

**Town of University Park**  
**Council Committee on Public Facilities and Services**  
**Report of Meeting**

**Saturday, July 27, 2013**  
**University Park Town Hall, Conference Room**  
**6724 Baltimore Avenue**  
**University Park, Maryland**

Mr. Carey called the meeting to order at 9:39 AM, in the Conference Room at Town Hall. Beginning of the meeting was delayed to allow a Special Session of the Council to consider a resolution honoring Francis M. (Mickey) Lucas.

Present were Mr. Carey (Chair), Mr. Brosch, Mr. Cron, Mr. Gekas (pending appointment). The Mayor was present *ex officio* for the first part of the meeting.

**Vegetation Management along the Route 1 Sidewalk between Beechwood Road and Pineway (North)**

The Committee discussed the issue of vegetation encroaching upon the sidewalk along the West side of Route 1 between Beechwood Road and Pineway (North). The vegetation hinders bicycle and pedestrian access along the sidewalk, posing a safety issue.

Mayor Tabori:

1. The sidewalk presents a peculiar circumstance because Route 1 is a State Highway, the sidewalk owned by the State, and the Right-of-Way ends at the edge of the sidewalk. The Town does not own any of that. The sidewalk is technically not inside the boundaries of University Park. There is no public utilities easement; the power lines are on private property. University Park paid part of the cost of building the sidewalk prior to 2004. While the Town had suggested that the State Highway Administration expand the Right-of-Way to make it easier to maintain and keep clear, they declined because it would require condemnation.
2. Distinguish between controlling bamboo and controlling it only to keeping sidewalks clear. We have an Ordinance requiring removal of snow from sidewalk.
3. The Council could enact code addressing specific invasive species and requiring landowners to prevent them from obstructing sidewalk; however, this should apply to the entire Town and not just that area along the sidewalk.

The Committee discussed the idea of an ordinance which forbids landowners from maintaining plant species in a way which obstructs passage along a public right-of-way including sidewalk. Visibility along roads and sidewalks is also a public safety concern; do we require that property owners maintain sight-lines at intersections free of visual obstruction?

Council discussion included public- versus private-land issues. The Mayor cautioned against creating rigidity in any Ordinance.

The Committee discussed developing legislation or policy in five general areas:

1. Public Right of Way--Legislation/policy which requires landowners within the Town of University Park to maintain their properties in ways which do not encroach upon, infringe upon, or obstruct public rights of way including sidewalks, roadways, and alleys. The Committee would look to the State Highway Administration, Maryland-National Capitol Park and Planning Commission, and others for standards for vegetation management along rights of way. Also of concern are air-rights above the right-of-way, and what kind of setback is necessary.
2. Private lands--Legislation/policy which would require landowners within the Town of University Park to maintain plant materials, including invasive species, in ways which do not invade or encroach upon their neighbors land. This could be similar to the College Park Ordinance on bamboo.
3. Visibility at intersections--The Committee could recommend that the Council Committee on Police, Traffic, and Public Safety study and recommend policies and legislation to strengthen the Town ordinances re: vegetation management and sight-lines at public intersections.
4. Invasive species--Legislation/policy re invasive species. This is possibly part of a tree ordinance, but the Committee will take up the invasive species part, due to it being a pressing issue affecting Town park lands.
5. Clean-up fund--Legislation/policy to create a clean-up fund, funded by non-tax dollars. Such a fund would leverage non-town dollars, including possible State- and County funds, to cost-share on clean-up of private lands on a one-time basis where landowners are of fixed- or limited incomes. Following the initial clean-up (on a cost-share basis with the landowner), the landowner would be required to maintain the vegetation within Code.

#### **Status of other Committee Projects.**

1. Veterans Memorial--Mr. Carey: The Veterans Memorial Design Advisory Committee has been meeting, and is working with the Neighborhood Design Center. The Committee is planning a design Charette for November 2013, expecting to have a design recommendation to the Council by Spring 2014.
2. Streetlight Replacement--Mr. Gekas: Replacing street lights by PEPCO is saving energy and saving the Town money. In October 2011, the Town's 231 street lights consisted of incandescent, mercury vapor and high pressure sodium fixtures. But as of June 2013, almost all of them have been converted to high pressure sodium. Energy consumption and charges have been considerably reduced when the Town's October 2011 bill (\$2904.02) is compared to its June 2013 bill (\$1966.03). The Committee discussed the monthly time difference (i.e. summer versus fall).

Consequently, once we have the October 2013 bill, we should have a better idea on the energy and cost savings. (Pepco's street light rates were about the same in 2011 and 2013).

Replacing the sodium fixtures with the even more efficient LED's was not considered at this time since retrofitting would be too costly and unreasonable given that the existing fixtures are relatively new.

Mr. Brosch: Maybe it should be explained that while the electric use has dropped and our bill may have decreased, half of our bill--service charges for maintenance--have not, and as a percentage of our overall bill have actually increased.

3. Kitchen Waste Composting--Mr. Carey: The kitchen waste composting program has been moved to the Town's Public Works Department.
4. Once/week trash pick-up--The Committee will recommend surveying of Town residents in this regard, possibly using Survey Monkey and/or a mailer. Possibly there could be an arrangement to supplement 1/week pick-up with a dumpster where Town residents could empty any excess-capacity trash, or for a service where Town residents could call and arrange for their excess trash to be picked up. This program is a Committee priority.
5. Town holiday tree replacement--Committee consensus is that the Tree does not need replacement; the Town should consider whether it could be pruned or trimmed to make it a little more conical.
6. Town Hall addition/replacement--The Committee will continue to review and recommend to the Council on this as a committee priority.
7. Household hazardous waste collection--The Committee considers this still a good idea, if there are ways to reduce the cost. Can the County do some of this? Relax permit requirements? Let's see if we can find a way to get this done.
8. Town Web site and Web services—The Committee agreed to add the Town Web site and Web services to projects the Committee will take up. This is another Committee priority.

**The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.**

Submitted for the Council Committee on Public Facilities and Services  
by  
Council Member Len Carey, Chair