



NEWSLETTER SPRING 2021

Newsletters and Events are posted on

GreaterFarmland.org

facebook.com/GreaterFarmland

WHAT GFCA IS DOING...

It's been a difficult year for everyone. Among our missions, we aim to bring our neighbors together, support each other, and foster a sense of community. We have been unable to socialize as we previously did through our parties, yard sale, and other in-person events. The GFCA board, however, has been actively working to create new methods for us to connect with each other and to maintain our community.

- ◆ GFCA has a premium Zoom account so that we can hold large-capacity meeting of unlimited length
- ◆ We have two ongoing "Conversations" series programs on Zoom, see article inside
- ◆ There have been two general meetings to discuss issues with some of our local politicians
- ◆ We sponsored the Lego Truck that gave away hundreds of mini-build kits to our kids!!
- ◆ The listserv continues to be a lively source of topical discussion, charitable opportunities, and general information
- ◆ We held a Fourth of July house decorating contest
- ◆ 300 neighbors attended an Equality/Inclusion/Justice parade, organized by a community family
- ◆ The landscaping contract with Trillium Landscaping has been renewed to maintain four main traffic circles/islands
- ◆ Trillium will re-landscape the circle at Old Stage Road & Stonewood Lane, now that the gas leak has been repaired
- ◆ We will print a new 2021 Neighborhood Directory and distribute it to all GFCA paid members
- ◆ The GFCA board continues to meet to plan for future community-building events. See GreaterFarmland.org/events

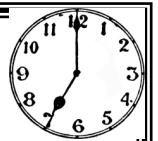
The GFCA Board conducts meetings by Zoom, which are open to the community. To attend, please email ejrich56@yahoo.com. The next GFCA board meeting will be on Wednesday, June 30, 7 pm.



IMPORTANT MEETINGS TO ADD TO YOUR CALENDAR

GFCA will host several upcoming Zoom events.

The links will be posted on the listserv and at GreaterFarmland.org/events.



1. **General Meeting:** Representatives from Washington Gas and The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission have been invited to discuss operational concerns and the state of their infrastructure within our community. We will also conduct the annual election for GFCA Board members. See Page 3, for self-nomination details.
Wednesday, May 26 at 7 pm
2. **An Open Forum:** a neighborhood discussion of issues and concerns
Wednesday, June 9 at 7 pm
3. Watch the listserv & GreaterFarmland.org/events for future "Conversations" programs

GFCA IS ACTIVELY RESPONDING TO HOGAN'S I-270 PROPOSAL by Ed Rich, president

We are members of three organizations opposing the expansion project, [Don't Widen 270](#), [Citizens Against Beltway Expansion](#), and [Maryland Advocates for Sustainable Transportation](#). Several bills were submitted to the General Assembly this spring regarding issues with Hogan's proposal, and the GFCA submitted testimony and co-signed letters, along with such groups as the [Sierra Club](#), the [National Parks Conservation Association](#), the [Coalition for Smart Growth](#), the [Chesapeake Bay Foundation](#), and the [Washington Area Bicyclists Association](#). Delegate Marc Korman introduced The Promises Act and another bill that would create a legislative oversight panel for public-private partnership projects, require a full environmental impact statement be completed prior to any pre-solicitation documents being issued, and prevent a selected contractor from blocking locally supported transportation projects. These bills will have to be pursued in the 2022 MD Assembly and promoted by us, since they failed to complete passage this year.

Interested in joining the I-270 committee? We will be monitoring hearings, formulating position papers, coordinating with our partner organizations, and communicating with the community. If you want to help with *any* small or large part of the above tasks, we can use your help! Contact Ed Rich, ejrich56@yahoo.com.

We will work with Congressmen Raskin & Brown to ask the Secretary of Transportation, Pete Buttigieg, to reevaluate this highway project and remove federal funding if it doesn't comport with President Biden's goals for federal infrastructure.

