



# Mount Vernon Belvedere Clarion

September 2007

Volume 22, Number 9

**The next General Membership meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 18, at the Belvedere Condominiums, lobby level, beginning at 7:30pm.**

We have invited our new City Council member, Bill Cole (who is uncontested in the General Election) to be a guest speaker at the General Meeting to learn more about how we can help him with his priorities and to share ours. Also on the agenda will be a brief presentation on the Red Line study including the potential for a subway under Saint Paul Street.

## Election Results

The results of the September 11, 2007 Primary are very positive for Mount Vernon. We want to thank our members who were active with a variety of campaigns over the primary season. While MVBA is not a political organization, neighborhood leaders have been careful this year to make certain that Mount Vernon was represented in the workings of every major campaign: mayor, city council president and city council representative. No matters the results, our community would have been in a positive position to work hand-in-hand with our elected officials. Sheila Dixon has been a partner with Mount Vernon on a number of critical issues, including our victory last year in the battle to bring reasonable height limits to Mount Vernon. Since her elevation to Mayor in January 2007, MVBA has been actively working with members of the Dixon administration on a variety of issues including establishing a Mount Vernon Place conservancy, resolving sanitation issues, and involving communities in improving Baltimore's preservation policies. We will continue to work in close partnership with the Mayor Dixon and her staff to bring more resources and innovative initiatives to our community. Stephanie Rawlings-Blake and William Cole are already good friends of the Mount Vernon community. We anticipate strong leadership from Rawlings-Blake and fresh, energetic, and effective representation from Cole.

## Mount Vernon Selected for Statewide House Tour in 2008

Mount Vernon has been selected as one of a handful of locations for the 2008 Maryland House and Garden Pilgrimage. This is not only an honor for our neighborhood and a recognition of the high quality and architectural value of our homes, but a great public relations opportunity to show off our community and all of its assets to a large group of visitors from across the state. The tour will take place all day on May 4, 2008. Mount Vernon's efforts are being coordinated by Betty Loafman. Betty is seeking volunteers to assist with this important event. Contact Betty [www.4eastmadisoninn@earthlink.net](mailto:www.4eastmadisoninn@earthlink.net) 410-332-0880 to sign up.



### SUBSCRIBE!

If you are getting this newsletter in the mail, you are probably missing out on important email newscasts, neighborhood alerts and early electronic delivery of this newsletter itself. Help save a tree and convert to email delivery by sending an email to [membership@mbva.org](mailto:membership@mbva.org) with "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line and your full name in the body. Non-members can join the association and sign up for email communications at [www.mvba.org](http://www.mvba.org).

## Mount Vernon in the News

Whose handsome mug is on the cover of this month's Urbanite? None other than our own transportation guru Ed Cohen. Ed is recognized in the article for his unmatched expertise in mass transit planning, something we have known about in Mount Vernon for years. We are fortunate to have Ed working for us on what is a complex and critically important economic development issue and clearly others around the region are taking note of his enormous contributions and leadership as well.

Congratulations to these outstanding Mount Vernon businesses selected as "Best of" in by Baltimore magazine: Zena's Day Spa and Salon, the Beatnik Barber on West Read Street, Brewer's Art, Paris West Optical and the Pampered Pooch on Cathedral Street.

## Development Update

**Waxter Center** – As noted in the press, the proposal for 600 small residential units at the location of the Waxter Center is moving ahead under the auspices of the Baltimore Development Corporation. The community has expressed a number of concerns including over-density, unit size, architecture, massing, and parking. We will continue to be engaged in this project to ensure an optimal outcome for both the community and the Waxter Center.

**Brexton Building** – The much-loved Brexton is now planned to be a 20-room extended stay hotel opening as soon as the fall of 2008.

## MVBA Testimony Before CHAP Commission

MVBA Vice President Paul Warren testified on September 11 before the CHAP (Commission on Historic and Architectural Preservation) about inadequacies and problems with a process now underway to for much-needed revision of the guidelines, procedures and policies of the CHAP. Warren specifically noted the following:

1. Lack of economic data to support and justify the work of the CHAP, including enhanced real estate values, increased investment as evidenced by building permits and increased tax-base resulting from new residents being drawn to historic districts. Warren stated that all of this data is readily available for analysis and inclusion in the work of the consultants leading the project, but none is currently included.
2. Research to cull the "best practices" for municipal historic preservation departments involved the selection of 6 mid-sized cities to study. Not included in the criteria for selecting these cities, was establishing that their practices were indeed "best" or even successful. Warren maintained that the best preservation departments from across the country should be studied, no matter what size the city, to find what are truly the "best" practices.
3. Warren also noted the limited involvement of community representatives in the current process. According to Warren, the CHAP Steering Committee Chair has even stated that communities were being invited to participate as a "courtesy." Warren cited the following to back up his contention that historic communities are not being included in the process: not one neighborhood representative is included in the Steering Committee that is suggesting the CHAP policy changes. A focus group of neighborhood representatives was hastily arranged only after the complete lack of community involvement was noted to the CHAP chairman and executive director.

