

# UNIVERSITY PARK NEWSLETTER

TOWN OF UNIVERSITY PARK, MARYLAND

JUNE 2024

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

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## MAYOR'S COLUMN

**This is my final column as your mayor.** Thank you to everyone who offered their encouragement and helped me do this job better and thank you to all of our community volunteers that make University Park a great place to live. Thank you to our town employees and town staff who worked with me to support volunteers in our community and answered “yes” to their requests because volunteers are the lifeblood of our community. I hope our volunteers and civic groups felt empowered and supported during my term.

I am proud of our many accomplishments over the past two years. We opened a new playground, lowered the speed limit to 20 mph, spruced up our signage, and delivered traffic calming to neighborhoods that needed it. We also dusted off the timber sitting in the town garage

parking lot and built the pedestrian bridges. Future residents will be enjoying these bridges for the next 50 years.

I am proud that we collaborated with the county on stormwater management over the past year and a half. We’ve almost completed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) requiring the county to fund most—if not all—of the costs for upgrading our stormwater systems. The intersection of Pineway and Clagget-Pineway in Ward 5 will be the first system repaired and reengineered to modern storm standards. This system was examined and assessed with video equipment, and we have a plan for moving forward. Since 1993, our town has had the opportunity to have the county pay for stormwater drainage system upgrades and to maintain them in perpetuity. I was surprised to learn this but began the

### Town Meetings & Special Dates

Town Council June 3 & 17

Town Holiday June 19

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)

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process, established accountability mechanisms and built momentum on developing an MOU with the county to move forward. We have made meaningful progress, and the town's next administration is well situated to continue and finish these stormwater management improvements.

The Town Hall project-i.e., upgrades, ADA accessibility, council meeting space, town employee workspaces- has moved forward productively over the past two years. The Public Facilities Committee spearheaded this effort and has been working with an architecture firm. There is consensus within the Town Council to limit costs to an amount our town can reasonably afford. In the next couple years, two of our long-term infrastructure bonds will be fully paid, thus any future bond for the Town Hall should have little to no impact on our property taxes. While I will not be the mayor when Town Hall is completed, I am happy that I was able to help our town get an additional \$160,000 state grant for this project and further minimize the fiscal impact to us.



Continuing a tradition from last year, the Council and I declared June to be Pride Month to recognize our commitment to universal equality. We also proclaimed June 19<sup>th</sup> as Juneteenth in recognition of our nation's second Independence Day when on June 19, 1865, the Army delivered the news to the remaining enslaved people in Texas that they were freed by executive decree. Flags for both occasions will be flown at Town Hall, and the proclamations are viewable on the town's website.

*Juneteenth*  
celebrate freedom

Congratulations to our next mayor, Laurie Morrissey, and our newest councilmember in Ward 3, Casey Kelby. I wish you success in your new roles and trust that you will work hard to continuously improve our community and advocate for our environment while being wise stewards of our limited resources. The swearing in ceremony will take place on Monday, June 17 at 6 PM outside of Town Hall. The public is invited.

In closing, here is a photo of my boy Zeus. Of his many talents, his ability to maintain a positive disposition no matter the circumstances—and he's blind now—is by far his best trait. Special pets like him are waiting for you at the Prince George's County Animal Shelter!

*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)*



## July 1 New Parking Enforcement



Effective July 1, 2024, all parking regulations will be enforced. We are in the grace period now. Selective enforcement has proven ineffective and hindered accessibility to parking. Enforcement includes violations such as parking:

- with driver's side against the curb facing against the flow of traffic.
- within any intersection.
- on any Town roadway that obstructs passage along that roadway.
- at the entrance of a private drive.
- within 30 feet of the approach to a stop sign.
- within 3 feet of a stopped vehicle or the entrance to a private driveway.
- within 15 feet of a fire hydrant.

Residents have up to 60 days to pay the \$50 parking fine or run the risk of having their tags flagged at MVA. Residents are encouraged to review the town's parking ordinance (Town Code Section 9-104 Parking) in its entirety and to encourage family and friends to do the same. Effective parking management necessitates the cooperation, participation and collaboration of all stakeholders.

Summer brings warmer weather, the end of the school year, and excitement for vacations and beach getaways.

While it's a season filled with fun opportunities, it also increases the risk of accidents and injuries. From June through August 2022, one million children visited emergency rooms due to summertime activity injuries. Summer is also dangerous for driving: in 2020, over 38,000 people died in car accidents, surpassing winter as a riskier period for road travel. Recognizing these risks, the University Park Police have offered a comprehensive list of safety tips to help ensure you and your family's safety.

### Personal Safety Tips

- Protect yourself from the sun.
- Stay hydrated.
- Be cautious with hot cars.
- Avoid trampolines for safety.
- Enjoy fireworks safely.
- Inspect playground equipment before use.
- Ensure proper helmet fit when riding.
- Wear a fluorescent jacket for visibility while walking.

### Water Safety Tips

- Always practice water safety.
- Never swim alone.
- Swim only in designated areas.
- Supervise children constantly near water.
- Wear a life jacket if you can't swim.
- Keep toddlers within arm's reach near water.
- Check the weather conditions and avoid swimming in inclement weather conditions.

### Driver Safety Tips

- Regularly maintain your vehicle.
- Watch for distracted drivers.
- Travel on less busy days to avoid congestion.
- Plan your route and avoid distractions while driving.
- Focus on the road.
- Increase your following distance.

By following these tips, you can help mitigate the increased risks of summer and enjoy a safer season with your loved ones.

### Crime report

All incidents on May 12:

- A resident in the 6800 Block of Pineway reported an attempted vehicle theft overnight. There are no suspects.
- A resident in the 6700 Block of Queens Chapel Rd. reported vehicle damage overnight. There are no suspects.

