the installation of the new swing sets was completed just in time for the Street Fair. I know many of us were worried how the swings would look on the space but I've received a lot of positive feedback from you and the swings are getting a lot of use.

Fourth, I thought our Annual AIA Street Fair was another success on September 14, 2008. It was nice to see so many of you out on such a hot day. We were honored to have Mayor Sheila Dixon any City Council Woman Mary Pat Clark stop by the fair. I would like to thank all of the volunteers and especially thank the chairs of the planning subcommittees: Michael Raitzyk, Matt Kirby, Jim Anthony, Kathleen Hruska, Simone Thompson, Miruna Patrascanu, Paul Burk, and Jake Seagull. Lastly, a week later we had the new member social. It was nice meeting many of our new neighbors. Thanks to all of you who brought food and thanks to Miruna for coordinating the event.

There are several events coming up in the next few months:

1. November 15, 2008 at 10:30 a.m.: General Membership Meeting at the Waverly Library

2. December 21, 2008 at 7 p.m.: Christmas Caroling. Please contact Jim Anthony for additional information at 410-243-2269.

3. December 31, 2008 at 7 p.m.: New Year's Eve Progressive Potluck Dinner. Please contact Robin Truiett-Theodorson at 410-366-7996 if you would like to host a course.

I hope to see you at the upcoming events!

Warmest Regards,

Robin Truiett-Theodorson
President, Abell Improvement Association

Inside:

Charles

Street Trolley

Pro & Con

—

Contractors

—

Abell

Christmas

Caroling

—

Thank You

Silent Auction

Supporters

Noted

The Passing of Gil Stange

The Abell community lost one of its true pioneers this past spring. Gilbert William Stange, Jr., known to family, friends and neighbors as Gil, passed away in May. He was born August 6, 1931 at Union Memorial Hospital and lived on Abell Avenue his entire life. He and Bob Richmond, who grew up a few doors away, shared many childhood adventures and witnessed the changes that our community has undergone through many decades. A bit of this lore was captured in an interview with Bob for *The Charles Villager* a while back, but Gil was not well enough to be interviewed at that time, to our great loss. Gil and his wife Nancy raised their son and daughter here and became grandparents five times. They took part in many an AIA meeting and in all of the street fairs. In recent years he became a much loved presence, sitting on his front porch, greeting all who passed. Small children were particularly drawn to him, and continue to miss him, as will this community of which he was such an integral part.

Abell's Own Hometown Hero

This summer **Vonnie Gowe**, of the 3000 block of Abell Avenue, received a 2008 *Hometown Hero* award from the American Red Cross. Vonnie's dedication to rescuing, healing and arranging adoptions for small animals and birds is legendary in, and well beyond, our community. She began her rescue service--Nest For The Night--after witnessing a screaming dog being lifted with a neck noose into an animal control vehicle. According to her partner, Cassandra Orem, that experience "sky-rocketed Vonnie's passion to involve others in making a humane difference for animals." NFTN is operated entirely by volunteers, including Cassandra and their five year-old daughter Mikayla. The veterinary care, shelter and adoption programs that Vonnie directs depend on her family's contributions and donations from the community. Over the last ten years they have ministered to, cared and found homes for all varieties of pets and urban wildlife. We are grateful to Delegate Maggie McIntosh for calling Vonnie's compassion and commitment to the attention of the awards committee and extend our warmest congratulations to our neighbor.

Donations to NFTN--in the form of food, crates, medicines, equipment, cash -- would be a great way to let her know how proud we are of our Hometown Hero. Monetary donations in the form of checks should be made payable to: 'Aardmore Veterinary Clinic'.

