

Kemp Mill Civic Association Meeting Minutes for September 13, 2021

Virtual Meeting from 7:30 – 9:05 PM

Thank you to our speakers: Officer Katie Beard, Ms. Jennifer Renkema, and Gil Chlewicki!

KMCA President Alan Felsen called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM on Zoom.

- The posted agenda and minutes of the previous meeting were approved without objection.
- Treasurer Anna Waller reported that we have 110 active members and a balance of \$5,899.43 in the checking account and two CDs of \$1,571.70 and \$1,480.00 respectively.

Committee Reports

Treasurer: The report was presented at the beginning of the meeting.

Beautification: Pete Lublin reported that one plant disappeared and he has bought some bulbs to use for fall planting. He has two helpers and anyone interested in helping can email him through the KMCA website. Only two of the solar lights are still working, having been in use for three years and need replacement. The small lights on the back of the sign never functioned well.

Deer/Wildlife: Jonathan Aghion announced that he has tick tubes available for sale for \$10. They are toilet paper tubes stuffed with cotton balls saturated with an insecticide that rodents and other animals will spread and will kill ticks in yards. They have been successfully used over the last three years to control ticks although they were not made last year due to Covid.

Speakers

Officer Katie Beard, MCPD Community Services Association

Update on Recent Crime Trends and Q&A Session

Officer Beard presented county data for Kemp Mill from March 1 – August 31 of 2021. Serious crime is considerably lower in Kemp Mill than surrounding similar communities. There were a total of forty-seven incident reports that consisted of the following: twelve thefts, four forgery, ten theft, fifteen miscellaneous, five police information, and five juvenile runaways. Of these, one was an auto theft, two were second degree assaults, and one was vandalism. During May and June there were eight thefts of catalytic converters, mostly from Toyota Prius cars, by far the most common crime. Some crimes were reported late (including two sex offenses) and others not at all. People were reminded to lock their cars and aim their security cameras at their driveway and car to help in apprehension of criminals.

Officer Beard encouraged people to report all crimes, even if nothing was taken. This helps the police find trends and solve more crimes. Normally several cars are targeted in an area at one time. The process to report a crime is to call the Police Non-Emergency Number: 301-279-8000 to report the crime. An officer will come out to investigate and will look, take pictures, and fingerprints as appropriate. They submit reports and data to the lab. The petty crimes unit has achieved great success, arresting nine crime crews in the area. When asked what the closest serious/violent crime communities are, the response was Aspen Hill and lower Wheaton.

Silver Spring Christian Reformed Church (SSCRC) Food Bank

Ms. Jennifer Renkema

Contact for Jennifer Renkema/Food Pantry at SSCRC: foodpantry@sscrc.org; 301-284-8401

For financial donations: <https://www.sscrc.org/online-giving>; Please put "food pantry" in the notes; funds will be used for food and paper bags to pack food

Ms. Renkema began by thanking Chris Farrell and the neighborhood volunteers, those who made food and financial donations, and to everyone for their patience with the traffic situation during food pantry hours. She then went on to a brief history of the organization. The project began about eight years ago and served approximately a hundred families once a month. At that time a priority was to establish relationships with the families and contributing community organizations.

For the last eighteen months since Covid the food pantry has been open every Tuesday serving about six hundred forty households per week. Last week was the lowest number yet at five hundred forty households. Approximately 35% of the households live in 20902 and 34% from surrounding counties of 20904 and 20906. Support is provided by fifteen community organizations including churches and synagogues, MCPS, Parks and Planning, and Park Police. The organization is financially sound as of now as it is receiving food from the Capital Area Food Bank, Montgomery County, and local people in the neighborhood. Ms. Renkema was proud to report that they have never run out of food or had to turn anyone in need away, unlike many other programs.

The program is changing to twice monthly on the first and third Tuesdays since participation has been trending down. They are struggling to get enough volunteers on Tuesday from 2:45 – 5:30 PM on Tuesdays. People can donate money as described above. The process to donate food is as follows: Shelf stable food can be dropped off in the outside boxes at the church any time except Tuesday afternoon. To donate perishable items it is advisable to call the church to make sure someone is there to take it in. Other good times are Monday night before the boxes are put together from 6:30 – 8:30 PM or Tuesday morning from 8:00 – 11:00 AM before the pantry hours.

