

ECA Newsletter

March 2024

Topics in This Issue

1. Mark Your Calendars – 2024 ECA/BOWA Spring Cleanup Day
2. Have You Paid ECA Dues for 2024?
3. B-CC High School Used Book Sale
4. ECA Board Seeks Community Volunteers to Monitor and Recommend Possible Actions in Response to County Council and Planning Board Proceedings Affecting Residential Neighborhoods
5. Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative Update
6. Quadrennial Growth and Infrastructure Policy Review
7. EC-Net Reminders
8. Edgemoor Tip of the Month – Downtown Bethesda Residential Development

Mark Your Calendars – 2024 ECA/BOWA Spring Cleanup Day

The ECA/BOWA Construction Spring Cleanup day returns in 2024. The event is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, April 6, from 9 AM to 11 AM in the Bethesda Elementary School Parking lot. Pencil it in on your calendar now, and start cleaning out the house and garage. Look for additional details soon.

Have you Paid ECA Dues for 2024?

As noted in a recent email, the ECA Board will be preparing and mailing out the annual dues reminder letters in about 2 weeks. If you've already paid 2024 dues (\$35), thank you. You've saved us the cost and labor involved in mailing you a letter. If not, this is your last chance to prevent a letter from going out to you. Just visit the [Membership and Dues](#) page of the ECA website and make your 2024 dues payment right now.

Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School Used Book Sale

The very popular annual BCC High School used book sale will be this Saturday, March 9, 10 AM to 5 PM (when books will be \$1-3 each), and Sunday, March 10, 10 AM to 3 PM (when, for \$15, you can fill a paper grocery bag with books). Tens of thousands of used books (in good condition) will be available, sorted into more than 60 genres. Be sure to check out the “banned books” section!

They'll take cash, credit cards, and Apple Pay. There will be musical entertainment while you shop, refreshments available, and free parking in the school lot at 4301 East-West Highway, Bethesda. Info [HERE](#).

ECA Board Seeks Community Volunteers to Monitor and Recommend Possible Actions in Response to County Council and Planning Board Proceedings Affecting Residential Neighborhoods

In the last few years, the ECA board has tried to keep the community informed about laws, policies, initiatives, and proposals that may impact our neighborhood, particularly in terms of zoning, and property development rules. But, we could use some help.

The Montgomery County Planning Board is now resuming work on two major initiatives that are likely to have a substantial impact here. One would permit construction of multi-family dwellings in neighborhoods that are currently limited to single-family units (the [Attainable Housing Strategies initiative](#)), and another would update the criteria used to assess the sufficiency of infrastructure (roads, schools, utilities, etc.) to support new development (the [Growth and Infrastructure Policy review](#)). See below for more information about these. As the County strives to implement its new General Plan (Thrive Montgomery 2050), and with the installation of an entirely new Planning Board, other related activities will undoubtedly follow.

The ECA Board is looking for community members who are interested in volunteering to serve on a Housing and Land Use Committee to monitor these issues, help keep the community informed, and advise the Board about possible courses of action. Experience in Montgomery County land use policy, residential property development, zoning, or related areas is helpful, but is not essential. Willingness to work on behalf of your neighbors is. There is no fixed time commitment, but interested residents should be willing to devote at least a few hours each month to the project.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the Board (EdgemoorCitizens@gmail.com). Let us know why you are interested, a little bit about your background, and what you feel you can contribute to the group. We can discuss the details.

Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative Update

On February 22, Montgomery Planning staff briefed the Montgomery County Planning Board and presented recommendations based on its Attainable Housing Strategies initiative. The Attainable Housing Strategies initiative was initiated at the direction of the Montgomery County Council in March of 2021, which asked Montgomery Planning to “consider zoning reforms that would allow greater opportunities for Missing Middle housing in Montgomery County.” You’ve heard about this initiative several times in

Newsletters and other emails in the past three years. You can find those by going to the [EC-Net home page](#) and typing “Attainable” into the search box at the top. You can learn more about the initiative and its history on the Attainable Housing Strategies initiative website [HERE](#). You can watch the hour-long February 22 briefing [HERE](#) (starting at about time stamp 5:39) and read the planning staff’s draft report and recommendations [HERE](#).

The recommendations are extensive and complex, and can’t be easily summarized here. But, the recommendations most specifically relevant to our community have to do with establishing a “Priority Housing District” which would include (among other areas) all properties within one mile of a Metro Red Line or Purple Line station. That includes all property within the ECA boundaries. In those areas, property owners would be allowed to build duplex, triplexes, and quadplexes by right (that is, without Planning Board review). In addition, minimum parking requirements (currently homes in these areas require two off-street parking spaces for each house) would be “reduced” to an unspecified extent. The development standards would generally follow the development standards for detached houses, and would put limits on building size and establish design standards that ensure compatibility and feasibility. The Planning Board would establish a “pattern book” to guide builders containing objective form-based standards multi-unit dwellings. The book would focus on massing and urban design standards for various building types in different horizontal and vertical configurations and include multiple plan layouts for architects, homeowners, and homebuilders.

The Planning Board will hold listening sessions on the initiative on March 21st. To sign up to testify, go [HERE](#). I will be testifying at the session. You can send written comments to mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org no later than 12 noon on March 20th.

Residents with a strong interest in following this matter should sign up to receive updates on the project [HERE](#) and consider joining the ECA Board’s Housing Committee (see “ECA Seeks...,” above).

Growth and Infrastructure Policy Review

Montgomery County’s Growth and Infrastructure Policy (GIP) is the tool that the County uses to make sure infrastructure (schools, transportation systems, utilities, etc.) is sufficient to keep pace with development. It establishes and updates the tests used in this evaluation, and is reviewed every four years to make sure these tools are adequate given the latest growth patterns of the County. You can learn more about the GIP [HERE](#).

Montgomery Planning is now updating the GIP for 2024. They are holding an online community roundtable on March 19, from 6 to 8 p.m., where staff will share their preliminary recommendations respond to questions from residents. Advance registration is required and you can register [HERE](#)

EC-Net Reminders

You've probably noticed that we've had an influx of new residents in the neighborhood over the past couple of years. As a result, there are many new members in the EC-Net neighborhood e-mail group, EC-Net. So, this is a good time to review some of the more frequently misunderstood or overlooked posting/replying rules. You can find the complete rules on the EC-Net Email Group page of the ECA website [HERE](#). Please:

- Sign each messages with your first and last name.
- The following are prohibited in most circumstances. (Limited exceptions are noted on the website):
 - Messages posted on behalf of other people
 - Commercial messages or advertising
 - Fundraising appeals that are not specifically related to our community
 - Posting security camera images, or appeals for security camera images, unless explicitly requested by the police
- When replying to a message, choose "Reply" NOT "Reply All."

This last one is, by far, the most overlooked rule and it makes a lot of extra work for the moderator to prevent those unwanted messages from going out to our 600+ users. If your email program's default setting for replying to messages is "Reply All" or your default action is to click the "Replay All" button, consider changing things. That will make all of the people you email with--not just EC-Net users--very happy.

Edgemoor Tip of the Month – Downtown Bethesda Residential Development

Last April's ECA Newsletter mentioned *Urban Turf*, an online publication that covers the DC area real estate news, and its overview of 21 residential development projects in Downtown Bethesda. They've now updated their list in a new article, "23 And Counting: The Downtown Bethesda Development Boom". Read it [HERE](#).

Do you have a tip you'd like to share with your neighbors? Please email me your suggestions [HERE](#).

The ECA Newsletter is a compilation of information relevant to Edgemoor area residents. It is distributed on an occasional basis on the EC-Net email list.