

# UNIVERSITY PARK NEWSLETTER

TOWN OF UNIVERSITY PARK, MARYLAND  
JANUARY 2024      OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER      VOL. XLIX, NO. 1

## MAYOR'S COLUMN

**HAPPY 2024!** As we turn the page on 2023, I hope you ended last year celebrating the holidays with close family, friends—and even new pets that some of you recently adopted. As we begin a new year, make resolutions, and set goals for 2024, it's appropriate to look back at what we accomplished.

▪ **Town Administrator** We hired interim Town Administrator Angela Lawrence this past July. Ms. Lawrence has consistently exceeded our expectations, and brings a level of passion and enthusiasm to the role that has not gone unnoticed. She has been indispensable helping us move contracts forward, engaging county officials on matters impacting the Town (e.g., Wells Run sediment issues, stormwater management concerns, permitting), improving communications between Council and residents, and enhancing the way Council conducts business. Ms. Lawrence will be leaving at the end of this fis

cal year, but she will stay with us long enough to help our community identify her replacement.

▪ **Tot Lot** In April, we celebrated the opening of the new Tot Lot playground along the Wells Run path between 43rd and 44th Avenues. A group of residents helped redesign the playground with enhanced amenities for parents and children. The redesigned space is ADA-accessible, and we incorporated a pollinator theme to encourage an appreciation for nature. A special thanks to all who participated, including Kelsey Bryant Starr, Kara Frome, Joe Thompson, Claire Worshtil, Ellen Hagerty, Emily McNally, Emily Ryan, Hannah Walsh, Monica Hesse, Christy Neff, Heidi St. Onge, Len Carey, Mickey Beall, Dan Baden, and our last town administrator, David Deutsch. All were instrumental in bringing this project from an idea to completion!

▪ **Pedestrian Bridges** We finally built them! As I write this column, we are waiting for the steel railings. Perhaps

## Town Meetings & Special Dates

Town Council	January 2 & 16
Town Holidays	January 1 January 15

Town Hall is open Mon.- Fri., 9 AM to 5 PM. Residents must ring the call button for service. Council meetings are at 7:30 PM and currently conducted by video. Agendas are posted at [www.upmd.org/agenda](http://www.upmd.org/agenda) center. Please sign up for alerts at [www.upmd.org/notifyme](http://www.upmd.org/notifyme)

## Contents

3	From the Chief
3	Town News
4	Highlights of November 20 Town Council Meetings
9	Town News & Events
10	Community Calendar
12	2024 Adopted Council Meeting Schedule

## FROM THE MAYOR CONT.

they will be installed by the time you receive this newsletter, but if not, their installation is imminent. Once this project is finally complete, we will hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony and put them to use!

▪ **Town Hall RFP** The Town's Public Facilities Committee, chaired by Councilmember Nat Morgan, has made tremendous progress on a way forward with Town Hall. Frederick Ward and Associates will soon provide us with several design options that are ADA-compliant, meet our residents' and Town government's needs, and are fiscally prudent. Additionally, our Town's financial reserves are sufficient to minimize or negate any impact to our Town's taxpayers.



▪ **Protecting Our Environment** In December, we amended our charter to require voter approval via referendum should a future Mayor and Council wish to sell or repurpose our Town's parks and public space. This effort was largely inspired by the recent fight over Guilford Woods when a proposed University of Maryland development made local headlines due to its planned deforestation. This charter provision will be an important tool for future generations to protect the natural amenities we enjoy today.

▪ **Sustainability Efforts** In 2023, we became a member of Bee City USA in recognition of our residents' commitment to native pollinator protection. MarySue Twohy and members of the Town's Sustainability Committee deserve credit for helping the Town obtain this special distinction. We renewed our membership in Tree City USA and partnered with the UP Elementary School staff and students to plant a tree on public property. Joe Thompson of the Town's Sustainability Committee was instrumental in University Park obtaining Sustainable Maryland's Silver Certification—their highest honor—recognizing our residents many efforts to protect our

environment. Finally, many of our residents planted new trees, tended to our Town Pollinator Meadow, helped clean the streams, and engaged in various sustainability projects, all of which help make our town a uniquely special place.

▪ **Enhancing Public Safety** We recently hired two new police officers, Sgt. Nicholas Griffith and Officer Jasmine Chase. In July, we launched a public safety message alert system, Nixle, for residents wishing to receive real-time alerts of local emergencies and community advisories. Simply text your zip code to 888777 or go to the Town's police website or Nixle.com to create customized alerts.

▪ **Pedestrian and Traffic Improvements** We installed diamond-grade reflectors on many of our traffic-control signs and will continue this until all signs have been upgraded. We added traffic calming measures to a section of Van Buren Street and installed a new speed hump on Pineway near Baltimore Avenue. Working closely with County Councilmember Eric Olson, we hastened the installation of safety improvements to the pedestrian crosswalks on Adelphi Road near Tennyson Road and Van Buren Street. A special thank you to Councilmember Gathercole, who as chair of the Police, Traffic, and Public Safety Committee, communicated important resident concerns to me and Councilmember Olson helping to speed up installation of the improved crosswalks. I and the Council are receptive to all resident concerns about pedestrian and bicyclist safety. Please continue to engage us as we consider additional projects in our community.

We achieved so much in 2023 that cannot possibly be summed up in one newsletter, and we look forward to doing the same in the new year. I wish you success in achieving your personal goals and resolutions for 2024. As always, consider one of the many little animals awaiting their forever homes at the Prince George's County Animal Shelter. Pets make people happy, and happy people achieve their New Year resolutions!