Councilmember Jawando: Thrive Montgomery 2050 Plan

Councilman Jawando is serving on the committee for PHED (Planning, Housing, and Economic Development) that will be working for six weeks on the plan to present to the full Council. There will be a virtual Town Hall on September 29 for more public input. (It was pointed out that this is the last night of a major Jewish holiday which will conflict at least in part.) The Councilman stated his personal priorities as developing a Vision Document for Master and Sector Plans for the next 20 -30 years. Important themes to him are environmental impact, social justice, and racial equality.

Councilman Jawando supports transit oriented development that is affordable. He stated that growth needs to occur where economically feasible and more in-fill building is needed to provide adequate housing. He envisions activity centers within fifteen minutes of where people live. He feels that the framework for the problem is good but needs tweaking.

KMCA President Felsen brought up concerns expressed at the previous KMCA Meeting as follows: Fear of environmental problems with the floodplain, overcrowded schools, feeling that the program is a developer driven money grab, and the usual process for public input not being followed.

Councilman Jawando described the concerns as hyperbole. He said that he is opposed to unlimited incentives for developers in areas already in demand. He further stated that Thrive 2050 sets a framework but does not have laws. Duplexes and triplexes have laws pertaining to their construction. He says there are many questions on how to manage growth. He still wants more affordability since "affordable" housing would still be very expensive. He feels Habitat for Humanity should be used for affordable housing. Rental increases should be limited to 1 – 4% per year.

Councilman Jawando was asked what he considers the best argument for the other side. He cited rent stabilization and protections. He is concerned about the "missing middle" housing and feels it could benefit from duplexes and triplexes.

Jonathan Aghion expressed several concerns from the neighborhood: a lag in the growth of business, the desire to develop every square foot of land to increase the tax base, a concern over turning suburban areas in urban areas, and the fact that since proximity to transportation also includes bus routes, Kemp Mill would be included as within a transportation hub.

Councilman Jawando's response was that four of the most diverse cities in the country are in this area and we need to develop a plan to manage the pace of change.

Gil Chlewicki, KMCA Transportation Committee Chair: University Boulevard Shared Streets Project

Mr. Chlewicki explained that the project runs from Arcola to Amherst on University Boulevard from mid-June through mid-November. It involves taking away the right lane to be used for bikes. At this point they are gathering data. He personally has done some monitoring during peak hours and observes pedestrians using the lanes but very few bicycles. He has not had time to do so since school started. From what he has observed most people can clear the light on University on one cycle and also on Arcola within one cycle because the lights have been retimed even though the right turn lane has been lost.

The largest volume seems to be from Sligo Creek Parkway to Arcola with those being the most used start and end points for cyclists. It was pointed out that people who do not live in the neighborhood may not know of the trail behind the shopping center and it floods during heavy rains.

Mr. Chlewicki has no idea if or when a permanent bike lane might be installed. If it does, the right turn lane on Arcola would need to be reengineered. Concern was raised about a lack of protection for cyclists since many of the flex posts have already been damaged. The project has slowed traffic down on University Boulevard.

A suggestion was made to pursue permanent structures, similar to those on Dennis Avenue that display your speed, for Arcola, Lamberton and Kemp Mill Roads. President Felsen said that the police were asked to increase enforcement of school bus violations on Kemp Mill Road. It was then mentioned that a safety island is desperately needed at the corner of Monticello Avenue and Kemp Mill Road where many students and other pedestrians cross.

New Business/Announcements:

No new business

Announcements:

- Friendship Picnic this Sunday:
<https://www.montgomeryparks.org/events/friendship-picnic/>
- WSSC is in the neighborhood looking over water lines
- Question about whether there will be more gas line replacements taking place on Stonington or Hermleigh since those streets have also been marked

Meeting adjourned at 9:04 PM.