



# Mount Vernon Belvedere Clarion

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## **Mount Vernon Children's Park Receives Major Grant from Comcast**

Mount Vernon has just had a wonderful surprise come its way: an unexpected – and unsolicited grant from Comcast that will fully fund a summer of creative and fun programming for families in the Children's Park on Saturdays this summer. A wide array of events is in the works, from gardening to puppetry, traditional games to the best magician in the city. A full schedule will be available shortly. Many, many thanks to Comcast for this wonderful gift to our neighborhood and the families who will gather at our Children's Park to enjoy their generosity this summer.

## **Sanitation Committee in Full Operation Mode**

MVBA Board Member Sandy Lawler has taken over as Chair of the MVBA's Sanitation Committee and, with the assistance of Brandt Petrsek and Barbara Gilbert, is tackling illegal dumping issues in the neighborhood. Lawler and Petrsek have already met with Dale Thompson, the Director of Sanitation Enforcement, and other enforcement officials, about Mount Vernon's particular sanitation issues.

The Sanitation Committee will be providing a weekly list of dumping sites to the city for enforcement action and monitoring these locations and others throughout the week to identify those responsible and the property owners involved. Look for cleaner sidewalks and alleys with this team leading the charge in the months ahead.

## **Tree Planting Update**

The city planted 63 trees at the request of MVBA this Fall and early winter. We had expected closer to 110 trees to be planted this season throughout the neighborhood, so this number is not fully what we had been promised or anticipated. We will again place a full order for new trees next Fall and hope that the city has the labor and machinery to complete the planting. (Apparently there are only two stump removal machines for the entire city.) MVBA will continue to provide watering for new trees for a number of months after they have been planted, as it has for the past two years, with funds donated by our members for this tree planting initiative.

**The next General Membership meeting will take place on Tuesday, February 20, at the Belvedere Hotel, starting promptly at 7:30pm. Our guest will be Mr. Peter Merles, District Administrator, Midtown Community Benefits District. There will also be a brief discussion with input from members regarding proposed eviction rule changes.**

### **At the upcoming MVBA general meeting**

Join us and our guest speaker, Mr. Peter Merles, District Administrator for the Midtown Community Benefits District, who will provide us with updates and many happenings at Midtown.

Midtown is now just beginning a new Strategic Planning process with the help of Ann Cotton of the Schaefer Center at the University of Baltimore. Community input will play a major role in this project. Learn how the Strategic Planning process will impact the four communities of Midtown.

Midtown will be conducting its Spring Town Hall Meeting on March 21, where the Fiscal Year 2008 budget will be presented for comment and approval. In addition, Midtown is up for its Authorization Renewal.

There will also be a discussion with member input regarding evictions in Baltimore City, see below. While there is no legislation pending in City Council as of the time of writing this article, Councilman Jim Kraft has indicated that he will probably introduce legislation to change the current rules.

### **Evictions a Mess?**

The Citizens Planning and Housing Association (CPHA) has been working with Rental Housing Coalition to change current eviction policies. Current law permits landlords to dump a tenant's belongings into the street following an eviction. This happens more than 7,000 times each year in Baltimore, an average of 33 piles a day. Midtown Benefits District

reports that they pick up an eviction at least once a week within the District. The City is required to pick up any remaining belongings and dump them at taxpayer's expense.

Currently, there is no provision to notify the tenant of the day an eviction is to take place. One of the proposed changes is to provide an appropriate notice so that a tenant can safely remove his possessions. Another suggestion is to require landlords to store tenant's possessions for a period of time (presumably at the landlord's expense) and after such time, dispose of the possessions lawfully.

Legal issues regarding tenant's possessions have been raised, as the tenant's possessions would be considered private property. As Midtown currently picks up eviction property, it has expressed an interest in the proposed changes and would like to invite community input.

### **Danna Honored by City Council**

MVBA's new President Jack Danna was recently honored by the Baltimore City Council with an official declaration of congratulations for his new position with the community.

### **A Message from Our New President**

For those of you who missed last month's general meeting, I had the opportunity to discuss and highlight some areas that I think are critical to sustaining Mount Vernon's resurgence: restoration of Mount Vernon Place Parks, reauthorization of historic tax credits for rehabilitation, coalescing residential and commercial development initiatives, mass transit, and improved quality of life issues.

In 2015, we will celebrate the bicentennial of Mount Vernon Place Parks and the George Washington Monument, and most of you will agree that these two landmarks are the neighborhood's greatest assets. The parks, however, are deteriorating precipitously and need several million dollars of capital improvements in order to restore the parks to their original grandeur.