*Joel Biermann*

*What do you think? Did I miss something? I am always interested in your perspectives and viewpoints.*

*Email me at [mayorbiermann@upmd.org](mailto:mayorbiermann@upmd.org)*

**Reminder: Please use University Park as your address on your Maryland tax forms.**



## FROM THE CHIEF

Carjacking is defined as stealing a car by force, and very often the offender is armed with a gun. Carjacking is a serious problem in the Washington metropolitan region. Nationwide, most carjackings occur between 10 PM and 2 AM, but can happen anywhere, anytime. Instead of stealing parked cars, many violent criminals find it easier to steal a car while the owner is inside with the keys in the ignition. Cars are stolen and used to commit other violent crimes, or simply because the thief wants to take the vehicle for a ride. No matter the purpose, carjacking is very dangerous for the victim. Unfortunately, Prince George's County has a high rate of carjackings. The University Park Police wants to keep you and your family safe. Please read these helpful tips and share them with your family and friends. **The best way to prevent a carjacking is to always be aware of your surroundings.**

### When getting into your car:

- Walk with purpose and stay alert.
- Approach your car with keys in hand. Look around and inside the car before getting in.
- Be wary of people loitering in the area.
- Trust your instincts; if something makes you feel uneasy, get into the car quickly, lock the doors and drive away.



### While on the road:

- Keep your doors locked and windows rolled up (at least part-way), no matter how short the distance you will be driving or how safe the neighborhood.
- Be especially alert when stopped at intersections. At night please don't stop at gas stations, ATMs, or convenience stores.
- When you are coming to a stop, leave enough room to maneuver around other cars, especially if you sense trouble and need to get away. You should be able to see the rear tires of the car ahead of you.

## TOWN NEWS

- Drive in the center lane to make it harder for would-be carjackers to approach the car.
- Avoid driving alone, especially at night.
- Do not stop to assist a stranger whose car is broken down. Instead, help by calling police to help.
- Keep your cell phone in your pocket. If your vehicle is stolen, you will have a way of contacting 911. If your cell phone is left inside the vehicle, you will be stranded without a way to call for help.

### When getting out of your car:

- Park in well-lighted areas, near sidewalks or walkways. Avoid parking near dumpsters, woods, large vans or trucks, or anything else that limits your visibility.
- Never leave valuables in plain sight; lock your car and take the keys.
- Even if you are rushed, look around before you exit your vehicle and stay alert to your surroundings.

### If carjacking happens to you:

- If the carjacker threatens you with a gun or other weapon, give up your car. Do not argue. Your life is worth more than your car. Get away from the area as quickly as possible.
- Try to remember what the carjacker looked like: sex, race, age, hair and eye color, special features, clothes. Also remember the description of any vehicles involved—color, make, model, license plate.
- Report the crime immediately to the police.

### Crime Report

**Theft** On November 25 a resident in the 6900 block of Pineway reported that his firearm was stolen from his residence. He stated that he last saw the weapon in October 2023 in the basement of his home. No serial number was provided. There are no suspects.

### Public Works News

#### Styrofoam Recycling Being Added

The Town will be introducing EPS Industry Alliance as a new vendor at our next recycling event in April. EPS will be collecting Styrofoam. Town residents will be able to drop off Styrofoam this year for free. Details on the types of Styrofoam that may be dropped off will follow as the information becomes available.



## TOWN NEWS

### PEPCO Vegetation Management



Currently, PEPCO is working on a vegetation management plan which will impact Wards 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. It's anticipated a permit will be on the council agenda for January 16 or in February with work to begin as soon as possible thereafter. As always, the Town's arborist will review the plan with PEPCO and the Public Works Director before the plan is presented to Council. Also, the Town will have an arborist supervising all pruning within the town each day a PEPCO crew is working. The Town's review does not include private trees. Residents should be aware that if they receive a PEPCO doorhanger it is an indication PEPCO plans to prune what they believe is a tree on private property. PEPCO operates on a passive consent basis—the homeowner must reply to learn the extent of pruning intended and/or to deny PEPCO permission to prune the tree.



### Pedestrian Safety

Walking and bicycling are wonderful transportation options, recreation, and a great way to stay fit. With winter's decreased daylight hours, be safe by making sure you and your family members can be seen. Ideally that means wearing a reflective or lighted vest or clothing and footwear. If you don't have reflective clothing, wear plenty of white. Bikes should have lights on the front and back. Remember to walk facing traffic and ride with traffic. Remind your children of these safety measures frequently. Let's make sure that pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers can all be safe.

### Helping Hands University Park

Happy New Year, everyone! We look forward to seeing all our members and volunteers at this year's upcoming social activities and special events! Also, we would like to remind everyone that, in addition to direct services provided by our volunteers, HHUP has a fund set aside



### Helping Hands University Park

specifically for our community's seniors who may need temporary financial help to meet basic needs. In-kind or monetary assistance can be provided for urgently needed help with food/nutrition, housing (temporary emergency assistance or crisis situations to avoid foreclosure or eviction), medical (small co-pays, urgent care visit), and services, such as short-term health care aide assistance. All requests are completely confidential. Call or email us if you have any questions about member enrollment and the Temporary Assistance Fund application process. Let's all do whatever we can to make sure our senior neighbors have a safe and healthy new year.

**HHUP Calendar**—All events are via Zoom unless otherwise noted.

**Members Monthly Lunch Club, Wednesday, January 17, 12-1 PM** In person. Members and volunteers social gathering. Location changes every month. Become a member and join us!

**Executive Committee Meeting, Wednesday, January 24, 5:30-6:30 PM** HHUP is a committee of the Town Council, and all UP residents are welcome to attend. Contact us by phone or email for the Zoom link.

**Conversational Spanish, Wednesdays, 3-4 PM** Members meet weekly to practice with instructor Edda Osborne. Skill level: intermediate and up.

