

IDLEWYLDE*NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE IDLEWYLDE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
"Community Commitment since 1947" April 2018

ICA March general meeting

Not many people attended the meeting on Saturday, March 18, but those who did had a good time. The gathering was graced with visits from State Senator Jim Brochin, Delegate Steve Lafferty, and County Councilman David Marks.

There's a bunch of events on the calendar. Here they are, in order of date.

2018 Elections: candidates' forum

The forum is on Thursday, *April 12*, from 6 to 9. There will be a hour of meet and greet followed by 2 hours of Q and A.

The forum will feature the primary election candidates for County Council District 5 and the general election candidates for Maryland House of Delegates District 42A.

There will be drinks and snacks. No booze or tomatoes.

Earth Day Stream Clean-up!

Sunday, April 22 is Earth Day, and volunteers will be helping to make Idlewylde and its environs a little less polluted by capturing and bagging every bit of trash in the Herring Run from Overlook Park to the City line.

Contact ICA Veep *John Keenan* (info, p. 3).

Community Yard Sale

The Idlewylde community yard sale is set for *Saturday, May 5*, with rain date, as always, the next day. As usual, the ICA will advertise the sale on *Craigslist* and in the *Towson Times*. The ICA has bought half-a-dozen new roadside signs to advertise the event. (Where *did* the old ones go?)

We hope to compile a list of potential vendors as usual, post it on the ICA website with a neighborhood map, and link it to Craigslist in the hope that it will lead sale patrons to vendors on our many side streets.

ICA board member *Jamie Kass* has volunteered to co-ordinate the event this year. Please contact her (info, p. 3) if you'd like to help.

Garden Club plant swap

The Idlewylde Garden Club is planning a plant swap and sale at the Idlewylde United Methodist Church (1000 Register) at the same time as the community yard sale.

The club's *biennial garden tour* is set for Saturday, June 23.

Contact *Jamie Kass* (info, p. 3).

Dumpster Day

As you commence your spring cleaning, remember that our annual *Dumpster Day* is on Saturday, May 12. *John Keenan* has scored 4 dumpsters from the County to provide for disposal of your bulk trash. They will be located in the parking lot at Idlewylde Hall (6301 Sherwood Road).

They are usually in place by 8 a.m., and we will continue to accept trash until midday unless we've filled up the dumpsters before then. Since the County usually supplies 6 dumpsters, that could happen.

If you'd like to help, contact John (info, p. 3) or just turn up. Volunteers should bring work gloves.

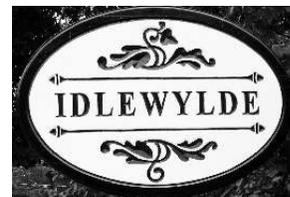
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Please note that the following items cannot be accepted:

- Large stumps, or wood/logs in excess of 8 inches in diameter or 6 feet long.
- Flammable or hazardous materials and liquids, paint, or pesticides, including batteries and oil.
- Tires or any appliances.
- Electronics or televisions.
- Recyclables (put them out for your weekly recycling pickup).

Also, please don't bring yard waste that can be put out for the bi-weekly yard waste pickup.

Lawn mowers and other powered items must be completely empty of gasoline.



The crisis facing Idlewylde

Relax. There is no crisis facing Idlewylde.

But don't relax too much. There will be, sooner or later, because Idlewylde is on the edge. The edge of the County, of Towson, of the York Road Corridor.

Four years ago, Idlewylde was facing two crises.

Some of us had just finished a year of attending county school board meetings wearing tee-shirts proclaiming the slogan "Idlewylde and Loch Hill United."

That crisis emerged in the summer of 2013. Baltimore County Public Schools had recently hired a startlingly young and inexperienced Superintendent from Texas, and suddenly a comprehensive school re-districting was on the table.

Idlewylde felt vulnerable, because Idlewylde is about good public schools and it's on the edge of every school district we currently belong to. That's because we're right at the southeast corner of the York Road Corridor, a zone of rapid residential development fueled by the constant quest of people like us for good public schools.

Increased population pressure in the Corridor squeezes us eastward. We feared being squeezed out of Stoneleigh Elementary, the school that opened in 1930 to serve our community.

So the community left nothing to chance. A few dozen of us went to the next board meeting in those tee-shirts and made a big noise. We kept on going. Our elected representatives rallied to our cause. Complicated fixes blossomed: de-magnetize Cromwell Valley ES, magnetize Halstead Academy ES, re-open the old Loch Raven Middle School.

Luckily, the renovation and expansion of Stoneleigh ES was already under way. That made it easy to design a fix that left our ES district unchanged. And now plans are afoot to build a larger Towson High.

Was all the noise necessary? I don't know, but I've yet to hear of a community securing a worse outcome by making a big noise.

* * *

The other crisis was the sudden eruption of a scheme to build a Family Dollar store on the vacant lots on Sherwood Rd opposite the community hall. You can't get closer to the edge than that, since the lots abut the City line. The project was a bad fit in several ways.

The plan didn't fit the property's CB (Community Business) zoning. It was more than twice the size of the largest store on the block, and there wasn't nearly enough parking for a store of that size.

The property is elevated above Southwood Rd, right behind it, so the store would have towered over the houses there.

The last thing the community wanted was a large, understaffed chain store with long opening hours and glaring outdoor lighting.

Anyway, there were already two Family Dollar stores a mile away.