-submitted by Jo Ann Robinson

Contractor Recommendations

From time to time, the AIA's officers are asked by our members if we can provide recommendations for local contractors. This is something that, as an organization, the AIA is not in a good position to do - nor do we wish to get into the business of endorsing specific companies or businesspeople. But realizing that this could be a valuable resource for the community, we asked AIA members to share their recommendations for plumbers, electricians, painters, etc.; anyone who has worked on or around their home. Here are a few of the responses we received:

Kathleen Wilsbach:

*For kitchen and bath remodeling, I'd highly recommend **Courtyard Kitchens**.*

<http://www.courtyardkitchensofhampstead.com/>

Jonathan Wetmiller:

*I highly recommend **James McDonald & Son Roofing**: (202) 255-5285.*

*I'd also recommend **Jensen Plumbing**: (410) 467-1813*

Gina Weaver:

*Excellent for interior/exterior painting--**Cutlip Painting Co, Casey Cutlip** 443-631-2416*

*Also had a good experience with **Long Fence** for an iron railing, and **Chris Jensen** for plumbing*

Steve Frank:

*Ed the Electrician, **Pripstein Electric**, 443-552-3007 office, 410-458-6788 mobile*

Robert McClintock:

*Replacement Windows: **Jeff Hardesty** - Severna Park - 410-812-2001. Replaced all of our windows, quality workman, fast, all business, good price and NICE GUY!!*

Do you have a recommendation for a contractor that you'd like to share? We'll continue to run this column as long as we get submissions. Send your recommendations to Paul Burk at burkpaul@hotmail.com.

The Charles Street Trolley - Pro vs Con

As most of you know, planning is underway for a proposed trolley that will run between University Parkway and the Inner Harbor. Since it was initially proposed over 3 years ago, questions have been raised about the feasibility, value and purpose of the project. Here with thoughts on the pros and cons of the Charles Street Trolley are Kristin Speaker of The Charles Street Development Corporation, and Abell resident (and AIA Treasurer) Steve Gewirtz.

PRO: A Trolley Will Expand Transit Options and Encourage Development

Kristin Speaker

Since 2004, Charles Street Development Corporation (CSDC) has studied the feasibility of a fixed-rail trolley in the Charles Street corridor that would connect the Inner Harbor with University Parkway. The trolley would travel north on Charles Street from the Convention Center and south on St. Paul Street from University Parkway, before crossing over at Mt. Royal Avenue and heading down Maryland, Cathedral, and Liberty Streets. Because the trolley would run with mixed traffic, it would not eliminate a travel lane, but would require the removal of 2-to-3 street parking spaces at each stop.

A trolley line would not only serve to improve north-south transportation in the City for residents, students, and visitors from out of town, but would also connect the corridor's many cultural and educational institutions, provide an increased pedestrian presence and decrease the need for parking, benefit the environment, raise property values and encourage infill development in areas that are targeted for change, and improve overall quality of life.

Since its inception, the trolley project has been premised on the creation of high-quality transit to improve service for existing bus riders and attract the many residents of Abell and others in the corridor who could ride transit to work, shopping, entertainment, or school but do not currently do so because the existing bus service is unreliable and uncomfortable. Research has shown that high-quality rail service can attract 15-30 percent more riders than traditional bus service.

In August, 2007 a Community Steering Committee was formed that included 40 stakeholders who provided input on the design, ridership, finance and governance issues related to the project.

-continued-

CON: A Trolley Will Add Another Surtax and Provides Questionable Benefit

Steve Gewirtz

The Charles Street Development Corporation has proposed that Baltimore City construct a fixed rail trolley (streetcar) connecting Charles Village with the Inner Harbor. In our area, the route will go north on Charles Street to University Parkway, loop to the northwest to make the sharp turn onto University Parkway, go east one block, and then proceed south on St. Paul St. It is proposed that the trolley run every 10 minutes during rush hours and every 15 minutes other times, but that will not be set in the legislation. Presumably, fares will mesh with those of the MTA, but that will not be written into the legislation either. The major justification given for the trolley is that it will spur a great deal of high-rise residential development along the trolley route.