**HHUP Contact Info:** [hhuniversitypark@gmail.com](mailto:hhuniversitypark@gmail.com); 301-892-6636; [helpinghandsup.org](http://helpinghandsup.org); [facebook.com/HelpingHandsUP](https://www.facebook.com/HelpingHandsUP).

### November 20 Council Meeting Highlights

Present (via video and audio conference) were Mayor Biermann; Councilmembers Dubayah, Gathercole, Morrissey, Morgan, McGaughey, Godfrey, Sweet.

### Fiscal Year 2023 Audit Presentation

William Seymour from SB and Company presented the audit findings and provided a summary of the results. He reported no adverse findings or issues.

### Public Comment

■ A Ward Two resident of Queens Chapel addressed the Council with regard to an undeveloped lot across from her house. She explained that the lot had a beautiful azalea garden many years ago, but it had turned into a

## TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

briar patch, overgrown with vegetation. She added that the lot went up for sale for \$350,000. She raised concerns about the real estate agent advertising of the lot. She suggested that the town Council buy the lot and turn it into a wildlife sanctuary. She also noted that there might be grants available to preserve green areas.

- A resident from the north side of Pineway raised concerns about the increased traffic effectiveness of existing speed bumps and requested the installation of a third one. He expressed the need for the Council to examine this issue, including assessing the current speed bumps and evaluating the need for additional measures to address traffic concerns.

- A resident informed the Council about a recent honor bestowed upon University Park for collaborating with Mount Rainier's Nature Center. She added that the UP Sustainability Committee is collaborating with the Tree Committee to organize a thank-you event for Green volunteers.

- A resident raised concerns about providing free electricity to EV owners, stating it is costly for taxpayers and suggested finding a remedy. He shared that the last four months have been 120 days of usage, with 33,088 kilowatt hours of electricity being provided for free to anyone who plugs their car in. In addition, it provides 175 kilowatt hours per day and 100,495 kilowatt hours per year.

- A resident expressed his support for an approach to the Chesapeake Bay Trust Grant program that includes education on stormwater management and applying for grants to implement such programs in public spaces.

- A resident highlighted three factors that make speed bumps necessary on Pineway's north side, including an increased number of children living there, a steep road encouraging speeding, and a dangerous curve in the road.

- A letter from a resident regarding 6711 Adelphi Road stated that he was appealing to the County Board of Zoning Appeals seeking permission to deviate from land use and building code requirements for RSF 65 zoned residents. It was brought to his attention that the owner of 6711 Adelphi Road has filed for the appeals, and they are directly behind his house. He also wrote that he had not been notified or received any information from them regarding this application. From his perspective, the lot does not appear to have any particular limitations due to its shape or exceptional topographic logistics. Therefore, the lot use and any practical difficulty would be considered self-inflicted and would not merit

an acceptance or grant zone variance. Overall, he was concerned about the added effects of their stormwater management plan and the tree protection plan. He did not see any information offered related to drainage, sediment control, environmental impacts, or tree protection plans. He pointed out that they had already begun work and used heavy machinery in the rear and side yards. The excavation was done in what appears to be a critical root zone for the healthy, mature native trees on their lot.

### Mayor, Council, and Committee Comments and Reports

*Mayor Biermann* Mayor Biermann announced the tragic incident where two elementary school children were struck by a vehicle in Riverdale Park and emphasized the importance of pedestrian safety measures implemented in University Park. He shared the solar arrays project, which has saved 889,000 pounds of carbon emissions from being released into the atmosphere since installed. Mayor Biermann reported that the Town conducted the Veterans Day observance. The Maryland National Capitol Park police and their equestrian unit attended. He shared that the Tree Lighting event will take place on December 2, 2023, from 6 to 8 PM. Lastly, he noted that pedestrian bridges are nearly completed in Ward Six and Ward Seven.

*Public Services and Facilities Committee* CM Morgan reported that the committee met on November 16, 2023, where they discussed the PG County Stormwater Stewardship Grant Program and whether or not there was time to apply. This is a grant, if awarded, of up to \$150,000 for the design and implementation of stormwater management solutions. The deadline is November 30, 2023, and the Town Administrator is currently looking to see if applying is feasible. CM Morgan also reported that the committee discussed whether or not to apply for the Watershed Assistance Grant program, which is a minor award that would cover only the design.

CM Sweet expressed the need for traffic safety, including the need for effective speed humps and better pedestrian infrastructure. He shared the latest updates at Adelphi Road, like the new pedestrian islands, new crosswalks going in and turn-arrows coming off of Adelphi Road into the neighborhood. The speed limits have been reduced to 20 miles per hour. The speed cameras have slowed people down and generate approximately \$100,000 a month. Lastly, he discussed EV chargers as a

## TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

green initiative, although there were differing opinions on their cost and who should have access to them.

*Police, Traffic, and Public Safety Committee* CM Gathercole reported that the committee met on November 8, 2023, where JM Security Solutions presented data security regarding security cameras. She also noted that the Chief presented a draft policy for security cameras and that there was an interest in opening it up to public input.

*Sustainability Committee* CM Dubayah raised concerns about the children crossing Route One without going down to the lights to cross. He requested more interaction from the Council with the committees regarding any issues. In addition, he supported the Chesapeake Bay Grant program. CM Dubayah reported that the Committee did not meet in November 2023 but will meet in December 2023. He urged people to join the Sustainability Committee and to contact him if anyone was interested in learning more.

CM *Dubayah* requested that the Council make a decision about the compost bags and not defer it. He suggested continuing it indefinitely, for a limited time, or stopping after December 2023, when bags are purchased. Lastly, he asked for the compost bags to be included on the agenda to be voted on at the next meeting.

*Policy, Rules, and Municipal Structure Committee* CM Morrissey inquired about the EV charging stations regarding the Town's obligation and timeline for switching over to only residents.