Improving these parks cannot be achieved solely by one organization; it will need to be a collaborative endeavor that engages the public, private, and foundation sectors to be successful. Thus, I look forward to working with the Friends of Mount Vernon Place on identifying how we can best accomplish this task. I do want to take this opportunity to thank the Friends of Mount Vernon Place for all of their hard work in maintaining the parks and bringing a renewed sense of energy to the square.

The State's progressive historic tax credit for

rehabilitation has been one of the driving forces behind Mount Vernon's regeneration. Unfortunately, over the past few years, the general assembly has adopted legislation that has curtailed the program's effectiveness by capping credits awarded at \$25 million for the entire state. In addition, no more than one half of the total available tax credit can be used by any one jurisdiction. This approach puts projects in Baltimore City at a disadvantage, since the City has more than 50% of the total tax credit work in the state. I strongly urge you to lobby our City delegates to raise the cap to \$30 million and to allow any unspent money to be applied to Baltimore City projects.

I support initiatives that will bring more mixed-use development in our commercial sectors, especially along Historic Charles Street, Mount Vernon's Main Street. Our organization can achieve this goal by working closely with the Mid-Town Development Corporation and acting as a liaison with pri-

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vate developers and other partners to highlight potential projects in the neighborhood. We can be an active partner in identifying economic incentives that would create more viable development initiatives that expand the community's housing and retailing mix.

The refurbishment of the Old MacGillivray's Building into a vibrant mixed-use building that houses the Spirits of Mount Vernon at street level and includes residential units on the floors above is a prime example of the kind of development that I envision along Charles Street. Moreover, Iggies, and Red Maple are also examples of small business investment that is succeeding in our neighborhood and bringing a renewed sense of viability and vitality to the district that yields more street activity. I would be remiss, if I did not take this opportunity to thank our existing businesses for their endless commitment to the MVBA.

Since our community is significantly transit oriented, we need to ensure that all modes of mass transit run effectively and that they meet the needs of the residents and visitors. We need to support innovative strategies that encourage the integration of bus, commuter rail, metro-subway, and the proposed trolley into a comprehensive

### Great Restaurants? We Got 'Em!

Once again, Mount Vernon overwhelms the latest Baltimore Magazine listing of Best Restaurants! Just step out your door and enjoy the following winners:

Abacrombie Fine Foods, 58 W. Biddle Street  
 The Brass Elephant, 924 N. Charles Street  
 The Brewer's Art, 1006 N. Charles Street  
 The Helmand, 806 N. Charles Street  
 Ixia, 518 N. Charles Street  
 The Prime Rib, 1101 N. Calvert (entrance on Chase Street)  
 Saffron, 802 N. Charles Street  
 Sotto Sopra, 405 N. Charles Street  
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system that better serves our residents, businesses, and visitors.

Better cooperation from various City agencies that improves our quality of life is the hallmark of a revitalized Mount Vernon. We seek the police department to work more closely with our public safety committee by disseminating information regularly, which allows us to better fight crime. The City's Department of Sanitation must work more closely with our sanitation committee by issuing citations to violators who illegally dump trash in our streets and alleys. We shall continue to plant and maintain our trees with joint assistance from the City's Department of Forestry, which will improve the neighborhood's landscape. And finally, we ought to always remain resilient in our efforts to preserve our built environment.

I cannot reach these goals without your support, and most importantly I need your help in making this vision a reality. Please consider volunteering for the organization or one of our committees. I believe our goal of sustaining Mount Vernon's regeneration is shared by all. I hope to see you around the neighborhood! -jd

**The Mount Vernon Belvedere Association Wants You! Join the association using the form below. Want to Check out the MVBA? We invite you to join the next General Meeting on November 21, at 7:30 PM at the Belvedere Hotel located at 1 East Chase Street. Call Us at 410-528-1919 for more informa-**

Mail to: MVBA Membership  
700 North Charles St #5C  
Baltimore MD 21201

The following information is needed to process your membership. It will not be used for other purposes.

**Type of Membership (circle one)**

Please make checks payable to MVBA for any MVBA memberships.

<b>Type</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Individual	\$20.00
Family/Dual	\$30.00
Student	\$15.00
Senior Citizen	\$15.00
Sustaining	\$30.00
Business	\$50.00
Institution	\$150.00
Benefactor	\$350.00
Benefactor	\$350.00

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State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Home: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Work: \_\_\_\_\_

**John Eager Howard Society**

**Lifetime Membership**

Please make your tax-deductible check payable to the Baltimore Community Foundation for any John Eager Society membership.