GFCA is joining with other groups to urge the MD Board of Public Works not to select a contractor for the project until the completion of the [Environmental Impact Statement](#). Contact Peter Franchot, the State Comptroller, the swing vote on the MD Board of Public Works, to express your opposition to the I-270 project, at pfranchot@comp.state.md.us.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS JOIN IN “CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS” AND “CONVERSATIONS WITH EXPERTS” ZOOM SERIES by Emily Mintz

I hardly know where to begin to tell you how deeply these conversations have touched me. These series have enriched my life and expanded my understanding. I have met new friends whom I hope to get to know better.

The **Conversations with your Neighbors** group has met six times to discuss podcasts in the series “Seeing White” from Scene on Radio. We have examined American history, society, and interracial relations from diverse points of view and experiences. If you haven’t been following along, I sincerely encourage you to go to sceneonradio.org/seeing-white. Each episode is available for free download, and a transcript is provided. The intention of the Workgroup that organized this Zoom series has been to foster discussion, educate, and create understanding among us. I, for one, am the wiser for it. Thank you to the “Conversations with Your Neighbors” leadership. Please check out the podcast series; it will alter your universe.

There has been one **Conversations with Experts** Zoom meeting since the last newsletter. We met with Councilmember Will Jawando, who is spearheading police and justice reform measures in Montgomery County. He outlined the history of policing and defined some future issues, such as vetting who is hired as a police officer, motivations for police officers, standards of when deadly force is permitted, and force accountability and transparency. Bills that have passed include a statistics and tracking data bill and the Law Enforcement Trust and Transparency Act, which requires an independent investigation whenever a citizen is killed, with the report to be made public. He is hoping to get the state to set up a separate body for independent investigations. The reimagined police force could be used for serious crime, not for ancillary lesser infractions. For schools, he proposes that the school resource officer (SRO) budget of \$3M be reallocated to school counselor and social work services. Current mental health management training for police is too basic. Montgomery County is talking with the CAHOOTS program, which has 911 triage capability to send the right people to each situation, be it homelessness, drug abuse, or mental health crises. Funds may be allocated to create six crisis intervention teams over the next few years. Traffic enforcement may be given to DOT, with a higher reliance on increased automation (speed and traffic light cameras). The county has asked for ideas and models. Councilmember Jawando also is making proposals to increase affordable housing and reevaluate housing type zoning near transit, an anti-rent-gouging bill for transit-accessible areas, increasing the affordable housing fund, and increasing funding for social services.

Conversations in the Future. The Conversations Workgroup will merge the two series to work in tandem with each other. Periodically, we will invite the GFCA community to a Zoom “Conversation with an Expert(s)” presentation, and then hold a later Zoom “Conversation” to discuss the speaker(s) and topic of that meeting. *Watch the listserv & GreaterFarmland.org for topics and scheduling.*



TWO GREATER FARMLAND GENERAL MEETINGS FEATURED ADDITIONAL PROMINENT LEGISLATORS AND POLICY MAKERS

On March 11 and 24, many neighbors joined Zoom meetings to discuss policy and progress with County Executive Marc Elrich, State Delegate Arianna Kelly, and our District 1 Councilmember Andrew Friedson.

County Executive Marc Elrich shared latest proposals for developing the WMATA property between the White Flint Metro and Nebel Street. It will be coordinated with the Twinbrook Metro area development, with a focus on creating a research, quantum computing, and AI hub, including a start-up incubator. He has four universities interested in the area. The goal is to foster a critical mass of high-paying science and bio-tech jobs. The timeline is, 1. a joint agreement ready for bid in summer, 2. make a “pitch” to developers in six months, 3. select a master developer. His office is trying to coordinate with Gov. Hogan to have the incentives that the state had promised to Amazon apply to infrastructure and incentives for this project. Turning Rockville Pike into a multi-modal boulevard with bus rapid transit (BRT) is key. BRT will have a dedicated lane and stops every 1/2 mile or so, which augments the Metro station intervals. Whiteflint.org is often a great source for information about the Pike business district.

State Delegate Arianna Kelly is particularly active with health initiatives and has been writing the penultimate *covid-19 information newsletter*, referred to by every other politician. Access her resources at delegatarianakelly.com/covid-19-information.