**101 W. Read Street (Medical Arts).** This important building continues to suffer funding setbacks with the latest report being a project start-date of January 2008.

## Charles Street Street Scaping

Surveyors began their work up and down the Charles Street Corridor from Madison Street to North Avenue in preparation for the removal and replacement of all sidewalks and utilities for this valuable stretch of Charles Street. Much of the demolition and construction work will occur at night to not interfere with traffic flow and keep interruptions to businesses as minimal as possible. The entire project is expected to take 18 months to completion. **IMPORTANT NOTE TO MEMBERS:** Please take note that businesses along Charles Street may need your patronage when the construction is at or near their location. Let's be extra vigilant to support these retailers, clubs and restaurants during the streetscaping process.

## Trash Update:

You've probably noticed that the city has been picking up our trash a tad earlier than in the past. The sanitation committee is working with the city on this issue and on some proposed changes. Please look for updates by email in the next few weeks, hopefully this will be sorted out shortly and we can move ahead with our education campaign...

**Meanwhile,** note the new hours where trash is to be placed outside between 5pm and 7pm on Tuesdays and Fridays.

**New Kids on the Block**

Welcome to a great new restaurant, Indigma. Indigma offers a creative Asian fusion menu but the same outstanding ownership, management and location of the former Saffron Restaurant at 800 N. Charles. This looks like another winner on the Mount Vernon restaurant scene. And the positive buzz is everywhere about Eli the Computer Guy, located in a chic and comfortable office between Howard's and Al Pacino Café on Cathedral Street. Eli offers fast and brilliant help with any computer problem or computer set-up as well as assistance with telecommunications and other tech-related issues.

**Children's Park and Mount Vernon Place Thanks**

Thank you to MVBA members Laura Giantris and Susan Pippin for the outstanding children's programming they organized in the Mount Vernon Children's Park this summer. Music, magic, zoo animals, and puppetry were some of the featured events on Saturday mornings in the park. All of the events had attendance of anywhere from 50 to 100 adults and children enjoying the program, the playground and our neighborhood. The programs were generously sponsored by Comcast, who we also thank for their support of our beautiful new playground in its first summer of operations. Thanks also to the Friends of Mount Vernon Place for the chance to enjoy classic films al fresco in the park this summer. It was an entertaining and fun way to spend a summer evening while enjoying the beauty of our historic parks.

**Welcome New Business Members**

MVBA has seen a boom in business members, all of whose support we welcome and greatly appreciate. Our new members include the Prime Rib, Sammy's Tratoria, First Monument Chiropractic, Jay's on Read Street, the Imperial Half Bushel on Antique Row, Kumari Restaurant, Tissue Banks International, Midtown Yacht Club, Medical Associates at St. Paul and Biddle, Midtown Yoga Center, The Becker Group, architect Peter Pearre on Park Avenue, the law firm of Schorch Federico and Staton, Oroko Gallery on Read Street, Jenkins Baer Interior Design on West Chase Street, First Monument Chiropractic at 421 N. Charles, Somerset Development of Washington, DC, the office of Joel

**311 is Important for Mount Vernon**

If Mount Vernon doesn't call 311, other neighborhoods will be receiving our share of city services. Call 311 – note: you can call 311 from cell phones! -- or go to 311 on-line for any and all of the following:

- Alley cleaning
- Illegal trash dumping
- Properties with high weeds or debris accumulation
- Missing street signs
- Properties with broken windows and peeling paint
- Broken sidewalks and storm drains
- Lack of curb cuts at corners
- Street lights burned out
- Rat eradication
- Graffiti

Levin, Esq., MV Fitness on Charles Street, PW Feats special events firm, the Michael Group, a general contracting firm on East Read Street, Symphony Center Apartments, dentist Stephen B. Mastella at 1030 N. Charles, Baltimore OutLoud/Pride Media, attorney Anton Keating on West Madison, Maryland General Hospital, and Eli the Computer Guy on Cathedral Street next to Howard's.