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- A resident in the 4300 Block of Woodberry St. reported vehicle damage overnight. There are no suspects.
- A resident in the 4300 Block of Woodberry St. reported an attempted vehicle theft overnight. There are no suspects.
- A resident in the 6700 Block of 44th Ave. reported vehicle damage overnight. There are no suspects.
- A resident in the 6600 Block of 44th Ave. reported vehicle damage overnight. There are no suspects.
- A resident in the 4400 Block of Underwood St. reported property theft from their vehicle. There are no suspects.
- A resident in the 6400 Block of Queens Chapel Rd. reported vehicle damage overnight. There are no suspects.



### Sustainability Committee News

Many thanks to the 35+ volunteers that participated in the Anacostia Watershed Society Earth Day Stream Clean Up in UP! You have made a difference.

Want to grow lush native plants in a mostly shade yard? Consider native ferns. Here are Maryland natives: Northern Maidenhair Fern (*Adiantum pedatum*), Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*), Hay-Scented Fern (*Dennstaedtia punctilobula*), Lady Fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*), Royal Fern (*Osmunda regalis*), Wood Fern (*Dryopteris marginalis*) and Ostrich Fern (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*). Feel free to observe UP's test fern garden near the Big Tot Lot in its battle to reclaim habitat from invasive Lesser Celandine. Seventeen ferns have impressively broken through the carpet of this invasive to date in the first year of the test fern garden.

**Meadow Restoration, Saturday, June 15, 10 AM-12 PM**  
Enjoy the UP Native Wildflower Pollinator Meadow on Adelphi Road? Join us for meadow restoration when we identify and remove invasives like crown vetch and mugwort. Wear outdoor clothes and shoes and bring garden gloves, a bucket and willpower. Beginners welcome!

**UP Meadow Day, Saturday, July 13, 9-11 AM** Families welcome! If you enjoy learning about nature, this volunteer adventure is for you. Events not your thing? You can become a native plant grower for the Native Plant Giveaway—email [upmeadowday@gmail.com](mailto:upmeadowday@gmail.com) for details and free seeds. Adelphi Road across from the Hyattsville Library. Rain date Sunday, July 14. Sign up to volunteer by emailing [upmeadowday@gmail.com](mailto:upmeadowday@gmail.com).

### Tree Committee News Be Wary of Dyed Mulch

Dyed mulch—why is this in vogue? What is in dyed mulch? Is dyed mulch safe? The use of dyed mulch is trending throughout the DMV—it's now predominant in all the big box garden centers. Thus far, mulch is available in red, black, green, and brown. It's become increasingly challenging to find natural mulch.

Dyed mulch is unregulated in Maryland. The principal ingredient—"forest by-products"—is corporate speak for recycled construction debris. The mulch industry loves dyed mulch as the cost of construction debris is extremely inexpensive or acquired at zero cost. Once processed into mulch sized particles, the material is very dry and does not look or feel like mulch until the moist dye is added. Manufacturers are quick to say that the dyes are benign—mostly derived either from rust or carbon. This is largely true, but as an unregulated product, the wood itself may have been soaked or in prolonged contact with



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creosote, arsenic, petroleum products, copper, aluminum, lead, or formaldehyde.

Dyed mulch doesn't decompose to enrich the soil as natural mulch does. Instead, it leaches the dye along with the possible contaminants into the soil, compromising or killing beneficial soil bacteria, earthworms, and possibly the plants they are applied to, with heightened risk around young plants and in newer landscapes.

**Ivy League, Saturday, June 8, 9-11 AM** The Ivy League, founded in 2009, meets most months to offer residents a volunteer opportunity to remove English ivy from the town's trees. This is a wonderful way to give back to the town, meet some neighbors and enjoy the outdoors. All that's required is a pair of hand pruners and a prying tool (mini breaker bar, dandelion weeder, large screwdriver, etc.), both of which we will provide if you don't have one. Receive a custom Ivy League bandana after only five sessions. We'll meet on Queen's Chapel Road, Wells Creek Bridge, across from UPES. Community Service vouchers will be signed on site.

For consultations on your trees, please contact the Committee for Trees, Parks, and Environment at [TreeComm@UPMD.ORG](mailto:TreeComm@UPMD.ORG)



### Helping Hands University Park

For the first time since before Covid, the Helping Hands of University Park (HHUP) steering committee

held an in-person annual meeting for all members and volunteers. About twenty-five people gathered at the Prince George's Community Center where we enjoyed a catered Afternoon Tea Social, heard a report of this year's business to date, and invited all to participate in a brainstorming session about the needs, wants and future direction of HHUP. In addition to our liaison Councilmember Mary Gathercole, we were joined by Councilmembers Bill Sweet and Laurie Morrissey. Thanks to all who participated. Keep the ideas coming!

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

**Members Monthly Lunch Club, Wednesday, June 19, 12-1 PM** In person. Members and volunteers social gathering. Location changes every month. Become a member and join us!

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**Executive Committee Meeting, Wednesday, June 26, 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. Contact us by phone or email for information.

**HHUP Poetry Gathering,** Sundays approximately every six weeks at 4pm. All UP residents are welcome, whether a poet, poetry lover, or just poetry curious. Contact Gerry Hendershot, [ghendershot@earthlink.net](mailto:ghendershot@earthlink.net); Loretta Saks, [lorettahhup@gmail.com](mailto:lorettahhup@gmail.com), or Deborah Rosenfelt, [dsr@umd.edu](mailto:dsr@umd.edu).