In going past the Washington Monument, the trolley will cause fixed rails and overhead power lines to be placed in a very historic area of Baltimore. Grades there are near the limit of what is possible for a trolley. The trolley will make it much more difficult to hold the Book Fair and the Flower Mart there. And a blockage anywhere on the entire trolley route will force the entire system to shut down.

\$85 million of the estimated \$160 million construction cost will be paid with tax increment financing. This means that the City will issue construction bonds and pledge a fixed percentage of the increase, after a certain date, in real property tax revenue within a quarter mile of Charles Street to the payment of those bonds. A backup tax district or the full faith and credit of the City, depending on how it is set up, will kick in if the increase in revenue is insufficient to make the bond payments. Given the current state of the economy, one has to wonder where all the expected development is or whether the backup financing will in fact have to kick in.

-continued-

PRO: A Trolley Will Expand Transit Options and Spur Development (cont'd)

CSDC has been very appreciative of all the thought and hard work that has been put into the process and will continue to seek community input.

The one-time capital cost is estimated to be \$160 million and the yearly operating cost is estimated to be \$4.5 million. Possible capital funding sources include Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funds, as well as City, State and Federal funds. A variety of sources to cover the cost of operations are being discussed: farebox revenue, advertising, a contribution from institutional non-profits along the corridor, a benefit assessment on commercial properties, and City Funding. All potential funding sources will continue to be explored.

September 2008 saw the formation of the Charles Street Trolley Corporation (CSTC), a non-profit organization whose mission is to continue the planning process in regards to financing, governance, and operations of the proposed trolley system. Issues that are currently being studied include the possibility of alternate energy sources that would allow for a wireless segment of the system, the location of the vehicle maintenance facility, and logistic coordination with the various festivals and events that occur throughout the trolley route. Phase II of the engineering study is scheduled to be completed next summer.

For more information on the Charles Street Trolley, go to www.charlesstreet.org/trolley

CON: A Trolley Will Add Another Surtax and Provides Questionable Benefit (cont'd)

In addition, a Trolley Authority will be set up to run the trolley, along with a trolley benefits district. As presently proposed, the Authority will not be able to tax owner occupied residential property (but the exemption is less broad than the eligibility for the Homestead Tax Credit), but it will tax other properties. The nonprofits (JHU, the BMA, U. of Baltimore, MICA, the Walters, various churches, etc.) along the route will collectively voluntarily have to pay what would be the tax on all properties exempt from the tax, or else the Trolley Authority and the trolley tax will terminate. I know it sounds crazy, but if JHU should cease paying, the City will then have no dedicated funds to operate the trolley.

The Charles Street Trolley Corporation has been set up to construct and operate this trolley, and its board members include people who appear to represent JHU, developers, BMA, and CVCA. If the Charles Street Trolley Corporation takes over operation of the trolley, will it be subject to the Open Meetings Act and the public Information Act if the Authority should cease to exist? David Funk, who drafted the proposed legislation, has promised to insert a clause that the trolley cannot be operated by a private corporation, and he claims that the Corporation was created only to handle things until the Trolley Authority is set up.

There is a further twist to all this. The City is planning to set up free circulator bus service on three routes. One route would go from the Inner Harbor to Penn Station. It would be easy enough to extend that route to University Parkway, but the City claims that that is too expensive. However, the City is willing to drop the circulator bus route in the Charles Street corridor and apply the money it would thus save to the trolley. But if the City can afford the additional costs of the trolley, it certainly can afford to extend the circulator.

In short, it is hard to make sense of the present trolley plans, especially as the national economy is going south. There are far better ways to spend the City's money, especially to spend a smaller amount on extending the circulator bus to University Parkway. We do not need another benefits district and another surtax.

For more on the downside of the trolley, visit:
www.trolleytrouble.org

A Special *Thank You* To This Year's Street Fair & Silent Auction Supporters

The AIA Silent Auction raised \$1865 at this year's Street Fair. Our silent auction success was made possible by the generous donations of our neighborhood shop owners, kind neighbors with unique talents, and all those wonderful shoppers who bid at the auction!