We are also especially grateful for the major financial contributions of Mercantile Bank (soon to be PNC Bank) at 1200 N. Charles Street, the law firm of Vederaiame and DuBois at 1231 N. Calvert, Medical Associates/Pacific Rehab at 1120 Saint Paul Street and Day Capital Management, owner of the Cathedral Court Apartments at 900 Cathedral. All of these entities have recently become Benefactors or Life Time members of the MVBA. Their generous support will help us to continue our mission of making a better Mount Vernon.

**Public Safety Group Organizing**

Hats off to Mount Vernon residents Craig Strydom, Chris Regan, Drayton Foltz, Christine Bittner and many others who have organized a new ad-hoc public safety group to address chronic drug activity emanating from the Michelangelo's Pizza business on W. Read Street as well as other criminal activity circulating around the Park Avenue, Madison, Cathedral and Read Street areas. The group is working on aggressive and creative strategies to address crime problems including the use of cameras, hiring off duty police officers, citizen patrols, sending letters to car owners seen circling the blocks in question, and cleaning up tree wells where drugs can be stored. They are also working with a state's attorney who has begun a formal investigation of the activities at Michelangelo's. This is a great effort with lots of momentum. Thanks to the residents and business owners who are making it happen.

**RESIDENTIAL PARKING PERMITS**

**RENEW NOW**--Current Area 28 parking permits expire on September 30, 2007.

**RENEW ON-LINE** at [www.baltimorecity.gov/government/parking](http://www.baltimorecity.gov/government/parking), or  
**VISIT THE RPP OFFICES** at 200 West Lombard Street, Suite B.

Apply on-line by September 18. New residents must apply in person after September 20 at the RPP office. See documentation requirements below or on-line. For further info, call the RPP office at 443-573-2800.

**PICKUP PERMITS** at one of three Mt. Vernon Belvedere Association sponsored pick up sites! **Only pre-paid permits can be picked up.** No applications will be accepted. MVBA can be reached at 410-528-1919 or e-mail at [parking@mvba.org](mailto:parking@mvba.org).

**PICKUP SESSIONS:**           Wednesday, September 19, 6pm – 8pm  
  Saturday, September 22, 10am – 12 noon  
**Location:** Belvedere Condominiums  
  1 East Chase Street  
  John Eager Howard Room

  Tuesday, September 25, 6pm – 8pm  
**Location:** Midtown Benefits District Office  
  1221 North Calvert Street

**DOCUMENTATION:**

You must provide your driver's license and current vehicle registration. The registration should be in your name and reflect your Mt. Vernon address. If the vehicle registration is not in your name, you will also need to provide a notarized letter from the owner of the vehicle stating that you are the sole driver, along with proof of residency (a current lease, current utility bill, cable or phone bill).

Students and military must have and show a current ID.

If the vehicle registration is out of state and you do not have a Maryland driver's license, you must obtain a non-resident permit from the Maryland Department of Motor Vehicles. You must provide the receipt from DMV and provide a copy of the application.

Lack of proper documentation will result in the issuance of a temporary permit only. Temporary permits may only be picked up at the RPP office.

*Residential Parking Permit renewal is provided as a service by you local community association, the Mt. Vernon Belvedere Association. If you are not already a member, please consider joining! Visit our websight at [www.mvba.org](http://www.mvba.org) for more information and to join.*

## Baltimore Architecture Foundation Offers Fascinating Noon Time Forums

Don't miss this great line-up of topics:

September 19 – Tom Noonan, new CEO of BACVA discusses how the city plans to attract more conventions and tourists to Baltimore.

October 3 – Donald Fry, President of the Greater Baltimore Committee, addresses transportation and infrastructure issues facing Baltimore.

October 10 – architect Michael Murphy discusses changes in CHAP and making modern structures into city landmarks

All sessions are held at 12 noon at the Berman Auditorium of the Johns Hopkins Downtown Center at Charles and Fayette Streets. Attendees are invited to bring lunches.

## Mount Vernon Invited to Support New Charter School in Station North

Great news for Mount Vernon's families. We will have a first class Montessori Charter Elementary School in the neighboring Station North community beginning in the 2008-2009 school year. This school will be a welcome resource for Mount Vernon families who will be eligible for to send their children to the school. Please try to attend their first major fundraiser in Mount Vernon on September 26.

### Support Baltimore Montessori Public Charter School

Hosted by Struever Brothers in the courtyard of their newest development at 1209 N. Charles Street

Date: Saturday, September 29th

Time: 6 - 8 p.m.