**Route 1 Corridor Conversations** An online informative series co-sponsored by HHUP to entertain, engage, and educate. Info online at: [hyattsvilleaginginplace.org/programs-and-activities/corridor-conversations/](http://hyattsvilleaginginplace.org/programs-and-activities/corridor-conversations/)

**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).

### April 15 Council Meeting Highlights

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

#### Mayor, Council and

#### Committee Comments and Reports

**Police, Traffic and Public Safety Committee** CM Gathercole reported that the Committee met on April 10, 2024, where Chief Baker reported that he is applying for a \$100,000 grant from the Maryland Department of Housing, Crime and Violence Prevention, for lighting and related safety services for a town-wide camera program. In addition, discussions were held at the meeting regarding concerns centered around maintenance costs to the Town as well as providing free electricity to non-residents.

Committee members also discussed installing charging stations for electric vehicles in Town, with potential cost savings going toward maintenance and solar panels. Suggestions were made to explore the possibility of Pepco providing chargers, with potential cost savings going to Pepco.

**Development Committee** CM McGaughey noted that the Committee met on April 11, 2024, to discuss the

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proposed white paper and zoning plan amendments.

*Policy, Rules and Municipal Structure Committee* CM Morrissey noted that the Committee met on April 4, 2024, to discuss the trap, spay and neuter program.

*Sustainability Committee* CM Dubayah discussed the Sustainability Committee meeting that took place on April 9, 2024, highlighting the traffic calming measures, especially in Ward 1, including painted sidewalks and cameras to monitor cut-through traffic.

*Mayor Biermann* The mayor worked closely with Delegate Williams, who sponsored legislation to get the Town additional funds for the town hall. When the budget passed, the Town was approved for an additional \$160,000 for a town hall.

### Continuing Business

***Motion: To approve Ordinance 24-O-03, to authorize a budget transfer of \$20,000 from P1 Police Salaries and \$25,000 from P3 Payroll, Taxes, and Benefits and \$20,000 from Unreserved/Designated Funds F1, Vehicle Replacement into P27, Police Vehicle to purchase an unmarked police vehicle not to exceed \$65,000; and \$26,000 from Unreserved/Undesignated, \$3,000 from S6 Snow Removal, and \$6,000 from B4 Consulting Arborist-Tree Ordinance to 7110-00 Street Work Project-\$20,000, and 7133-00 Bridge-Van Buren/Beechwood-\$6,000, in the Capital Project Fund and S3 Street and Sidewalk Maintenance-\$9,000 in the General Fund.*** Motion carried unanimously.

### New Business

***Motion: To approve a \$4,000 grant to A Cat's Life Rescue (ACLR) to provide spay, neuter, and medical services in University Park.*** Motion carried unanimously. CM Morrissey noted that they had a proposed item in 2023 to donate to a local shelter, which the council decided to follow up on. The Organization aims to spay or neuter cats in the county. They will go door to door every weekend to inform people of their services and find out what the needs are and where the cats are. It was noted that the organization prevented the unnecessary births of 125,000 kittens in the county.

***Motion: To issue a permit allowing food truck sales on Queens Chapel Road near the Town Field in conjunction with the Town Yard Sale on Saturday, April 20,***

***2024, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and to waive any applicable fees, with the understanding that the truck's location can change.*** Motion carried. Ms. Lawrence noted that there was a slight change in the location from the school parking lot to Queens Chapels near the field.

***Motion: To declare Police Vehicle #31, 2017 Ford Sedan, Interceptor, Tag: 7CV1116, VIN:1FAHP2MT3HG106904 as surplus and not needed for a public purpose and to approve this Town property for disposal.*** Motion carried.

***Motion: To authorize installation of a portion of a driveway on Town right-of-way, subject to issuance of a building permit and the owner entering into a License Agreement drafted by the Town Attorney.*** Motion carried. Ms. Ferguson explained that in the last 30 years, the Town has been requesting or requiring that the individual sign a license agreement with the acknowledgment that if the Town, for whatever reason, requires this public right of way for a public purpose, the driveway would have to be pulled up. The right of way for the driveway is not accurately represented on a county building permit. Raised beds in the right of way may be partially in the Town's domain. Ms. Ferguson clarified that the front yard is a corner lot with building restrictions.

Ms. Ferguson noted that the driveway apron is not shown accurately on the provided diagram, and the actual driveway will cross a green grassy area before reaching the concrete surface. She highlighted the importance of a license agreement, which would include a diagram showing the exact footage of the driveway placement to ensure the public's interest is protected. She also explained that the Woodberry Street apron is not an issue because residents have a right to access the street in front of their houses.

CM Morgan asked whether the application would be contingent upon conditions. Ms. Ferguson responded that there are contingencies for this issue and that homeowners must sign license agreements for access to shared driveways. CM Dubayah questioned why a variance is not needed for a larger-than-standard driveway as the driveway is 12 feet wide, not the standard 10 feet. Ms. Ferguson explained that the variance only applies if there is too much lot coverage as a result of this and whether it is in the wrong yard that would allow for a driveway. The variances are for the county zoning ordinance, and there is no variance from the county zoning

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ordinance that is required. The applicant noted they wanted to avoid a 20-foot wide driveway due to aesthetics and cost.

**Motion:** *To not accept the CPJ bid and ask staff to undertake the valley gutter in-house and come back with contracting or in-house options for the alleyway restoration and table the issue of the last stormwater item.* Motion carried.

Ms. Lawrence discussed two projects with different engineering solutions for drainage issues in a neighborhood. City officials discussed options for alleviating drainage issues in an alleyway, including a swale construction project. Staff recommended alternatives explained in Option Two and then did not do anything with Option Three.

