



# MPNA News

## The Melrose Park Neighbors Association

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Volume 2 – Number 3  
From MPNA President – Andy Rudin  
November 1, 2004

Other members of the Board are Phil Kates, Michael Schectman and Jim Muldoon. If you are interested in helping out with MPNA, please email me at [andrewrudin@earthlink.net](mailto:andrewrudin@earthlink.net)

This newsletter is available with photos on our website – [www.melroseparkneighbors.org](http://www.melroseparkneighbors.org)

### The News:



#### **Celebration for new SEPTA station**

Well, we didn't have any speeches because the commuters were too spread out over the platform, but we did have fun and food – cupcakes and apple juice. Dave Posmontier and Lynn Mather played lots of great music – many train songs!

Albert took these photos. To the left is a picture of Kim Kennedy, SEPTA's R5 coordinator, plus Dave and Lynn.

To the right is a photo of Commissioner Mike Swavola, Diane Kolb (dressed in 1905 vintage clothes) and myself with the big ears!

Diane was great! She schmoozed the commuters, handing them an MPNA brochure, which you can see or download from our website. For the station celebration, I printed on the back side of the brochure –

**Gas - \$2+ ?**  
**Encourage neighbors to**  
**Ride SEPTA**



## Meetings about the Ashbourne Country Club Housing Development

The Melrose Park Neighbors Association is not taking any position on the following because it is just outside the northern boundary of our neighborhood. We suggest that interested readers attend the meetings on November 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>.

According to Cheltenham Township officials, the Ashbourne Country Club is proposing the creation of 297 new dwelling units with all underground parking under the three high rise buildings averaging 97 feet. The height is to minimize the amount of impervious coverage. The site will also have to meet the new regulations for stormwater runoff. The current design proposes a detention pond that most likely will need to be modified somewhat to satisfy the new criteria. . The height of the new residential units may appear to be out of character to the surrounding neighborhood and the applicant may be asked to provide architectural renderings of the proposed buildings from different views. The additional traffic generated on the road network may present another issue.

This proposal will be discussed in the Township Building meeting room on November 3, 2004 at 9 PM at the Building/Zoning Committee meeting to review their zoning hearing board appeal. The application will then be reviewed by the ZHB at their meeting on November 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM at Curtis Hall. This is for zoning approvals only. No permits for construction will be issued at this time or anytime in the near future. Should the applicant receive zoning approval, he must still go through land development review which will take about 3-4 months. The land planner is Stu Appel. The plan preserves a large amount of open space.

## Words from our previous President – Albert Fried-Cassorla

Dear Neighbors:

Thank you for the opportunity of serving as president of our association since our beginning in 1999. This has been a much more enjoyable and rewarding experience than I ever imagined it would be!

I decided last week to put some energy into re-capping what we have accomplished so far. My "little re-cap" has become a sort of *War and Peace*. Pardon my length! I discovered a great deal. As examples, I learned:

- that many neighbors have good will and energy and just need the slightest opportunity to contribute,
- that the act of working with neighbors is just as important as the actual accomplishments,
- that a little bit of energy exerted at the right time makes a huge difference (as when a SEPTA station was in its planning stages), and
- that our neighborhood is physically beautiful, which in part reflects our spiritual beauty. I have enjoyed celebrating this in photographs.

Beyond what I have learned so far, we have indeed achieved much in a few short years. Here are just a few of our achievements, and the key people involved;

- **New SEPTA Station** - This new \$2,500,000 station is a great source of pride for many of us. Jeff Knueppel of SEPTA made the decision to push for a full, new station. He did so because he saw positive energy in the form of plantings and hanging baskets at the old station (credit goes to Gwen Koths, Bill Donnelly, Greta Milles and others). Mr. Knueppel also pushed for a new station because they saw our group organizing actively around many issues.
- **Beautification and Earth Day Clean-Ups** - More than any other event, our Earth Days have been key to bringing neighbors together. Each year we have had anywhere from 30 to 200 people involved in

cleaning, weeding and planting. It's been a great chance to get to know one another. Andy Rudin has been instrumental in planning and follow-through. Also, in recent years, Gene Silver has been key. Also credit Cheltenham Commissioner and neighbor Mike Swavola, who had Town workers remove dead trees and mid-stream trash. Also credit Gwen Koths, Tom and Patrice Steigerwald, and more recently Ricki Lent, Nancy Reichenbach and many other neighbors for their hard work on Earth Days.

