

Mount Vernon Belvedere Clarion

May 2009

Volume 24, Number 05

The next general membership meeting will be May 19th at the Belvedere Condominiums, lobby level. Meetings begin promptly at 7:30 pm and all are welcome to attend. This month's guest will be delegate Keith Haynes of the 44th District.

SUITES ULTRALOUNGE LIQUOR LICENCE REVOCATION APPEAL HEARING:

Wednesday, May 13, 2009: First, a huge THANK YOU to the 50-60 community members and two victims of this weekend's attacks who took their valuable time to attend today's hearing. As noted there was no opportunity to testify, but it was impossible for the judge not to be impressed with the full courtroom. In short, at the end of the nearly 2hr hearing, the judge announced she would not rule from the bench. We will likely get her decision anywhere between 2 days and 2 weeks.

As we understand it, there are 3 possible outcomes: 1) final revocation of the license, 2) remand back to the liquor board (to clean up whatever technical problems with their decision) or 3) throw it out altogether putting us all the way back to square one.

Even if the liquor license is revoked, the continuing and growing operation as a non-liquor under-age club remains an open issue. There is a strong indication that the city can resolve that through zoning law once the liquor license upon which the zoning variance was issued in the first place is gone. The Mayor, City Council President, our own Councilman Cole are very involved in trying to get this resolved spurred on no-doubt by the many wonderful emails of concern they received yesterday.

Finally, as special thanks to Michelle Pierce and the Community Law Center for their pro-bono representation of MVBA on behalf of the community in this case. They are doing a fantastic job under very tough legal conditions.

As reported by ABC 2 news on May 14, the Baltimore City Police Department is considering the use of the Padlock Law to close the club. This was in response to a third incident of violence just recently reported. The Padlock Law is part of a zero tolerance effort that can be used to close any operation that harbors excessive violence.

Trash In The News!

MOUNT VERNON TRASH PICK-UP STILL 2x's per WEEK

Much time and energy has been put into the "trash" education of Baltimore Citizens, with an example being the mailing recently sent out about Citations for not using covered trash cans (an existing law). Include in the guidelines was the One + One Program. Due to our neighborhood's historic and tourist-bound nature, Mt Vernon will continue it's twice a week, nighttime service.

ReCycling (unlimited amount): mixed paper, bottles, cans, waxed containers, aluminum foil, and, Regular Trash, in covered cans (96 gallons per household per week), is to be set out every Tuesday and Friday 4:30pm-6:30pm,

Do not put items such as window glass, used food containers or plastic bags into your recycling container. **Do not use plastic bags for your recyclables.**

3 options: 1). purchase and use a recycling bin; 2). use a container of choice that is clearly marked as recycling material; 3). use a cardboard box.

With the amazing expanded Recycling Program... household trash should be cut in half. This means we're cutting the pollution emissions and landfill dumping. With all this recycling, many of you may find yourselves putting out less trash, less often.



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 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.

Please address any issues to
<sanitation@mvba.org>Sandy Lawler, MVBA Sanitation
Chair

Property Stewardship

We have just set up an automated photographic collection point for property stewardship (illegal/unpermitted work) complaints. For those who have camera phones, smart phones, or a digital camera and computer, simply send your photos to violationphotos@mvba.org. Make sure to put the address of the property in the subject line, and if there is space, put the offense in parentheses. e.g. "819 Park Ave (satellite dish wiring)". The photos will be archived on Flickr in the MVBA account located here: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/mvba-stewardship/>.

Be assured that sender information is anonymous on Flickr; however, your e-mail and photo will also be forwarded to the committee members on the stewardship@mvba.org distribution list so that proper enforcement action can be taken (any identifying information will be removed). The Flickr photos may then be referenced by including the URL(s) when filing 311 complaints online. This will assist Housing and CHAP in their enforcement duties and reduce bandwidth and redundancy in e-mails

We will also be uploading the photos taken last year during the comprehensive photographic inventory project. Many of you were involved in this important project to record the front and rear elevations of every single property in the Mount Vernon Historic District, augmenting the collection of 1960s-era and earlier black and white photos in CHAP's files. Using Flickr will allow us to continuously update this reference database.

Please take time now to put violationphotos@mvba.org in your phone's address book so that you can quickly report any illegal activity during your travels through the neighborhood.

Thank you for your continued vigilance in helping to preserve the architectural integrity of the Mount Vernon Historic District!

Live Entertainment Update

Baltimore City has been grappling with this issue for years and has turned into a rather complex one, both from a legislative standpoint and a practical one as demonstrated by all the recent problems with Suites and Red Square located in the basement of the Belvedere Condominiums.

The permission for live entertainment is part of the zoning code as a land use item. In some zoned areas, live entertainment is a permitted use, and in others, not permitted or is a conditional use. Currently, there is legislation that has been introduced to address the complaints from several restaurants that are located in B1 and B2 zones that do not permit live entertainment.

The original legislation would have removed live entertainment from the zoning code altogether and in its place, a Live Entertainment Licensing Board would have

been created to develop rules and regulations and to issue live entertainments licenses, that would be renewed annually. In addition, there would have been an Office of Hospitality created to coordinate and in some cases, mediate differences between communities and establishments with live entertainment.

However, this portion of the legislation was recently removed due pressure from existing establishments as it relates to annual renewal costs, etc. There is also the issue of preemption, as the rules governing licensed liquor establishments with or without live entertainment, are legislated at the State level. It is seen as debatable as to whether the State law would supercede locally established regulations that would have been created by the legislation.