CM Gathercole expressed disappointment with the cost of repair and disagreed with the recommended solution. Ms. Lawrence clarified that the engineering firm's high costs for the alleyway project were due to trenching and other issues. Council members discussed the apron removal and restoration, noting that in the early 90s, they removed the swale and elevated the apron, which has been an ongoing issue. The recommendation would be to send an RFP for somebody to do the apron removal and restoration. Ms. Ferguson noted that the engineers were concerned about the feasibility of the stormwater project due to the limited space between the field and the road. The Council requested the construction cost and the scope of work and reinvestigated the picking up of the apron and flooring.

**Motion:** *To approve the "Come Out and Play" event and closure of Queens Chapel Road at Underwood St., to 6511 Queens Chapel Road on May 17, 2024, from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.* Motion carried.

**Motion:** *To approve the Chief of Police applying for a Maryland Department of Housing, Community Health, and Safety Works: Lighting and Camera Strategies and Related Community Safety Services grant in the amount of \$100,000 for security cameras to be installed in Town.* Motion carried. Chief Baker requested a grant application for crime prevention and lighting. The Committee discussed implementing a traffic enforcement program with license plate readers. Council members raised concerns about surveillance camera placement and the grant funding deadline. It was noted

that residents need to be comfortable with cameras while walking the streets.

**Motion:** *To support Councilmember Olson's designation for MUTC in Riverdale Park and that the Town staff write a statement conveying Councilmembers' concerns about changes to UMD zoning and land for private developers.* Motion carried. Ms. Ferguson explained the changes to the zoning ordinance, including property definitions and the University of Maryland conveyance. She suggested clarifying public notice provisions to ensure the Town receives adequate notice. Eric Olson proposed amendments to the bill to keep single-family lots at 6,500 square feet and allow a MUTC zone in Riverdale Park. Concerns were raised about density near Prince George's Plaza, including a potential bill regarding transfers of state-owned property to private individuals.

CM Godfrey inquired whether there are grandfathering or vested rights. Ms. Ferguson clarified zoning ordinance changes and extension of development time, explaining the economics of the high-density construction. She noted that it is a policy issue and that developers can take advantage of current zoning laws to build larger homes on smaller lots in University Park. Confusion was noted about the UMD zoning transfer with properties.

**Motion:** *To introduce Ordinance 24-O-04 to levy the real property and personal property tax rate and appropriately adopt the annual budget for fiscal year 2025.* Motion carried. It was suggested that a special session with Councilmembers be held before the next Council meeting to discuss the topic further.

### Department Reports

Report from the Town Treasurer

**Motion:** *To eliminate account R25 and G29.1 and move \$50,000 from G29 to F3.* Motion carried with one nay vote.

Mr. Baden provided budget details, including a 3.6% cost-of-living adjustment for employees. He highlighted 15 one-time expenditures contributing to the budget deficit. He also explained that the pay scale study is necessary to bring police officers' salaries in line with neighboring jurisdictions.

CM Gathercole questioned the \$50,000 for transit operating costs and mentioned the need for a CDL driver

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and two buses. Mayor Biermann mentioned that the transit program is vital to many residents in the northern part of town, who moved under the assumption that it would be an amenity. CM Gathercole expressed skepticism about restarting the transit program this year due to other expenses, such as the town hall, park planning, and stormwater management. Mayor Biermann emphasized the importance of public transit, citing its benefits for the environment, community, and individuals. He questioned the logic of cutting transit funding during a budget deficit, citing the large reserve fund and the impact on the operating budget.

Mr. Baden discussed the budget surplus and potential uses, including paying off debt and funding one-time projects. It was proposed that the transit program be restarted with 50% funding. Council members questioned the operating costs for buses and maintenance. CM Morgan expressed concerns about EV technology's environmental impact, seeking data to prove its carbon neutrality. Mayor Biermann noted that an electric vehicle does not offset its carbon footprint until it reaches 28,000 miles. However, a gas vehicle never offsets its carbon footprint.

CM Godfrey noted that residents prioritize transit assistance, sustainability, and ease of access. He suggested creating a designated reserve line item for transit investments, prioritizing resident needs, and evaluating long-term solutions. Mr. Baden explained that \$50,000 was moved from the transit reserve to operating costs to show expenditure, and it was suggested that it be moved back to the reserve if the Council wanted to prioritize the transit program. Council members expressed concern about the cost of implementing a transit system, including the issue of bike access to the metro station. CM Dubayah debated the cost of the transit program, raising concerns about affordability.

CM McGaughey recommended not allocating funds for the shuttle program, citing a lack of concrete details and potential costs to households. The Council discussed the possibility of revisiting transit program parameters at a later point in time, with some agreement on this approach. CM Godfrey expressed concern about adopting a motion that would invest zero dollars in future transit programs. Mr. Baden mentioned that the bus is close to \$200,000 after being electric and ADA-compliant with a CDL driver. He added that the funds allocated for trans-

it have been redirected to the police force.

The group discussed potential improvements to holiday decorations, including the new Charlie Brown Christmas tree.

The meeting adjourned by consent at 10:15 PM.

### April 23 Budget Work Session Meeting Highlights

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

#### Review of the Mayor's Proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Budget

Mayor Biermann asked Mr. Baden to continue the discussion on the budget from the last meeting with a suggestion to allocate some funds towards a Veterans Memorial. The Council discussed the veterans park project, including the flagpole and seating structure. Mr. Baden explained that \$50,000 was designated for park upgrades and was moved to reserve accounts. CM Sweet expressed concern about the \$50,000 budget for holiday decorations. Ms. Lawrence clarified that the holiday decorations were on Queen's Chapel Road, electrifying those poles and putting lighted decorations going down the street. CM Gathercole expressed concern about lighting up Queens Chapel Road for holiday decorations due to its residential location and potential religious implications. Alternative locations were suggested, such as Route 1 or Adelphi, as there is a need for inclusivity in decorations.