*Development Committee* CM McGaughey reported that the committee met on November 16, 2023, where the developers did not present updates on the library apartments. However, they will be presenting them at the December 2023 meeting. He shared that the Riverdale Park mayor gave a brief presentation about Riverdale Park's hopes for the Army Reserve project which would include turning a portion of the site into a bioretention area. Congressional approval is needed for this project. CM Sweet added that the presentation for Riverdale Park was very informative, and it would take an act of Congress to designate the area to somebody. Riverdale Park is hoping that it goes to them; however, other parties are also interested in the site.

### Department Reports

*Interim Town Administrator* Ms. Lawrence referenced the report in the meeting package and explained the news and alert system available through the town website's homepage which allows residents to choose news and alerts that are of interest to them. She reported that the Park Plan has not commenced as they have been reviewing a new scope of work that might include rain garden and other bioretention projects. The next meeting will be held on December 4, 2023, which will be the last one of the year. Ms. Lawrence shared that the EV chargers have been discussed; however, more research needs to be done regarding the EV charging station grants.

Ms. Lawrence reported that she has been working on a survey tool to provide feedback from residents regarding whether the compost carts should continue or not. She added that if the project continues, about 180 carts have to be purchased, with a lead time of four months, and that there might be a budget issue if more were needed.

*Town Clerk* Ms. Hegeman reported that the permits approved administratively were included in the meeting package.

*Chief of Police* Chief Baker noted that his report was included in the meeting package and asked if there were any questions. He added that there were still steering wheel locks available for residents if they needed them. Chief Baker reported that a new sergeant will be starting in November 2023 and a PFC on December 7, 2023. Two additional candidates are being recruited as staffing numbers have decreased and crime is escalating.

*Town Treasurer* Treasurer Baden reviewed the highlights of the financial report provided through the end of October 31, 2023. He provided an overview of the tax differential program, explaining how it works and the services covered by the program. The tax rate is based on the county's general fund and varies for each service provided by the Town, so that residents are not "double taxed" for services.

*Director of Public Works* Mr. Beall referenced the report provided in the package and asked if there were any questions. CM McGaughey inquired whether all the speed humps in Town are under the same profile and shape and manufactured by the same company. Mr. Beall replied that the same company installed all the speed humps in the Town to the same county standard. He reported that the solar array on the school roof

## TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

has experienced issues with inverters that need replacement or repair. The three inverters from the main core of the system are for converting current from AC to DC or vice versa. Inverter no. 3 was replaced in July 2021 by a different manufacturer, which is considered to be a better unit. Therefore, inverter nos. 1 and 2 are no longer functioning, and those units are no longer supported by the company that produced them. The cost to replace the two inverters is in the \$25,000 range, and there is no maintenance agreement.

Ms. Lawrence mentioned that grants are being sought from the Maryland Energy Group and that they will determine the amount after they receive the report. Mr. Beall added that the replacement will take several months, and every month that the units are not operating, the Town pays for electricity. Ms. Ferguson noted that the warranty contract needs to be reviewed. Mr. Beall explained that for the period from April 2022 to April 2023, \$1,800 was paid because the generation covered the majority of that from the solar array. Without that generation, it would be about \$10,700 a year.

Mr. Beall reported that the construction of the bridges and the pathways will be completed before Thanksgiving. The grading will be done the week after, and then the railings. Once the railings are installed, the next step is a matter of either seed straw or sod as an alternative. Therefore, if seeding in straw, then all the sediment controls (the super silt fence, the orange snow fence, and the sandbags) must remain in place until the grass grows and reaches a certain height for the county to allow the sediment controls to be removed. By using sod, the sediment controls could be removed immediately on the same day. However, sod was not in the budget, but seeding is.

### Continuing Business

***Motion: To approve the license agreement and application for locating small wireless facilities in the Town's rights of way and the Consultant agreement with Columbia Telecommunications Corporation to assist with evaluating and approving applications.*** Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Ferguson shared the need for the license agreement and the application for any potential request to locate 5G antennas in the Town's right of way and that CTC is the company qualified to handle the review of these applications.

### New Business

***Motion: To accept the financial year 2023 audit report for the Town of University Park.*** Motion carried unanimously.

*Consideration of Town Position with Respect to Prince George's County Board of Appeals Virtual Hearing – Variance Request V-66-23-6711 Adelphi Road*

■ Ms. Ferguson explained that a variance request for 6711 Adelphi Road has been filed and will be heard by the Board of Appeals on November 29, 2023. The variances are for lot coverage and the other items listed in the notice. She shared that the proposal was for a second story to be added to the garage and the house, and that the buildings would be connected. The Board of Appeals will consider specific criteria before granting or denying this variance request. The Town and any adjoining or adjacent neighbors have a right to become persons of record and make a statement. This is true regardless of whether the individuals received actual notice from the Board of Appeals.

■ The Council may vote to support or not support the variance or take no position. Ms. Ferguson pointed out that the Town's position must be taken in a public vote, which would involve reviewing and determining whether this development satisfies the applicable criteria. An assisted living facility is an allowed use in the RSF-65 zone. The County Use and Occupancy permit is currently issued for only five residents, but the owner intends to apply to raise that to eight. The question was raised about whether this means eight dwelling units as defined by the county. Ms. Ferguson stated that the Town has not received interior plans, but based on the justification and application filed by the owner believes there will be eight bedrooms with baths, but only one dwelling unit. Council members can voice their support or opposition at the hearing or authorize legal representation from Ms. Ferguson at the hearing. The Town must have its lawyer at the hearing because it is a corporate entity.