- **Improving Mill Run Water Quality** - Andy Rudin and I decided to found MPNA because of the terrible state of Mill Run, at one time the most polluted stream imaginable. For years, I noticed the foul odors when idling at Cheltenham Avenue and Granite Coventry). In a meeting at my house, attended by Andy, Larry Curry, Caryl Levin and a few others. I found out that Mill Run had been a source of concern (and letter-writing by Andy for as many as seven years previous). Since then, thanks to actions by the state DEP, the Philadelphia Water Department, Town officials and our MPNA urgings, hundreds of bad cross-connects on the Philly side were corrected. That means, literally, that hundreds of homes were emptying directly into or stream. Things have improved: the e.coli count has gone from a worst-ever record in July, 2000 of more than 200,000 colonies per 100 ml to 6,700 in July of 2002. This is thanks in part to diversion valves being installed. Much more remains to be done to improve the stream. I am sure that Andy will continue to work on this, but he will need your help. That is, until we are able to safely schedule our first Mill Run Annual Skinny Dip!!
- **Traffic Improvements** - We have remedied some bad traffic spots, including one with vision-obstructing shrubs at Union Avenue near Mountain. Special credit goes to Helaine Zlotnick for leading that work.
- **Inter-Cultural Understanding** - We have a varied population, a fact which has drawn many of us to this area in the first place. As you know, some principal groups, religions or ethnicities in Melrose Park are African-Americans, Koreans, Vietnamese and whites, Jews and Christians. The best way to pull people together is to work together, and we have provided projects and venues. Another way has been through pro-active work, such as tours of the Asian Market at Han An Reum. Those evenings were great fun!
- **Building a Fence Along SEPTA's Tracks on Mill Road** - Neighbors were concerned about school kids walking on the tracks, which could have led to a terrible accident. Michael Shechtman led the work of starting a petition to the Town and SEPTA to get this fence built -- which eventually did happen. Much more remains to be done in all of the areas mentioned above. To that list of projects and issues, I would like to add fighting noise pollution. As a work-at-home person, I face a daily auditory barrage of noise from mowers, chippers, blowers and now a huge chemical sucking racket-making truck at Coventry House.

Also of concern are the ugly, broken traffic islands on Cheltenham Avenue and the lack of coordinated development there. Not long go, a joint governmental task force led by Cheltenham Township began once again to address these problems. (See Andy's update in the last issue of the MPNA e-newsletter.) Let's hope this joint task force's work continues towards success. The best news for all of us is that MPNA is in good hands. Andrew Rudin is a true leader and an environmental visionary. He will help us get to where we need to go as a community. Also helping him is our able board, including Michael Shechtman, Phil Kates, Jim Muldoon, Gene Silver and myself.

I have resigned as MPNA President to undertake other activities, including my regular advertising and writing work and serving as President of the Philadelphia Direct Marketing Association. But rest assured that I will be stay involved -- and you will continue to see me and my white pooch Bailey jogging through the hood! Stop us any time to say hello and, if you like, to pet Bailey!

Sincerely, *Albert Fried-Cassarola*

## **Wesley Avenue Plaza Groundbreaking on November 5**

Wesley Plaza is in the middle of Glenside, between Easton and Bickley Roads between Waverly and Glenside Avenues. This is part of the streetscape enhancement effort by Cheltenham Township, thanks to \$540,000 in Montgomery County Community Revitalization Grants. A major portion of the funds will create Wesley Plaza out of part Wesley Avenue. According to Township Manager David Kraynik, "This section of roadway will remain open to traffic and parking on a regular basis, but it will transform into a unique staging area during special events." The groundbreaking will be held Friday, November 5, 2004 at 8:30am rain or shine.

### **This Newsletter**

If you have any suggestions for items for this newsletter, feel free to email them to me at [andrewrudin@earthlink.net](mailto:andrewrudin@earthlink.net).

**Our best wishes to you for a pleasant Thanksgiving.**