Mr. Beall shared his experience with Pepco, highlighting the lengthy and costly process of moving lights. The need to negotiate with Pepco for streetlight purchasing and upgrading was expressed.

Ms. Ferguson clarified that \$30,000 designated for park improvements will be used for designated categories like



Please make sure dogs use the right of way, avoiding private front lawn property. Remember to pick up after your dog and dispose of waste in public trash cans or your own trash can. Sign up your animal(s) in the UP Pet database at <https://tinyurl.com/UPPet>.

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town hall, stormwater management, and parks, as it was to come from ARPA funds, which was an adopted legislative resolution ordinance. CM Sweet suggested holiday decorations but required more planning and public comment before moving forward.

CM Gathercole asked members to consider designating funds for Route One Community Cares; however, it was noted that ARPA funds are currently not designated for the fiscal year of 2025. CM Dubayah emphasized the importance of considering the source of funds when proposing new expenditures. CM Godfrey proposed funds for the parent, teacher and student association at Northwestern High School as they sought support from the Town.

Chief Baker agreed that the police could raise and lower the flag until the electric issue has been sorted for the next budget year. The Council discussed moving \$30,000 from holiday decorations to the Veterans Memorial line item. However, it was decided that quotes be obtained regarding the flagpole installation to have a better ballpark figure.

CM Sweet raised concerns about unequal donations to local schools and suggested dividing \$13,000 among elementary and high schools. Council members discussed PTA donations and funding for local schools. CM Dubayah suggested publishing a list of donated organizations to encourage direct contributions. However, concerns were raised about specifying charitable organizations in the Town newsletter budget. CM Sweet suggested capping grants and donations at a certain amount as there are no ARPA funds to increase the donations' budget. CM Godfrey proposed a 1% cap on general fund revenues for grants and donations.

CM Morrissey discussed the distribution of \$15,000 in donations, prioritizing local schools over community organizations. The group aimed to balance giving to various organizations while being mindful of budget constraints. It was suggested that budget allocations need to be revised based on priorities, with a minimum for each organization.

CM Godfrey suggested a hybrid meeting setup for accessible remote participation. Ms. Lawrence shared that a 360-degree video camera with 13 smart microphones built-in was purchased to be set up in the conference rooms. It was suggested that the school cafeteria be used for council meetings.

Mr. Beall estimated \$150,000 for roof repairs but noted that is not enough for all needed repairs or upgrades. Council members discussed and debated budget items for Public Works, including maintenance and repairs for facilities. Mr. Baden explained that all the line items are assumed to be one-time charges being paid from reserves that contribute to the \$540,000 deficit that the budget is currently showing. Therefore, there are no grants for any of the line items in the Public Works budget.

CM Gathercole proposed implementing a residential parking permit system with different fees for residents and non-residents. The Committee discussed parking meter options for electric vehicle charging.

It was noted that the \$25,000 for traffic calming is meant for a study and not construction like raised crosswalks. Mr. Beall mentioned a cost of \$15,000 for a raised crosswalk, which could be added to the street maintenance line item. The group discussed the importance of separating a line item for the raised crosswalk to ensure proper tracking of funds. CM Godfrey asked about street maintenance replacement categories and how they relate to the capital budget's Street Works program. Mr. Baden explained that the \$15,000 line item has been used for various street sidewalk maintenance, including traffic calming measures, and that the cost of a speed hump can range from \$10,000 to \$20,000, depending on the location. CM Godfrey discussed traffic issues on College Heights Drive, including speed and safety concerns. Mr. Beall explained that if the Council wanted to place a speed hump on College Heights Drive, they are to pay for it twice, as it is currently not slated until the end of FY 2025.

CM Sweet questioned the \$10,000 increase in line item S3 and proposed cutting the parking meter line item to fund the crosswalk at Queen's Chapel. He expressed support for the placard approach, citing interest from other parties and the potential for experimentation. CM Dubayah raised concerns about the lack of funding for a comprehensive traffic study, prioritizing grants for cut-through traffic solutions. The Council discussed cost-effective ways to address traffic issues in town without expensive studies, as well as traffic calming and coping strategies in various wards.

CM Sweet suggested allocating \$200,000 from reserves or cutting from other areas to help an affected area, such as installing a stormwater capture management system.

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Mr. Baden explains that \$1,146,000 is designated for stormwater management, design, and engineering in the budget.

Chief Baker explained the upgrading of the security infrastructure with smart cameras and license plate readers. He noted that installing camera systems would reduce crime in the town, citing a 50% crime reduction in areas with cameras. Chief Baker confirmed that the three-year subscription service fee of \$36,000 is not included in the initial 184,000; therefore, it still needs to be added.

Mr. Baden noted that the increase in payroll taxes and benefits was mainly related to an increase in workers' compensation costs for police officers. CM Sweet asked about networking with the local municipalities as a joint method for benefits. Mr. Baden explained that there is a possibility of getting a rebate back under the legitimate plan based on the claims made by one's employees over that period. CM Godfrey suggested comparing the policies of other municipalities with camera systems to inform the Town's policy. CM Dubayah expressed concern about the cost-benefit ratio of investing in body cameras for the police department.

Chief Baker explained that officers are not trained as dispatchers, leading to concerns about officer safety and information processing. CM Dubayah recalled a time when the system seemed to be working well but now has concerns about its effectiveness. He expressed concern about residents not being able to contact police officers directly. The Committee discussed sharing dispatching with Hyattsville or College Park, but the Chief mentioned it is not a viable option due to staffing issues. It was suggested that money be allocated to the dispatch system to improve response times. Mr. Baden mentioned police budget items, including an additional vehicle purchase for fiscal year 2025.