■ Ms. Ferguson reported that there is also a proposed six-foot-high fence along the property line, which will block the view. In addition, a ten by 15-foot shed in the backyard, which would also have a story underneath it, was included in the plans. CM Gathercole asked about the weight of the Town's decision on the County Board of Appeals. Ms. Ferguson explained that the opinion of the Town would be taken seriously if it pertained to satisfying the variance criteria and its effect on the neighborhood.

## TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

- Mr. McClam addressed concerns about lot coverage, green space, and setbacks for a proposed development. He also explained plans for a driveway in front of an assisted living facility and showed interior drawings, although the Town did not receive them. CM Morrissey raised concerns about landscaping choices and why an assisted living facility would be appropriate for the residential Town. Mr. McClam discussed the need for a home-like environment in senior living facilities. He highlighted the shortage of assisted living facilities and how this project aims to provide access to those in need.
- CM Godfrey inquired about the difficulties regarding the lot. Mr. McClam noted that the burden would be tearing down the existing garage and shifting it eight feet to the right to satisfy the county's current requirements. Additionally, they would have to forego the semicircle horseshoe driveway in front of the property and cut down the footprint in a substantial way to stay within the lot coverage requirement. Therefore, it would either mean removing approximately 1,000 square feet of living space or not widening the driveway and eliminating the semicircle driveway in front of the property to be within the lot coverage limitations set by the county. Mr. McClam stated that there has to be a fire inspection when changes are made.
- CM Gathercole raised concerns about accommodating emergency vehicles and visitor parking. Mr. McClam replied that an emergency vehicle is, during emergency operation, allowed to park in ways that ordinary passenger and civilian vehicles cannot park. Concerns were expressed about the foot traffic and impact on neighbors due to staff members and visitors. Mr. McClam assured the Council that the neighbors are in full support of the assisted living facility. The owner plans to be actively involved in running the facility, which is described as a facility rather than a personal residence.
- CM Sweet raised concerns about blocking a lane of Adelphi, foot traffic, and parking for visitors and employees. Questions were asked about the distance of the

### Town Leaf Collection Ends January 12

Town Public Works crews continue to collect leaves by vacuum until January 12. Residents should rake their leaves up to the curb line for collection. Do not rake leaves into the gutters or street. Please keep leaf piles free of sticks, stones and other debris, as they can damage the vacuum equipment.



garage from the property line. It was clarified that second story stays within the limits and only extends to the rear. Mr. McClam explained staff members would park in the existing driveway while visitors could park in the horseshoe driveway. There should always be space for an emergency vehicle. The property currently has space for two vehicles, and there is also a fire hydrant. Questions were asked about the distance of the garage from the property line. Mr. McClam also touched on neighboring properties' additions and sheds, but no issues were raised regarding their legality. There was mention of a landscape plan, but Council members questioned its details and consistency with other information presented.

▪CM Sweet pointed out that the justification statement refers to the living spaces as units. Ms. Ferguson inquired about the number of professionals that would be on-site on any given day or night. Mr. McClam answered that there will be at least one licensed and qualified administrator who runs the facility and ensures that the facility is in compliance with state and federal laws.

*Motion: To approve going into a closed session to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice with respect to the variance criteria.* Motion carried unanimously.

The Council reconvened in open session at 10:06 PM.

*Motion: To approve that the Town of University Park take the position to oppose all the variances that are proposed on the basis that they do not comply with the criteria for variances that are required in the county zoning ordinance. The Council requests that the Mayor and Town Attorney prepare a letter that states the position of the Town and that the Town Attorney and a town representative appear at the hearing on November 29, 2023, to present that position to the Board of Appeals.* Motion carried unanimously.

*Motion: To approve and authorize the Mayor to present legislative initiatives and bond requests at the legislative dinner on November 28, 2023, to include town hall renovation and stormwater management bond bill requests.* Motion carried unanimously.

*Motion: To approve a \$500 net special holiday bonus for all town employees who are on payroll as of December 1, 2023.* Motion carried unanimously.

## TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

*Motion: To approve the 2024 Council meeting schedule, as presented.* Motion carried unanimously.

*Motion: To approve going into a closed session to discuss the appointment, employment assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluations of appointees, employees or officials over whom the Town has jurisdiction or any other personnel matter that affects any one or more specific individuals.* Motion carried unanimously.

The Mayor and Council would not return to open session.

---

**November 20 Public Record of Closed Session**  
Persons present via Zoom: Mayor Biermann; Council Members Morrisey, Gathercole, Sweet, Dubayah, Godfrey, McGaughey, Morgan; Attorney Ferguson; Interim Town Administrator Lawrence.

**List Of Topics Discussed:** Advice from legal counsel with respect to variance criteria to apply when determining the Town's Position to support, oppose or not comment on Prince George's County Board of Appeals Virtual Hearing - Variance Request V-66-23-6711 Adelphi Road

**Actions Taken:** None.

The meeting adjourned at 10:06 PM.

---

**November 20 Public Record of Closed Session**  
Persons present via Zoom: Mayor Biermann; Council Members Morrisey, Gathercole, Sweet, Dubayah, Godfrey, McGaughey, Morgan; Attorney Ferguson; Interim Town Administrator Lawrence; Chief Baker; Treasurer Baden

**List Of Topics Discussed** Consideration of salary, grade and step placement for two specific individuals, one new hire and one current employee.

**Actions Taken** Approve salary, grade and step for two individuals effective, as presented by staff. Salaries to go into effective for the next pay period and adjusted to fit the scale July 1, 2024.

The meeting adjourned at 10:27 PM.

