

# Westview Park Improvement & Civic Association

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WPICA  
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## Our Charter

A non-partisan and non-commercial association that functions solely for the mutual benefit and civic needs of the residents of Westview Park in Baltimore County, Maryland

November 21, 2006

## Board Meeting Agenda

- **Call to Order (7:00PM)**
- **Treasurer & Secretary Reports**
- **Old Business**
  - Zoning Issues
    - Qureshi Development (N. Rolling Road)
    - Russel Motors parking lot on residential property
    - Crosby Crossing Swim Club telecommunications tower
    - Rolling Stones (N. Rolling Road)
    - Excessive signage variance for Security Square Mall
  - Community copier
  - Holiday decorating contest
  - MTA Red Line meeting with state coordinators
  - 2006 / 2007 legislative agenda
- **New Business**
  - Revision to New Life Apartments PUD project site plan
- **Adjourn**
- **Key Dates & Announcements**
  - Thanksgiving Day (11/23/06)
  - Decorating Contest (12/15/06 thru 12/17/06)
  - Hanukkah (12/16/06 thru 12/23/06)
  - Christmas Day (12/25/06)
  - Kwanzaa (12/26/06 thru 1/1/07)
  - New Year's Day (1/1/06)
  - Dr. Martin Luther King Day (1/15/07)
  - Board Meeting (1/16/07, 7:00pm)
  - Valentine's Day (2/14/07)
  - President's Day (2/19/07)
  - St. Patrick's Day (3/17/07)
  - Community Easter Egg Hunt ( )
  - Easter Day Holiday (4/8/07)
  - Board Meeting (4/17/07, 7:00pm)

## 2006 / 2007 Legislative Agenda

WPICA is committed to preserving the value of community homes and demanding responsible use of tax dollars. Recent legislation and judicial rulings have prompted us to forward legislative goals to our elected representatives:

- **Eliminate the prospect of Eminent Domain and confiscation of private property in Maryland**

Eminent Domain allows the government to seize private property for the public good. A 2005 Supreme Court ruling (*Kelo vs. City of New London, Connecticut*) allows any local government to seize private property in favor of private development, even for the sole purpose of generating tax revenue. Local governments can now hand over private property to a developer in order to build a public-use facility (golf course, strip mall, mass transit rail line, street or highway, etc) that would increase the government's tax revenues or ability to provide public services. Instead of placing this extreme power in the hands of a few elected officials, all Eminent Domain issues should be eliminated, or at a minimum referred to the state legislature and require a super-majority vote by two-thirds of all state representatives.

- **Eliminate developer loopholes; require strict observance of zoning and density classifications**

Developers routinely co-mingle *unsuitable* land with *suitable* acreage to calculate the number of homes they can build in a new development. County laws and even some County Council members encourage developers to engage in this practice we call *irresponsible and over-development*. As an example, developers can build up to 44 homes in an 8-acre parcel that limits 5.5 residential homes per square acre. Even if four of the eight acres are *unsuitable* for development due to environmental restrictions, developers may still squeeze (or cluster) 44 homes on the four *suitable* acres. They essentially create tiny lots that disrupt the neighborhood's normal pattern. The resulting *in-fill* development would increase the county's tax base, but could also significantly decrease neighboring property values.

- **Adopt standards that accurately grade and assess the safety and use of Maryland streets**

County standards for grading roads only consider the percentage of a traffic queue that flows through a light cycle. The methodology does not consider fatalities, speed, and on-going development. Current county solutions for high traffic areas merely consist of lengthening light cycles – they do not address the root causes of excessive speed and traffic, and greater risk to our safety. Developers rely on current euphemistic grades and obtain more permits in crowded areas.

- **Require public hearings for any business venture, license, permit, etc in a residential home**

Public hearings will increase awareness of the number of group homes and assisted living facilities in our area. Although most group homes and assisted living operations in Westview Park are reputable, our community should know their presence and have a voice in limiting these home-based businesses. Such businesses can drastically affect home values, increase parking and traffic issues, and strain existing public emergency medical services.

- **Develop strong anti-corruption laws for land development and Renaissance Redevelopment**

WPICA is very concerned that developers use corporate and personal political campaign contributions to influence elected officials and political appointees at all levels of county and state government. Applications for land development should disclose a 5-year history of corporate and personal campaign contributions made to any current or former Maryland elected official, political appointee, and declared candidate for public office. Political appointees on the Planning Board, Zoning Commission, and other senior levels of county government are not held accountable to the voters -- these officials wield a great deal of power and establish policies that drastically affect the value of your property.

- **Enable community associations like WPICA to represent citizens by proxy in formal proceedings**

WPICA is unable to represent community residents legally at public hearings, judicial appeals, or charrettes. Residents have no flexibility to designate community representatives in writing to represent their property value interests. In Renaissance Redevelopment charrettes, residents must attend three evening meetings to ensure their voices and preferences are considered. We feel this tactic helps deter public involvement and helps developers; many residents have busy schedules (child sporting events, scouting, etc. – or simply setting the evening dinner table each night).

- **Authorize police take-home vehicles for Baltimore County police officers.**

Statistics and research indicates that take-home police vehicles have a significant influence in lowering crime rates in residential communities. Let's keep pace with neighboring counties that allow their officers take-home police vehicles!