Concerns were raised about the Town's reliance on gas-powered vehicles and the need to electrify the fleet. A council member mentioned a vehicle replacement plan, estimating \$2.5 to \$3.5 million in costs over ten years. Planning for vehicle replacements, infrastructure upgrades, and tree maintenance was discussed. CM Sweet raised concerns about aging Town vehicles and suggested evaluating an F-150 Lightning as a replacement option.

Mr. Baden mentioned the \$975,000 street work project and town hall design and construction. The group discussed whether the street work project would be included in the FY 2025 budget. The group also discussed the town hall design project timeline and grant deadlines. Ms. Lawrence provided an overview of the FY 2026 budget with project updates and timelines.

The meeting adjourned by consent at 9:55 PM.

### May 6 Council Meeting Highlights

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

#### Public Comment

- A resident recommended that Council members review the draft minutes thoroughly before presentation.
- Another resident encouraged the Council to do thorough staffing of budget proposals before inclusion.

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

*Policy, Rules, and Municipal Structure Committee* CM Morrissey noted that the Committee met on April 4, 2024, to discuss potential new policies regarding purchases from the town hall and a former council member who brought composting to their attention for consideration by the Sustainability Committee.

*Helping Hands UP* CM Gathercole reported that the Committee had a social business meeting at the community center, and it was attended by about 15 members of Helping Hands on April 27, 2024. They talked about different things about Helping Hands, like social events, the Spanish club, the luncheons, and the poetry club, and asked members about other things they would like to see. They also talked about TAF, the temporary assistance fund, and village rides.

*Sustainability Committee* CM Dubayah reported that the Sustainability Committee will meet on May 7, 2024.

*Development Committee* CM McGaughey noted that the Development Committee will meet on May 9, 2024, to finalize the white paper. He also thanked the police and the public staff for doing a great job helping at an event.

## TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

### New Business

*Motion: To approve the Police Week Proclamation as presented.* Motion carried unanimously.

*Motion: To approve the Public Works Week Proclamation as presented.* Motion carried unanimously.

### Continuing Business

*Motion: To defer the approval of the PEPCO Permit for Feeder 14479 Reliability Project.* Motion carried unanimously.

The Council discussed Pepco's permit request to replace some feeder lines and transformers in the town. Some members expressed their dissatisfaction with Pepco's lack of information and communication and questioned the validity of the permit information and the traffic plan that Pepco provided. The Council also wanted to know more about the purpose and benefits of the feeder 14479 project. Interim Town Administrator Lawrence, who introduced the permit request, said that she had tried to contact Pepco several times by email and phone but did not get a clear answer about the project timeframe. She also said that the project should not be very disruptive or take very long. Sally Baldwin, the Town attorney who filled in for the Town Attorney, Suellen Ferguson, said that she had talked to Suellen about the project and the feeder lines did need to be replaced. She suggested that the Council defer the permit until they get more information from Pepco rather than deny it outright. The Council agreed to defer the permit until they have more information from Pepco.

*Motion: To approve adding \$5,000 to G1-General Government Salaries and \$5,000 to G24-Town Administrator Cost and move the Town Administrator pay grade to the same grade as other department heads.* Motion carried unanimously.

*Motion: To approve changing item G46-Town Animal Control to \$4,000 and rename the account Trap/Neuter/Release Program, adding Route One Community Cares at \$5,000, and Northwestern High School PTSA at \$3,000, and leaving the other grants and donations as budgeted.* Motion carried unanimously.

*Motion: To approve removing G50-Holiday Decorations from the budget and put \$30,000 to W13-Veterans Memorial Park for a flagpole, bench and plaque.* Motion carried unanimously.

*Motion: To approve adding \$8,000 into line item G37-Legacy Tree Program.* Motion carried unanimously.

*Motion: To approve changing the W22-Parking Meter UPES EV Charging to UPS EV Charging Permit and reduce the amount to \$1,000.* Motion carried unanimously.

*Motion: To approve taking \$15,000 out of W25-Curb Painting and move it to S3-Street and Sidewalk Maintenance with a notation that would be specific for the raised crosswalk near the school.* Motion carried unanimously.

*Motion: To approve adding \$37,000 to P29-Town Wide Camera system.* Motion carried unanimously.

*Motion: To approve in the Capital Improvement Fund adding \$160,000 to 7022-00-Maryland Bond Bill - Town Hall; reducing 7046-00 MD Bond Bill-Town Match to Zero and adding \$120,000 to 7120-00-Town Hall Design.* Motion carried unanimously.

The Council members recognized the need to attract and retain a qualified and experienced Town Administrator who would oversee and manage all the department heads. They voted to increase the salary budget by \$5,000 and the expense budget by \$5,000, as well as to move the position up one grade in the pay scale.

The Council considered various suggestions for reducing speeding and improving safety on the town roads, such as painting curbs, installing speed signs, adding raised crosswalks, and narrowing lanes. The Council asked the police chief and the public works director for their input and cost estimates.

The Council members agreed that the long-term CIP, which covers the next five years, needs more time and attention. They decided to table the CIP discussion and focus on the budget for the next fiscal year. The budget included a capital projects fund, which covers the projects that are planned for the following year.

The meeting adjourned by consent at 9:47 PM.