## TOWN NEWS & EVENTS

### UP Woman's Club Meeting Monday, January 8, 11:30 AM



This month's guest speaker, Capt. Laura Dyer, will be discussing *Women in Police Work: Bootstrapping and Networking*. Laura Dyer has served the University of Maryland College Park community for 30 years as a police officer. During her career she has supervised several patrol squads, been assigned to the Community Crime Prevention Office overseeing state and federal grants, established the first UMPD K9 Unit for Explosive Detection, and created guidelines and training for University Administration response to First Amendment issues. For the last 17 years Capt. Dyer has served as Commander for all Special Events and Special Operations at the university. She has earned many recognitions and awards including the University of Maryland President's Distinguished Service Award and the award for the Prince George's County Community Service Officer of the Year. The meeting will be in-person at the University Christian Church at the corner of Adelphi and Belcrest Roads in Hyattsville. Sign-in begins at 11:30 AM. Please RSVP to [cmd9514@gmail.com](mailto:cmd9514@gmail.com).

### Second Saturday Lecture Series Saturday, January 13, 4-6 PM

Pete Pichaske, town resident and journalist, will talk about his career as a local newspaper reporter and editor. He will speak about the current state of journalism and how it has changed over the years. He has written for many local papers including the Prince George's Journal, the Montgomery Journal, the Howard County Times, and reported on the local Washington scene for the Arkansas Star and the Honolulu Journal.

In the winter and early spring of 2024, the following Second Saturday events are now scheduled:

**February 10** The University Park String Quartet plays classical

**March 9** Meet and greet your town chief of police and his officers

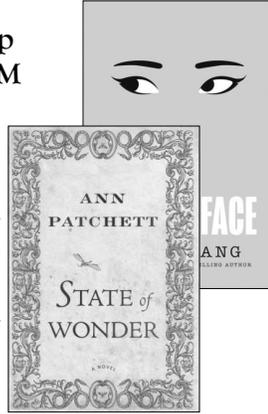
**April 13** Chris Walsh, UMD professor emeritus, talks about how he has developed new heat and pest resistant apples that should begin showing up in the marketplace in 2026.

## TOWN NEWS & EVENTS

All events take place at Church of the Brethren, 4413 Tuckerman Street. For more information or if you have an interesting topic to present, contact Dave Brosch at 240-888-1225 or davidcbrosch@comcast.net.

### After Eight Book Group Tuesday, January 16, 8-10 PM

The After Eight Book group will be meeting in person. Attendees must be fully vaccinated. Our book for January is *State of Wonder* by Ann Patchett. February's title is *Yellowface* by R.F. Kuang. Those interested in attending should contact Laura Donnelly at 301-927-6550.



We're actively seeking new members. Open invitation to join the After Eight book group! Members have lively and wide-ranging discussions on the book and a variety of town and local subjects. We read books in all categories, both current and prize-winning. All are welcome and we appreciate residents' suggestions for what we should read.

### Azalea Classic



Oh, the weather outside is frightful, but what better time to register for the 2024 Azalea Classic? Registration is now open for our annual neighborhood 5K, 1-mile, and 1K run/walk, which will be held on May 4, 2024. Find more information and sign up at [www.AzaleaClassic.com](http://www.AzaleaClassic.com) or email [upesazaleaclassic5k@gmail.com](mailto:upesazaleaclassic5k@gmail.com) for more information or questions.

### St. Mark's Food Pantry

The St. Mark's Food Pantry has been operating since 1991 with an all-volunteer team. We provide food at no cost and without any obligation to the homeless, poor, unemployed, senior citizens, immigrants and children in need. Since the start of the pandemic, we have served nearly 50,000 families in need and the numbers continue to grow.

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

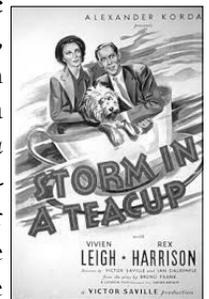


We've seen a steady increase in the number of families asking for help this year. At the same time, there's been a steady decrease in food and money donations compared to 2022. We continue to be well over 100 percent above our pre-pandemic levels. Between January and October 2023, we served 6,850 families in need with an overall average of 4.6 per household. Our neighbors are hurting, and they need all the help we can give. Please consider making a donation to feed the poor and less fortunate. Donations are typically 100 percent tax deductible to the extent possible under the law. Please go to [gofundme.com](http://gofundme.com) and search [stmarkfoodpantry](http://stmarkfoodpantry) to make a donation. Checks are also welcome, made payable to the St. Mark's Food Pantry. Please mail to:

St. Mark's Food Pantry  
7501 Adelphi Road  
Hyattsville, MD 20783

If you need help, our food pantry is open every Tuesday 9:30 AM-12 PM at the above address. All are welcome.

Hyattsville Library Coffee and a Classic Film Series, *Storm in a Teacup*, Wednesday, January 17, 1-3 PM Join us for an afternoon of coffee and a screening of a classic film. In *Storm in a Teacup* (1937), a local politician in Scotland tries to get back at the reporter (Rex Harrison) who wrote a negative story about him, and who is also in love with his daughter (Vivien Leigh).



Hyattsville Library Independent Film Series, *Harlem Street Singer: The Reverend Gary Davis Story*, Monday, January 22 7-9:00 PM Join us for the 2023-2024 Independent Film Series at the Hyattsville Branch: a screening followed by a community conversation. *Harlem Street Singer: The Reverend Gary Davis Story* chronicles the life of the Rev. Gary Davis, the great American ragtime, blues and gospel guitarist who inspired and influenced a generation of folk musicians in the 1950s and 1960s.

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR



### College Park Arts Exchange

All events take place at the Old Parish House, 4711 Knox Road, College Park, unless otherwise noted.

**Folding Paper Stars workshop with Ingrid Hass, Saturday, January 13, 1-4 PM.** Create intricate stars out of special translucent paper, using a few easy folds. \$10 materials fee.



**College Park Youth Choir and Vocetti Concert, Thursday, January 18** Free and open to the public—invite young singers to experience the joys of Youth Choir, led by Christopher Fominaya, choir director at the Jim Henson Academy of Visual and Performing Arts at Northwestern High School.