Councilmember Andrew Friedson presented a detailed presentation covering topics from covid-19 vaccination and health department updates to the 2022 budget. See his PowerPoint presentation at GreaterFarmland.org/links.

NORTH BETHESDA VILLAGE NEWS AND EVENTS by Jean Hochron

NORTH BETHESDA VILLAGE is a volunteer-led organization that aims to support community members age 55+ residing in the 20852 zip code. For information about our upcoming events, and to join our email distribution list, visit our website at www.northbethesdavillage.org or contact us directly at northbethesdavillage@gmail.com.

This is not an either/or question, but depends on context. The simple answer is that you can call it whatever you want, but none of our homes are in the City of Rockville. There are several ways that define location: local governance, planning, postal operations, tax records, and the legal description in property deeds and land records.

1. **Local governance.** Montgomery County is the smallest local governing body for our location. Within Montgomery County, there are several incorporated entities, which include the City of Rockville, Gaithersburg, Somerset, Garret Park Village, Kensington, and a few others. Consider them chocolate chips in a cookie. The county is the cookie, and the incorporated municipalities are dotted within it. Each incorporated town/city/village has its own elections, police & fire departments, along with city taxes. Any place that is not within incorporated boundaries is in Montgomery County proper. The City of Rockville's southern boundary is Montrose Road, and Greater Farmland is outside that boundary. We do not pay Rockville taxes or receive Rockville services.
2. **Planning districts.** Many people think that commonly-recognized areas like Potomac, Bethesda, and Silver Spring are towns, but they are not. They are planning districts within the county and have no distinct governing bodies. The Maryland-National Parks and Planning Commission (MNPPC) was established in 1927 to develop master plans for Montgomery and Prince Georges counties. We live in the North Bethesda/Garrett Park master plan district, which, for nearly seven decades, is defined by the area west of Rock Creek Park, east of I-270, south of Montrose Road, and north of I-495.
3. **Postal operations.** The post office that serves our community, and many others like it, is within the City of Rockville boundaries. When Old Farm and Tilden Woods were built in the early 1960s, the builder advertised them as "Bethesda" homes. The postal service had planned to have mail delivered from a Bethesda post office, but, ultimately, decided to assign the Rockville station on Rollins Avenue. That's how we ended up in 20852 with a Rockville postal address. Nearly 20 years ago, the USPS determined that 20852 is a dual-designation post office. Officially, any of these 3 addresses are acceptable for 20852: Rockville, North Bethesda, or N. Bethesda.
4. **Tax records, land records, and deeds.** *Tax records* use postal addresses. Since the postal address assigned to our developments at construction was Rockville, it remains so in the tax records. Some properties, when sold, were reassigned as North Bethesda, so that some of our houses show Rockville and some show North Bethesda addresses. *Land records and deeds* are the official documents defining a property with what's known as a "legal description." Legal descriptions on the east coast use a lot/block/subdivision system. For instance, your property may be noted as Lot 10, Block M, Old Farm. If you look at your deed, it will note your legal description, then say "also known as" and list the postal address for easy reference, since that is how most people describe their properties. This refers back to the semi-arbitrary postal address assigned by USPS.

It's a fallacy that North Bethesda was "invented" by the real estate industry to boost home prices. Names don't alter home values, but the characteristics of the home and community do. North Bethesda has been in existence since MNCPPC created the planning area in our county. In summary, you can use whichever you prefer or feel is more accurate based on your definition of location.

NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN FOR THE GFCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

by Toby Levin

Want to become more active in our community? **Consider serving on the GFCA Board.** Send your Statement of Interest to tobymlevin@gmail.com by May 10, describing why you want to serve. See GFCA Bylaws for description of duties at GreaterFarmland.org/bylaws. The election will be on May 26 at the General Meeting via Zoom.

311 SERVICE

Call "311" to Montgomery County's Call Center, or go online to mc311.com, to report a repair need for a street light on a metal pole, dead street tree, potholes, permitting questions, or any other county business. If you see a flickering or burned-out street light on a wooden telephone pole, request a repair by calling PEPCO at 877-737-2662.