## OBITUARY

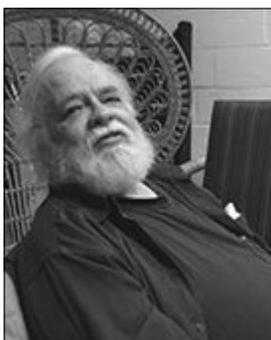


**Grace Story nee Schaffer**, 80, a longtime UP resident, passed away after a short illness January 27, 2024, at her home, surrounded by family. Grace was born October 5, 1943, in Brunswick, MD. Raised in Brunswick, she graduated from Brunswick High School in 1961. Grace began work at the Central Intelligence Agency in 1961. She

married George Story in 1969 and they made their home in University Park. She took a leave of absence in 1971 to raise her children, returning to work in 1984. She retired in 2010.

Grace was known for her love of her grandchildren, her six sisters and 50s “doo wop” music. She was a true crime buff and was often teased by her family as a modern day Alfred Hitchcock. She is described by everyone whose lives she touched as kind and sweet, leaving an indelible mark on those who were fortunate enough to call her friend. Grace was also generous to a fault, spoiling her children and grandchildren. Grace is survived by her husband, George Story to whom she was married for 54 years; daughters Krista (Mark) Story Newgent and Robin Story; five grandchildren; sister Barbara Altman; her niece Debbie Pearson, who was raised as a sister in her childhood home; and many nieces and nephews.

**John Ward**, 80, of Sheridan Street, died on April 26, 2024, after a long illness. John was born in Washington state, and as an “Army brat” lived all over the world. He served in the Army in Vietnam, then finished college at Indiana University. He received his law degree from the University of Maryland in 1983, spent several years in private practice, then joined the Office of the Public Defender in Upper



Marlboro, from which he retired.

Marlboro, from which he retired.

John was also a musician. He played for several years in the Prince George’s Philharmonic, and later was one of the founders of the Homespun Ceilidh Band, which played Celtic music in various places for 25 years. He is survived by his wife, Beatrix Whitehall.

## TOWN NEWS & EVENTS

**Sage Mumma**, formerly of University Park, passed away March 1. She was a founder of the University Park News, now this newsletter, and its first editor from 1974 to 1976. Sage also co-founded a citizen's coalition that sponsored the first “Meet the Candidates Night” in University Park. She and her husband later moved to Arnold, MD.

### Second Saturday Lecture Series

Saturday, June 8, 4 PM



This month’s speaker is Sam Walker, longtime resident of University Park, prize-winning historian and author of books on the history of American foreign policy, nuclear energy, and college basketball. He’ll talk about his book *Prompt and Utter Destruction: Truman and the Use of Atomic Bombs against*

*Japan*. This is a timely topic with the recent showing of the film *Oppenheimer*. University Park Church of the Brethren, 4413 Tuckerman Street.



### After Eight Book Group

You’re invited to join the After Eight book group! The group takes the summer off, but we hope new members will join us at the September meeting. Members have lively and wide-ranging discussions. We read books in all categories, both current and prize-winning. All are welcome and we appreciate residents' title suggestions. Contact Laura Donnelly at 301-927-6550.

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### Arts In the Park Celebration

Saturday, September 28, 1-4 PM



Save the date for the fourth annual celebration of the visual arts created by town artists. This has grown into a fun, community based event. Last year over 300 neighbors and friends joined the celebration. Any town resident 10 years of age or older is invited to display their art. Last year 24 artists participated in the event, offering

watercolor, oil and acrylic paintings, sculptures, stained glass, pottery, ceramics, photography, diorama and more—plus demonstrations by six artists. Artists display their works along the soccer field path between Tennyson and 41st St. Free for all artists and attendees. Rain date: October 5. Park along Queens Chapel Rd.

## TOWN NEWS & EVENTS

Interested artists should watch for the “Call for Artists” in the July/August Newsletter to register. If interested in registering early, go to [tinyurl.com/2023-UP-Arts](http://tinyurl.com/2023-UP-Arts) and complete the brief questionnaire. Follow-up information will be emailed to you. Any questions or concerns, email us at [UPartsinthepark@gmail.com](mailto:UPartsinthepark@gmail.com) or call Dick Groppe at 301-864-2096.



### UP Woman's Club Scholarship Winners

The University Park Woman's Club is very happy to announce the winners of our 2024 Scholarships.

- The first winner is **Edgar Benedict Sullivan**, a senior at DeMatha Catholic High School and resident of University Park, where he lives with his parents.
- The second winner is **Socorro Villanueva**, senior at Northwestern High School, and winner of the Doris McPhee Memorial Scholarship Award offered by the Woman's Club.

We extend our warm congratulations to these two students for their achievements and wish them continued success in the future. We are very proud of them.

### 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 or without any obligation to the homeless, poor, unemployed, senior citizens, immigrants and children in need. In 2023, our food pantry served 8,205 families in need with an overall average of 4.6 per household.

Total Adults (18-64): 19,507  
Total Seniors (65+): 2,152  
Total Children (0-17): 16,100  
Total People: 37,759

Since late 2016, we have been a proud partner of the Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB) which does amazing work for hundreds of area food pantries including us.

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR



The CAFB is a true blessing for so many and we sincerely appreciate their unwavering support in serving our community.

So far in 2024, we have seen a slight increase in the number of families asking for help to around 740 families per month. The fight against hunger and food insecurity continues. We need your help. Please consider donating 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 "St. Mark's Food Pantry" to donate. Checks are also welcome and may be 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 between 9:30 AM and 12 noon at the above address. All are welcome. Please leave no neighbor behind. Thank you for making it an even better and caring community.

### Downtown Hyattsville Arts Festival

Exhibitor Applications for the Downtown Hyattsville Arts Festival are now open. The festival will be held Saturday, September 21, 12-6 PM. This is a juried festival. Only original artwork, photography, handmade jewelry, handmade crafts, and creative literary arts are allowed. Apply by Friday, July 12. Visit [hyattsvilleartsfestival.com](http://hyattsvilleartsfestival.com) to apply.