**CPAE Arts Drop In, Saturday, January 20** Beaded stars workshop with guest Leah Cohen. At College Park Community Center, 5101 Pierce Avenue in Lakeland, 9:30-11:30 AM, and at Old Parish House, 12:30-2 PM. Arts Drop In is a fun, materials-based activities for children ages 3-8 with their caregivers, led by Ian Rogers, a local artist and Early Childhood Educator with 30 years experience.

**CPAE Book Club, reading Nonfiction by Women, Tuesday, January 16, 7-8:30 PM** on Zoom. Email [Info@cpae.org](mailto:Info@cpae.org) for more information. We'll be discussing *The Age of Dignity, Preparing for the Elder Boom in a Changing America*, by Al-Jen Poo.



### UP Helping Paws

Please make sure dogs use the right of way, avoiding private front lawn property. Please remember to pick up after your dog and dispose of waste in public trash cans or your own trash can. Please sign up your animal(s) in the UP Pet database at <https://tinyurl.com/UPPet>. This database is for University Park residents. Committee members can view the information to help reunite lost pets with their owners.

### Weeding Without the Use of Herbicides

"Weeds" are defined as plants growing where they are not wanted. They can range from harmless plants that show up to fill an empty space, or invasive plants that are regulated by federal and state authorities because they can cause harm to economic, environmental, or human health.

Chemical herbicides, as with any pesticides, have risks associated with exposure by way of drift, runoff, or improper use. If one desires to manage health concerns, protect water quality, and/or reduce harm to non-target organisms in the environment, physical and cultural methods can be used to kill weeds without chemical herbicides.

Weed prevention and management require regular monitoring, learning, and persistence! A variety of non-chemical methods will be needed based on your site conditions, the types of weeds you have, and your garden or landscape goals, preferences, and budget. There is not a one-size-fits-all solution.

#### *Understanding weed biology*

If you are looking for ways to kill weeds without chemicals, it is helpful first to know a few definitions about the lifecycle of weeds. This is important in determining the most effective methods for managing them.

Annuals complete their life cycle (seed germination to seed dispersal) in one year or less. Annuals are categorized into two basic groups:

- Winter annuals germinate from seeds in late summer to early fall, survive the winter, regrow and flower in the spring, and die when the temperature rises in the summer (e.g., henbit, chickweed). Winter annual seeds also can germinate in the spring but die in the summer.
- Summer annuals germinate from seeds in the spring, grow in the summer, and die in the fall (e.g. Japanese stiltgrass, crabgrass).

Limiting seed germination and seed dispersal are priorities for managing annual weeds.

Garden soils have a seed bank of viable seeds that have accumulated in the soil over time. Some weed seeds can stay dormant in the ground for many years, ready to germinate when environmental conditions (light, moisture, temperature, scarification) are optimal for growth. Taking steps to minimize soil disturbance and churning up seeds from the deeper soil profile is an important step in weed management. —*Courtesy of the Home & Garden Information Center, University of Maryland Extension*



## University Park Town Council 2024 Adopted Meeting Schedule

*All meetings are open to the public.*

January 2*	June 17
January 16*	July 15
February 5	August 19
February 20*	September 3*
March 4	September 16
March 18	October 7
April 1	October 21
April 15	November 4
May 6	November 18
May 20	December 2
June 3	

**Note: Dates of official Town holidays are below. Town Hall is closed on these dates. A few times a year, a public holiday falls on a Council meeting date in which case the meeting is scheduled the next day. These meetings are indicated above with an asterisk (\*).**

Monday, January 1	New Year's Day Observed
Monday, January 15	Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Monday, February 19	Presidents' Day
Monday, May 27	Memorial Day
Wednesday, June 19	Juneteenth
Tuesday, July 4	Independence Day
Monday, September 2	Labor Day
Monday, October 14	Indigenous People's Day
Monday, November 11	Veterans Day
Thursday, November 28	Thanksgiving
Friday, November 29	Employee Appreciation Day
Wednesday, December 25	Christmas Day



## **GAS-POWERED LEAF BLOWER BAN BEGINS JANUARY 1, 2024**

Ordinance 2021-O-04

In support of University Park residents who want to enjoy small-town atmosphere without auditory intrusion of yard maintenance equipment and in support of the Town's focus on sustainability and public health, an ordinance was passed in late 2021 that will take effect on January 1, 2024, banning the use of gas-powered leaf blowers. Although the ban only applies to leaf blowers, to provide incentives and to reduce financial hardship related to the replacement of equipment, the Town is offering a rebate for the purchase of any battery- or electric-powered lawn equipment.

### **ORDINANCE**

"Beginning January 1, 2024, it is unlawful for an owner or occupant of real property located within the Town, or any guest, employee or contractor of such person, to use gas-powered leaf blowers on that property." To read the ordinance in its entirety visit [www.upmd.org/Legislation](http://www.upmd.org/Legislation). Use of a gas-powered leaf blower on or after January 1, 2024, is a municipal infraction with a fine of \$200 per occurrence. Please use only battery- or electric-powered leaf blowers in your yard. This prohibition and fine apply to homeowners as well as landscaping companies, so please ensure your contractors are aware of the prohibition.

### **REBATE PROGRAM**

The Town Council adopted a rebate program to assist residents in purchasing any battery- or electric-powered lawn equipment and batteries to defray the cost of complying with the gas-powered leaf blower ban. The rebate shall not exceed the total cost of the equipment, including tax, or \$100, whichever is less. One qualifying purchase per year per household is permitted from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2025. Any reimbursement is subject to approval and available funding. Please go to [www.upmd.org/rebate](http://www.upmd.org/rebate) to submit for reimbursement or call (301) 927-4262 ext. 102 if you have questions.