* * *

The community made a big noise about the Family Dollar scheme, and the ICA hired a lawyer to oppose it, so it quickly went away. They were trying it on in the hope – maybe the expectation – that no one would make a fuss.

But one reason they were on thin ice was that, years earlier, the ICA had taken steps to change the zoning. In 1996 the County rezoned the whole business block as part of a county-wide review of the AS (Automotive Services) designation. The developed part was rezoned BL (Business Local), and the undeveloped part BLR (Business Local Restricted).

The then owner of the site felt that this was unfair and started nagging the county Planning Office about it. In March 1997, the Director wrote to him saying that, "As I and members of my staff have explained to you on numerous occasions," the decision took account of the homes bordering the site.

However, when the next comprehensive zoning process commenced, the owner applied for upzoning to BL. Apparently his persistence was starting to pay off: the minutes of the April 2000 ICA board meeting record that the Planning Office planned to support him.

So the board called a special community meeting to consider applying for *downzoning* to CB (Community Business). And with the help of then County Councilman Wayne Skinner, we prevailed. That's why the site was CB when the Family Dollar scheme cropped up.

But it's not CB now. In 2016, with the help of County Councilman David Marks, the zoning was changed to residential.

* * *

When you're on the edge, eternal vigilance is indispensable. Sooner or later, something will come up, and it's good to have your forces in place when it does. For us, those forces are the ICA, with its hall and bank account.

The hall, obviously, is a good place to make a big noise. It's also a community social asset, which is available for scout groups and playgroups, Hallowe'en parties, and anything else that you, as a member of the community, might dream up to entertain your neighbors. And it's also a symbol of Idlewylde's solidity and stability – something politicians notice as they visit us year after year.

Not least, it's responsible for that bank account, which comes in so handy when it's necessary to hire a lawyer.

But these things are nothing without the human element. And the human element is you. Idlewylde is nothing if not you.

So join the ICA. And, just as important, help out with the ICA. Stage an open mic night. Join the board. You'll be welcomed with open arms.

– Paul Romney

Stormy weather

Living in a community of large oak trees can be quite edgy too.

Dinner time on March 2nd, my wife and I were sitting in our living room dealing with the fact that the electricity was out and it was way too windy for any sane person to venture out in search of dinner.

Suddenly I noticed flickering light through the back window. It turned out to be flickering flames. Our biggest tree had blown over, bringing down the utility wires and sparking the dead leaves at the base of the pole. I was talking to 911 before I noticed the tree had fallen.

They'd already been alerted. We hadn't heard the tree fall, but the neighbor whose roof it landed on must have. Or maybe it was the other neighbor whose garage it had crushed.

The fire crew appeared round the side of the stricken house. They looked at the flames licking the utility pole. They didn't seem in a hurry to do anything.

I gesticulated. It's a utility pole, guys.

With all due caution, they edged closer and spritzed the flames.

The wires continued sparking gently for 20 minutes or so until the transformer blew. I recognized that sound, because it was the second time I'd heard it that day.

Sad about the garage. Nothing special to look at, but rumor has it that, back when there was a water tower behind what is now 804 Register, it had been built to house a fire engine.

In that case it may have been nearly as old as the tree that brought it down. A perfectly healthy red oak, with a huge root-mass that just couldn't keep it anchored in the sodden ground.

Luckily no one got hurt.

– Paul Romney

IDLEWYLDE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

PO BOX 66106, Baltimore, MD 21239

BOARD (2017-18)

Pete Ismay, *President*, 410-459-6638 pismay@hotmail.com; John Keenan, *Vice-President*, 410-377-0563 keenan32@comcast.net; Dana Reed, *Treasurer*, 443-869-3670 daanrd@comcast.net; Paul Romney, *Secretary*, 410-377-0748 paulromney03@aim.com.

At-large members: Cynthia Jabs, 410-377-7252 bomsterjab@comcast.net; Sarah McDonough, 410-245-7454 sarahamcdonough@gmail.com; Jamie Kass, 410-377-6728 jamie.kass@cbmove.com; Michelle List, 410-377-5244 dassylist@hotmail.com; Peggy Squitieri, 410-377-5722 pashannon@verizon.net

OTHER OFFICERS

Citizens on Patrol

Director: Katie McCabe, 301-922-2743 ktmccabe2@gmail.com
www.idlewyldde.org

Webmaster: Michael Snyder me@michaelsnyder.me

Membership Secretary

Paul Romney, 410-377-0748 paulromney03@aim.com

All members of the ICA are welcome at monthly board meetings, but please contact a board member to confirm time and place.

IDLEWYLDE NEWS

P.O. Box 66106, Baltimore, MD 21239

Editor: Paul Romney (410-377-0748)

Director of Distribution: Jamie Kass

Submit articles, announcements, ads, etc. to the editor at idlewyldenews@yahoo.com, or phone editor.

Advertising Rates

¼ page: \$25 members, \$50 non-members

½ page: \$35 members, \$75 non-members

Full-page insert: one-sided \$200, two-sided \$250

Classified listings are free for members of the ICA.

Payment. Send check payable to "Idlewyldde Community Association" to ICA at PO Box above.

Idlewyldde News is the newsletter of the ICA.. 755 copies are printed bi-monthly for door-to-door distribution, and each issue is posted on idlewyldde.org.



Jim Craig

410-377-6100

6609 York Rd - Anneslie

jimcraig1@allstate.com



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Stormy weather



*Windstorm hits
Idlewylde:
March 2,
2018*



*Spring hits
Idlewylde,
March 21,
2018*