### Friday Night Live!, Friday, June 7, 6:30-8:30 PM



Join us on select Fridays for a variety of musical genres and performers, music, food, beer and entertainment. There will be children's performers, a bounce house, kids activities and arts and crafts. All concerts are at City Hall Plaza,

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

7401 Baltimore Avenue, June-September. Parking is free at the Downtown College Park parking garage at the corner of Yale and Knox. Local food and beer will be available for purchase during the event. Performers:

**June 7** Bongo District

**July 12** Fred Moss & the Funk Band

**August 9** Uncle Jesse

**September 6** Friday Night LIGHTS

**Trolley Trail Day, Saturday June 8, 9 AM-4 PM** Discover all the Rhode Island Avenue Trolley Trail has to offer. Activities will occur throughout the day, along the entirety of the 3.8 mile-stretch of the Trolley Trail. The event is free for everyone; we welcome people of all ages and backgrounds to celebrate with us.

Live Music and Entertainment • Food & Drink Vendors • Bike Rides • Creative Scavenger Hunt • Farmer's Market • Interactive Community Art Project • Family-Friendly Activities • Prizes and Freebies • Outdoor Fitness Classes • Nature Walks • History Tours



**Hyattsville Library Coffee and a Classic, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, Wednesday, June 12, 1-3 PM** Spend an afternoon at the Hyattsville Library enjoying a cup of coffee and the film *Arsenic and Old Lace*, about a Brooklynite who writes books about the futility of marriage and then risks his reputation as

he decides to tie the knot. Things get even more complicated on his wedding day, when he finds out that his beloved aunts are habitual murderers. Starring Cary Grant, Priscilla Lane and Raymond Massey.

**University of Maryland Summer Chorus 2024, Rehearsals begin July 9, concert July 27** The University of Maryland Summer Chorus is a campus and community chorus available to anyone who wishes to sing. Each year, during three weeks in July, the UMD Summer Chorus rehearses and performs a major choral work with professional orchestra and soloists, led by one of the graduate conductors in the UMD choral conducting program. The 2024 selections are Gabriel Fauré's Requiem and Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel's Lobgesang and Hiob. Rehearsals are 7-9:30pm at The Clarice, Rm. 2201, beginning July 9. The concert is Saturday, July 27 at 8 pm. Registration required, \$80, \$60 for high school & college students. Fees are non-refundable. For more info, contact: [umchoirs@umd.edu](mailto:umchoirs@umd.edu) or 301-405-5571.



### College Park Arts Exchange

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

**Broadway Jazz Intensive, June 24-28, 6:30-8 PM** Practice jazz dance technique and learn choreography to *Wicked* with Elta Goldstein's Adult Broadway Jazz Intensive. This all levels class will feature an informal showcase at the end of the week. Register at [cpae.org/arts/event/adult-broadway-jazz-intensive/](http://cpae.org/arts/event/adult-broadway-jazz-intensive/).

### Workshops and Classes

**Soul Line Dancing with Karen Stewart, Fridays, 10 AM** by Zoom. Join in this fun and easy to follow dance class! No experience needed! Contact [info@cpae.org](mailto:info@cpae.org) for zoom link!

**CPAE Needle Arts Club, select Sundays, 5-7 PM** Dates for the coming year include May 12, June 9, and July 14.

**CPAE Art Club, select dates, 7:30-9:00 PM** Email [info@cpae.org](mailto:info@cpae.org) if you are interested.

### Shop Locally at Farmers Markets

You can eat locally grown produce year-round by shopping at these markets within a 5-mile radius. These are just a few of the area markets. Please check farmers market websites and social media pages for updates.

Riverdale Park Farmers Market, open now  
4650 Queensbury Road  
Riverdale Park, Maryland 20737  
Thursday 3-7 PM

College Park Farmers Market opens, 4/27  
5211 Paint Branch Pkwy.  
College Park, Maryland 20740  
Saturday 8 AM-Noon

Farmers Market at Maryland, opens 4/3  
University of Maryland Tawes Plaza Garden  
3900 Campus Drive, College Park, MD 20742  
[www.farmersmarket.umd.edu](http://www.farmersmarket.umd.edu)  
Virtual/online ordering only due to pandemic.

Crossroads Farmers Market, opens 4/24  
Anne Street at University Blvd. East  
Takoma Park, Maryland 20912  
Wednesday 11 AM-2:30 PM



# June 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Town committees meet regularly, please check the website for current details.						1
2	3 Town Council, 7:30 Yard Waste & Compost	4 Trash, Bulk Trash	5	6	7 Recycling	8 Ivy League, 9 AM Second Saturday Lecture, 4 PM
9	10 Yard Waste & Compost	11 Trash, Bulk Trash	12	13	14 Recycling	15 Meadow Restoration, 10 AM-12 PM
16	17 Town Council, 7:30 Yard Waste & Compost	18 Trash, Bulk Trash	19 Town Holiday	20	21 Recycling	22
23	24 Yard Waste & Compost	25 Trash, Bulk Trash	26	27	28 Recycling	29
30	July 1 <b>NEW PARKING ENFORCEMENT BEGINS</b>			UP Meadow Day, Saturday, July 13, 9-11 AM		



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

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**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 July-August newsletter deadline is Thursday, June 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. 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. Editors Todd Stewart & Bridget Warren univparknews@gmail.com 301-209-7341

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 dmcgaughey@upmd.org  
 ggodfrey@upmd.org  
 wsweet@upmd.org