We'd like to thank the local businesses who supported our neighborhood—please let them know you appreciate their support. And as the holidays approach, skip the crowds at the mall and shop locally!

A special thank you to the following shops & businesses...

Kashmir Imports	Greenmount Loan & Jewelry
Gertrude's at the BMA	Linder Automotive
Eddie's of Charles Village	The Charles Theater
Shine Collective	Fetch Food.com
Double Dutch Boutique	Pete's Grille
Video Americain	Falkenhan's Hardware
Hopkins Symphony Orchestra	Gordon Florist
Center Stage	Carma's Café
Falls Road Running Store	Zeke's Coffee
MacMillan Custom Framing	Neopol Smokery

Also, thank you to all of the AIA neighbors whose donations showcase their unique talents and generosity (or a waning interest in bocce...):

Brian Ralph's original artwork for the 2008 Street Fair
Robert McClintock's Charles Village giclee print
Shelley Treadway's *Belgian Bistro* cooking lesson
James Anthony's wine and cheese party and *Taste of Italy* basket
Freda Kirkham's wine from her family's vineyard
John Pallo's original artwork
Shervon White's massage
Bill Nelson's donation from La Tavola
Meg Stoltzfus and Patrick McMahan's bocce set
Susanne Riveles's crystal candlestick
Michael Decker's ceramic vase

If you are interested in helping with the 2009 silent auction please email Miruna.patrascanu@accenture.com or call Miruna at 443-756-1409.

AND...

Thanks go out to **The Wine Source** who provided beer and wine again at this year's Street Fair.

AND ESPECIALLY...

Thanks to all in our community who volunteered to make this year's Street Fair another resounding success!

- Bulletin Board -

Officers' Contact List

Robin Truiett-Theodorson,
President
3140 Abell Avenue, 410-366-7996
r.truiett@att.net

Paul Burk, Vice President
3218 Abell Avenue, 410-366-3883
burkpaul@hotmail.com

Steve Gewirtz, Treasurer
3007 Guilford Ave, 410-243-1850
gewirtz@bellatlantic.net

Kathleen Hruska, Corresponding Secretary
3116 Abell Avenue, 410-467-8566
kshruska@mac.com

Linda Forlifer, Recording Secretary
315 E. 33rd Street, 410-243-1287
lef@press.jhu.edu

Email list and other info:
www.abellimprovement.org

RECYCLING SCHEDULE

2nd & 4th Wednesdays
of the month:

11/12, 11/26, 12/10,
12/24

Regular trash pickup is every
Tuesday and Friday morning.

DUMPSTER DATES

11/19 - 11/20

AIA Membership Meeting Sat. Nov. 15th 10:30 AM

**Waverly Public Library
(400 E. 33rd Street)**

Agenda Items:

- 2008 Street Fair Recap
- Barclay School Grants Program
- Trash Dumpster
- New Year's Progressive Dinner

Abell Community Christmas Caroling - Sunday December 21st

The AIA will once again be organizing a Christmas Caroling outing - this year to be held on Sunday, December 21st. Carolers will meet at Jim Anthony's home at 3212 Abell at 7:00PM. As in years past, carolers will serenade the Abell community with selections from the holiday canon before returning to Jim's house for post-caroling refreshments.

Interested in taking part? Contact Jim Anthony for details - 410-243-2269 or janthony@towson.edu

New Year's Eve Progressive Potluck Dinner

It's not too early to start thinking about New Year's Eve, and where better to spend it than right here in your own neighborhood? Join us as we *progress* through 4 courses - Appetizers, Entree, Dessert, and Champagne - at 4 different homes in the Abell community. Bring a dish to share at one or more of the courses. Festivities begin at 7PM and conclude when the clock strikes midnight.

To volunteer to host a course, or to participate in this year's Progressive Dinner, contact Robin Truiett-Theodorson: r.truiett@att.net or 410-366-7996.