Tickets (at the door):

\$25/Person

## Baltimore Book Festival, September 28th, 29th, 30st. - Volunteers needed!

Looking for people and books. Do you have a bunch of books that you've been trying to get rid of? Donate them to the MVBA booth at the book fair! We will give you a tax deductible letter. Call Regina Minniss at 410-837-4896, or email miniss@coldwellbankermove.com. I will come and pick them up, or you can drop them off at our booth, which will be in front of 700 Washington Place.

**We also need people to man our booth!** The fair starts on Friday 28th at 5:00PM to 9:00PM, then Saturday 29th, and Sunday 30st. from 11:00AM to 6:00PM. Pick your time. You will meet other Mt. Vernon residence and have fun! Call Regina Minniss at 410-837-4896 or email rminniss@coldwellbankermove.com.

### Additional Donations:

\$100/Friend \$2,500/Sustainer

\$250/Patron \$5,000/Sponsor

\$500/Supporter \$10,000/Benefactor

\$1,000/Donor All donations are tax-deductible

RSVP: allison@baltimoremontessoriinc.com

### Cocktail Reception

\*Live Entertainment

\*Catering by Bent Fork

\*Exhibition of local artists' work to benefit Baltimore Montessori Public Charter School

## Liquor issues

At a Liquor Board hearing on August 9th, **The Five Seasons Restaurant** ultimately withdrew their application for expanding their operation into adjoining space. A large turn-out of local residents expressing numerous concerns regarding the operation of the restaurant/nightclub was a significant contribution to the withdrawal.

**The St. Paul Street Food Market** at 815 St. Paul Street has applied for a Class "A" package goods license. As Class "A" licenses are no longer created, the applicant has chosen to transfer a Class "B" license and downgrade the license to a Class "A". Local residents have expressed concern over the impact of such a license and has requested and was granted a postponement of the scheduled liquor board hearing so that community representatives and MVBA can meet with the applicant to determine a suitable course of action.

**The Midtown Community Benefits District** serving the Charles North, Bolton Hill, Madison Park, and Mount-Vernon-Belvedere neighborhoods, will hold its **Fall Town Hall Meeting** on Wednesday evening, October 17 at the Berea Temple on Madison Avenue. The business portion of the meeting will feature the election of one at-large members from each of the four neighborhoods for the District's board of Directors.

Residents expressing concern regarding the application asked the Liquor Board if the hearing could be postponed until the community has had an opportunity to meet with the applicant. The Board did grant the request and community representatives, along with MVBA, will be meeting with the applicant to discuss the application. Written nominations for the at-large seats may be sent to the District Administrator at 1221 North Calvert Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21202, together with a brief statement of interest and biography from the candidate. To be eligible a candidate must, own property or represent a taxable property owner in that neighborhood. Nominations of any person whose eligibility has been established by the officers of the District prior to the commencement of the meeting may also be made from the floor of the meeting.

For further information contact Peter Merles, District Administrator, at 410 528-1512 or by email at pmeres@midtowncommunity.org.



# Mt. Vernon ~ Belvedere Clarion

1221 North Calvert Street  
Baltimore, Md 21202

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..... *Vacant* .....president@mvba.org  
Vice President ..... Paul Warren .....vicepresident@mvba.org  
Treasurer ..... Brian Coleman .....treasurer@mvba.org  
Secretary..... Philippa Strydom.....secretary@mvba.org  
Corr. Secretary ..... *Vacant* .....CorrSecretary@mvba..org

### Committees

Architectural Review .....Steven Shen.....(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 .....*Vacant* .....(safety@mvba.org)  
Membership .....Susan Warren .....(membership@mvba.org)  
Parking .....Pam Stewart

**Of Counsel** . . . . . Laura Giantris .....(council@mvba.org)

### Board Members

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

### Appointed Member:

Bill Oelke, Walters Art Museum

### Ex-officio Members

J.J. Pecora  
Mary Ann Henderson

## Historic Mt. Vernon/Belvedere

### RPP (Residential Parking Permits)

**Renew your permits on-line at [www.baltimorecity.gov/government/parking](http://www.baltimorecity.gov/government/parking) beginning August 19th or visit the RPP offices at 200 West Lombard Street, Suite B. Apply on-line by September 18. New residents must apply in person after September 20 at the RPP office. For further info, call the RPP office at 443-573-2800. Pick-up permits in September. Pick-up locations in Mt. Vernon listed inside this issue. Current permits expire 09/30/07**

### Paper Recycling schedule:

Every Tuesday & Friday after 5pm-7pm

### Bottle Recycling schedule:

2nd & 4th Mondays, by 7am. Glass & Plastic in clear or blue bags