# BAG it RIGHT

in Prince George's County



Angela D. Alsobrooks  
County Executive



**Effective January 1, 2024**, Prince George's County prohibits a retail establishment from providing a plastic carryout bag to shoppers and, with certain exceptions\*, must charge and retain at least 10 cents for each paper carryout or reusable bag provided to a customer.

## WHY THE BAN?

To protect the environment, marine life and reduce litter.

## WHO IS AFFECTED?

All retail stores, restaurants, grocery stores, or any other establishment that provides single-use plastic bags to its customers as a result of the sale of a product, or service whether for-profit or not-for-profit.

# BAG BILL GUIDELINES

## What is allowed

**Stores and restaurants shall use/sell paper bags or reusable bags at a minimum 10-cent fee.**

"Reusable carryout bag" means a bag with stitched handles specifically designed and manufactured for multiple reuse and is made of: Cloth or other washable fabric; Or a durable material suitable for multiple re-use that is not made of plastic film.



## Exceptions

**Plastic bags used to:** Package bulk items, including fruit, vegetables, nuts, grains, candy, or small hardware items; Wrap frozen foods, meat, or fish, whether prepackaged or not; Wrap flowers, potted plants, or other damp items; Contain unwrapped prepared foods or bakery goods; Protect or contain garments or dry-cleaned clothes; protect suits, dresses, and formal wear; Take live fish, insects, mollusks, or crustaceans away from the retail store.

**Charge for paper bags used to:** Contain pharmacy prescriptions; Package prepared food provided at the drive-through window; and Provided by a full-service restaurant after a meal for leftovers.

## What's out?

**Single-use plastic bags**



**Plan Now. Start Bringing Your Reusable Bag When You Shop!**

For more information, visit [mypgc.us/bagitright](https://mypgc.us/bagitright)

# January 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>Town Leaf Collection Ends January 12</b>	1 Town Holiday <b>Gas-powered Leaf Blower Ban Begins</b>	2 Trash, Bulk Trash Town Council, 7:30 PM	3 Yard Waste	4	5 Recycling	6
7	8 Yard Waste, UP Woman's Club Meeting, 11:30 AM	9 Trash, Bulk Trash	10	11	12 Recycling <b>Town Leaf Collection Ends</b>	13 Second Saturday Lecture Series, 4 PM
14	15 Town Holiday	16 Trash, Bulk Trash Town Council, 7:30 PM After Eight Book Group, 8-10 PM	17 Yard Waste	18	19 Recycling	20
21	22 Yard Waste	23 Trash, Bulk Trash	24	25	26 Recycling	27
28	29 Yard Waste	30 Trash, Bulk Trash	31			



**TOWN OF UNIVERSITY PARK**  
**6724 Baltimore Ave.**  
**University Park MD 20782**

**Presorted Standard**  
**US Postage**  
**PAID**  
**Hyattsville MD**  
**Permit No. 2776**

**TOWN DIRECTORY**

**Town Hall**

Office Hours M-F 9 AM-5 PM 301-927-4262  
 Fax 301-277-4548  
 TDD 800-735-2258  
 Website www.upmd.org  
 Town Field Status 240-297-8277  
 Mayor Joel Biermann mayorbiermann@upmd.org  
 Cell Phone 301-351-0553  
 Interim Town Manager Angela Lawrence  
 alawrence@upmd.org  
 Town Clerk TC Hegeman thegeman@upmd.org  
 Public Works Dir. Mickey Beall mbeall@upmd.org  
 Chief Harvey Baker hbaker@upmd.org

**Police**

Emergency 911  
 Non-Emergency 301-352-1200  
 Police Dept. Direct 301-277-0050  
 Chief Harvey Baker 301-277-0051

**Town Council**

Ward	Council Member	Phone
1	Ralph Dubayah	301-458-0128
2	Mary Gathercole	301-325-9415
3	Laurie Morrissey	301-906-0276
4	Nathaniel Morgan	301-850-4249
5	David McGaughey	301-664-4030
6	Grant Godfrey	202-486-2436
7	William Sweet	301-541-7642

**NEWSLETTER**

The February newsletter deadline is Saturday, January 6. The *University Park Newsletter* is published monthly, except for a combined November issue. Newsletter submissions, questions and comments may be emailed to [univparknews@gmail.com](mailto:univparknews@gmail.com). The *Newsletter* publishes the milestones of current and former UP families (births, weddings, obituaries, graduations, awards, etc.) plus events of interest to residents. Political or commercial advertising is not accepted. Please send letters of opinion or Town suggestions to Town Hall. The *Newsletter* is online at [www.upmd.org/newsletter](http://www.upmd.org/newsletter).  
 Editors Todd Stewart & Bridget Warren  
[univparknews@gmail.com](mailto:univparknews@gmail.com) 301-209-7341

**Sign Up for Notifications** Stay up to date on the latest news by signing up for Notify Me, our notification service, at [www.upmd.org/notifyme](http://www.upmd.org/notifyme). Type your email address in the box and select Sign In. If you want to receive text messages, enter your phone number and select Save. To subscribe or unsubscribe, click and/or next to the lists to which you wish to subscribe/unsubscribe.

*Email*  
[rdubayah@upmd.org](mailto:rdubayah@upmd.org)  
[mgathercole@upmd.org](mailto:mgathercole@upmd.org)  
[lmorrissey@upmd.org](mailto:lmorrissey@upmd.org)  
[nmorgan@upmd.org](mailto:nmorgan@upmd.org)  
[dmcgaughey@upmd.org](mailto:dmcgaughey@upmd.org)  
[ggodfrey@upmd.org](mailto:ggodfrey@upmd.org)  
[wsweet@upmd.org](mailto:wsweet@upmd.org)