Regardless, at the moment, the current legislation is asking to extend the privilege of live entertainment into B1 and B2 zoned areas, which are areas of light business use and are rather small in terms of land area. They typically located along major streets are bordered by neighborhoods, so the zones act as buffer zones to surrounding communities.

Included in the legislation, is a requirement that many conditions related to live entertainment must be agreed to, and unlike the Liquor Board, the Zoning Board would have the power to mediate and impose conditions that may not necessarily be what either the applicant or the community desires. However, this conditional oversight is believed to be better than the current mechanism the Liquor Board has to adhere to where the Liquor Board cannot impose restrictions.

This conditional use requirement also forms the basis as an enforcement tool and it has been indicated that there is a desire to have the Environmental Control Board issue citations when establishments operate outside of their use conditions set up at the time of approval.

Note that current zoned areas, such as B3, B4, and B5 are exempt from the legislation, so the current legislation only addresses B1 and B2 zones.

As recently as May 11, the planning commission conducted an information session for interested parties where the above information was discussed. Following the session, there was a hearing at the Planning Commission on May 14 to determine whether the Planning

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Choral Morning Prayer, 10:30 AM

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Department would support or oppose the currently amended legislation.

City Council is scheduled to review the amended legislation on May 27. One issue to consider is that if the legislation in its amended form passes, those locations who apply for a receive permission for live entertainment will have that right forever. So if it turns out that it was a mistake to pass such legislation for B1 and B2 zones, it could virtually be impossible to undo the consequences, despite the enforcement mechanism envisioned. One possible solution is to provide a means to revoke the permission for live entertainment in these zones, but it is not understood if such a possibility would be included in the legislation.

Midtown to Replace Safety Escort Program

In response to the priority of improved public safety and improved perception of Midtown as safe neighborhoods, the Midtown Community Benefits District Public Safety Committee has developed a number of new initiatives. Highlights of the program include promotion of Citizens on Patrol teams; and a pilot program to increase street lighting in the Madison Park neighborhood. Midtown is reviewing proposals for use of state-of-the-art technology for live monitored cameras and communication stations.

In order to step up public safety services and make best use of limited surtax dollars, Midtown's Public Safety Committee recommended and the board approved the discontinuation of Midtown's safety escort service, which will no longer be available after April 20th. Patrol driver Clarence Johnson was transferred to Midtown's Clean Team as of April 20th. The safety escort service began when Midtown had a team of safety ambassadors who would provide a pedestrian escort within the district. As the safety guides were eliminated to move resources to sanitation services, the escort was provided by Midtown's one remaining safety team member in our patrol van. The Midtown board concluded that what began as a public safety service had evolved mostly into a shuttle type service, and was no longer helping Midtown achieve its mission.

For further information, please call the Midtown office at 410 528-1512 or email us at info@midtowncommunity.org.

Business News

Congrats again to FEAST@4east -- the restaurant at the Inn at Four East Madison which was selected as a top 10 restaurant for Earth Day by the Baltimore Sun. At FEAST, local ingredients are front and center and vegan options are plentiful on the menu.

In case anyone missed it, Brewer's Art received more accolades in the national press with its selection as the #1 Bar in America by Esquire magazine.

Check out Sotto Sopra's next Opera Night on Sunday May 24 at 5:30 p.m. Nowhere else can you find live opera and fabulous food in the same room. Reservations required. At \$58 per person, diners enjoy a wonderful 6 course spring menu to accompany the evening's live opera performances. This is truly a great night out.

And for the more casual diner who might prefer pool over Pavarotti, remember our many casual restaurants and pubs serve great meals every night of the week.

Eddie's Market keeps getting better and better. Check out the new selection of incredible Portuguese bread and rolls and local Harford County cheeses. Fresh produce from Westminster is starting to roll in and will be going strong all summer with local corn,

MVBA MEMBER OFFER



MV

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tomatoes, cantaloupe and more. Support Eddies – our one and only full scale food market – and go green in two ways by walking to the store and purchasing fresh local items.

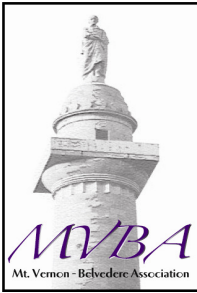
Great Theater Everywhere!

Attention residents and businesses. Please take a night or two in the next month to enjoy the outstanding productions being offered at our three – yes three – professional theaters. All three need our support to weather this tough economy. All of these shows are affordable and all are first class productions. Enjoy!

Center Stage has the hilarious play Souvenir featuring the original Broadway cast until May 24.

Spotlighters Theater is featuring the now-classic On Golden Pond which, in an intimate live theater setting, packs triple the emotional impact of the well-known film. On Golden Pond runs until May 31 at Spotlighters on St. Paul Street.

And the Theatre Project at 45 W. Preston presents Paraffin from June 4 – 14. Paraffin is a dance theatre piece that investigates the subliminal forces of formulas that affect our identity. In collaboration with an ensemble of eight performers, choreographer/director Naoko Maeshiba extracts subtle beauty and vibrant festivity that takes you through an exquisite and hypnotic landscape charged with intense physicality.



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 Jason Curtis president@mvba.org
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Historic Mt. Vernon/Belvedere

Visit MVBA at www.mvba.org



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Appointed Members:

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Please mark your calendars for the 4-corners yard sale.

SATURDAY JUNE 6th
9AM - 2PM Rain or Shine
The 4-corners of Madison and Park
This event will also be a fundraiser for
Second Sunday.

311 Violation Reports

Due to budget cuts, the city no longer offers 24hr, 311 service. PLEASE FILE YOUR OFF-HOUR COMPLAINTS THROUGH 311 ONLINE.