Individual	\$350.00
Family/Dual	\$500.00
Business	\$500.00

Would you like to serve on a committee or be a volunteer?  
Yes / No

Would you like to have your name listed as a new member?  
Yes / No

**The Architectural Review** committee met on January 30 and discussed preliminary restoration plans of 101 East Read Street (the Medical/Professional Arts Building), along with 824 Park Avenue. The former, consisting mostly of office suites, will be converted to 96 apartments. Of significance was the approval to use aluminum clad over wood windows on floors 3—8 and restoring the all wood windows on the first two levels. All of the window a/c units would be removed. The building will have architectural lighting shining up the building from the sidewalk, as well as lighting the top of the building. Finally, the 2000 sq ft storefront on Cathedral Street will be renovated.

### **New Businesses**

There's now even more good eating in Mount Vernon with the recent opening of the famous Five Guys burger restaurant at Centre Street and Park Avenue and the delicious offerings at Charm City Cupcakes in the Women's Industrial Exchange building. Robert Oliver

Interested in advertising in the Mt. Vernon Clarion? Rates:

1/8 page \$15 (2.5" x 2.5")  
 1/4 page \$45 (3.5" x 4.5")  
 1/2 page \$55 (7.25" x 4")  
 Business card \$30

All we need is an image file in .jpg, .tif, .bmp, or a clean copy that can be scanned.

Call MVBA at 410-582-1919 or e-mail [sjohnson009@sprintmail.com](mailto:sjohnson009@sprintmail.com)

Would you like to receive this newsletter by e-mail? Send a request to: [sjohnson009@sprintmail.com](mailto:sjohnson009@sprintmail.com).

Seafood has also opened across from the Meyerhoff in the old Spike and Charlie's space.

### **Notes from the Liquor Committee**

There is a request for a transfer of ownership of the liquor license at 800 North Charles Street (Donna's), a request to add basement for business, live entertainment, and off premise catering at 911 North Charles Street (Kumari Restaurant), and a transfer of ownership at 58 West Biddle Street (Abacrombie Badger Bed & Breakfast), along with a request to add the 2nd, 3rd, & 4th floors to the license as well as a request outdoor table service, and a request for off-premises catering. Transfers of ownership are generally automatic. All other requests require a public hearing. The above properties will be posted on February 12. Hearings will be held on or after February 22. For more information, contact the Liquor Board at 410-396-4385.

**February is American Heart Month.** To celebrate, Maryland General Hospital will host a free event to educate the community on cardiovascular disease. The event will offer free cardio screenings including blood pressure, diabetes finger stick, waist-to-hip ratio and body mass index. Health professionals will also offer tips on healthy eating, exercise and assess risk factors for heart disease. For more information, call (410) 225-8397.



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### ENDOWMENT FUND

Thanks to those listed below who have generously contributed to MVBA's Endowment Fund known as the John Eager Howard Society. The fund is intended to provide financial resources for the Association in the future through the use of the interest earned on the fund. The principal of the fund cannot be accessed by the Association. If you would like to join, contact any Board member of the Association. Membership includes lifetime membership in MVBA.

### Endowment Fund Contributors

Agora Publishing, Beth Ketzner  
Allied Contractors, J.J. Pecora  
Annie E. Casey Foundation, Inc., Scot Spencer  
THE ASSOCIATED: Jewish Community Federation  
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Julius Zulver  
In memory of: Ruth Wolf Rehfeld  
Dr. Stanley Mazer  
Allen Golden



# Mt. Vernon ~ Belvedere Clarion

1221 North Calvert Street  
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

To contact members by phone, call MVBA's main number 410-528-1919 and select the desired extension from the menu.

### Officers

President.....Jack Danna.....president@mvba.org  
Vice President .....Paul Warren .....vicepresident@mvba.org  
Treasurer .....Brian Coleman .....treasurer@mvba.org  
Secretary.....Philippa Strydom.....secretary@mvba.org  
Corr. Secretary .....Lisa Heckman .....CorrSecretary@mvba..org

### Committees

Architectural Review .....Craig Kufner .....(arc@mvba.org)  
Sanitation .....Sandy Lawler  
Property Stewardship.....Lance Humphries  
Liquor.....Steve Johnson  
Zoning.....Paul Warren  
Marketing.....Regina Minniss .....(rminniss@cbmove.com)  
Development .....Paul Warren  
Safety .....Lyle Nash.....(safety@mvba.org)  
Membership .....Petula Nash .....(membership@mvba.org)

Of Council . . . . . Laura Giantris .....(council@mvba.org)

### Board Members

Stan Keyser  
Steve Johnson  
Fitzgerald Hoskins  
Petula Nash  
Sandy Lawler  
.....

### Appointed Member:

Bill Oelke

### Ex-officio Members

J.J. Pecora  
Mary Ann Henderson

### Historic Mt. Vernon/Belvedere

**The Midtown Community Benefits District Spring Meeting will take place on March 21, where the FY 2008 budget will be presented and adopted.**