VACCINATION INFORMATION

Vaccinations are open to all adults above 16 years. Pre-register for one of MD's Mass Vaccination Sites at onestop.md.gov/preregistration or call 1-855-MD-GOVAX. To register for one of the County's vaccination sites and to get information on other locations, such as clinics, local grocery stores, and pharmacies providing vaccinations, visit the County's COVID-19 Information Portal at montgomerycountymd.gov/covid19/vaccine or call the County's COVID-19 Hotline at 240-777-2982. Let's protect each other and our community and get vaccinated.

THE COMMUNITY LISTSERV

The listserv is GFCA's primary means of communication. Here's where we exchange items & plants, make suggestions, coordinate meetings, discuss issues, offer charitable opportunities, and much more.

If you're not one of the 650+ members of our email listserv, please join. It's free and open to all community residents. The GFCA listserv is hosted by groups.io. **To join, email GFCA+subscribe@groups.io.**

When you post to the listserv, address your email to GFCA@groups.io. Include a hashtag (#) in the Subject line. An example of a subject line is, "Need handyman #handyman #repairs." Groups.io requires a hashtag in the subject line for posting. The GFCA board is researching changes to simplify posting. Watch the listserv for any policy updates.

IS YOUR INFORMATION CORRECT IN THE DIRECTORY? WILL YOU RECEIVE A PRINT DIRECTORY THIS SUMMER?

Paid-up members will receive one print directory per household. We anticipate distribution to occur sometime in July. Members also have access to view all household listings in the online directory and in the mobile app. If you haven't paid dues yet, there's still time to be included in the print distribution. Contact membership@greaterfarmland.org or call me at 301-704-2913 if you need instructions.

Please check your household listing to see if there's anything you want to change, add, or delete. Log into atozdirectories.com/home to confirm your listing and membership status (noted in small print at the top left of the page). Every household has an editable listing in the directory, regardless of membership, but only members can view other households. Questions? Email directory@greaterfarmland.org. I'll be happy to look up your membership status and/or send you a password reset link so you can log into the directory.

Want to **advertise in our directory**? For details, contact stephanie@atozconnect.com or call 240-206-6273. Don't delay, as time is short for inclusion in the print directory. All ads appear online, too.

Emily Mintz, GFCA membership & directory chair

CONTINUING PRESSURE ON WASHINGTON GAS AND WSSC by Ed Rich

Built in the 1960's, our aging water, sewer, and natural gas lines under our streets are concerning. Washington Gas (WGL) has been making spot checks and repairs for years. We are coordinating with WGL regarding on-going work to replace gas lines under our streets and service lines to individual home meters. Gas line work on and around Tildenwood Drive is underway. WGL has promised to have a schedule of upcoming work to share with us shortly. WSSC, our water & sewer service, is addressing water main breaks. GFCA is in constant contact with officials from both WSSC and WGL, as well as with our elected officials. Recently, we have contacted WSSC officials about large increases in water bills for some households. For those of you who provided us with water billing issues, we have passed those along. You should hear directly from WSSC. As a result of widespread digging by both utilities, they have had to resurface some of our streets. Landscaping replacement in the Old Stage Rd/Stonewood Ln traffic circle is paid for by WGL, since repair of the gas leak there. **Please send reports of gas or water main leaks to WGL and WSSC as soon as these are detected. Report gas leaks to WGL at 703-750-1000 and broken water main or sewage emergencies to WSSC at 301-206-4002 or emergencycallcenter@wsscwater.com.** GFCA maintains a master list of natural gas leak locations to address with WGL en masse, so, please, also report gas leaks to info@greaterfarmland.org.

Wednesday, May 26 at 7 pm. GFCA is hosting a Zoom meeting with representatives from WGL and WSSC.

Wednesday, June 9 at 7 pm. We will hold an Open Forum for the community to discuss these and other concerns.

2021 Membership—Renew or Join NOW
GreaterFarmland.org/membership

Your Civic Association is an all-volunteer effort
By Neighbors for Neighbors



SPRING NEWSLETTER 2021

Greater Farmland Civic Association
Ed Rich, President
11703 Hitching Post Lane
North Bethesda, MD 20852