

# Mount Vernon - Belvedere Clarion



This month's general membership meeting will be on **Tuesday, October 21st, 7:30pm** at The Belvedere.

Our focus will be a discussion involving a study for possible implementation of two way traffic on major streets. In addition, there will be an update on the State Center development

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## State Center Updated

At the general membership meeting on October 21, Jim Peiffer, MVBA's representative to the State Center Neighborhood Alliance, and Caroline Moore, the Chief Executive Officer of Ekistics LLC, the private development partner, will provide an update on the Program to redevelop the State Center campus. State Center is a 28-acre site located on the western side of Mount Vernon/Belvedere and at one of the most active transit nodes in Baltimore. In the mid-20th century, this area became a classic well-intentioned but ultimately ill-fated urban renewal project, where city row homes, shops and churches were cleared to make way for a State office complex. This urban renewal project destroyed the connectivity among the nine surrounding neighborhoods and created a blighting influence out of scale with its surrounding.

In response State Center is now the focal point for a 15-year, multi-phase effort to transform an aging group of state government offices into a diverse landscape of building types, uses, and public spaces. While the project will continue to house State agencies, it will be mixed with new retail and a variety of housing choices for city living. The presentation will describe how this affects Mount Vernon/Belvedere.

## Tree Planting

Thanks to the amazing group of volunteers who came out for our tree planting and maintenance event on Saturday, October 4! We had 46 volunteers who planted 35 new trees, largely along the Cathedral Street corridor, and removed over 160 gator bags from trees for winter storage.

## Second Fall Tree Planting & Maintenance Events - Save the Dates!

We are looking forward to our second fall 2014 tree planting and maintenance event in Mt. Vernon on Saturday,

October 25. We'll be meeting up at 9 a.m. at Tribeca Coffee at 1210 N Charles and finishing up at 1 p.m. We'll be planting trees primarily in the eastern half of Mt. Vernon at this event. Please sign up to volunteer now by emailing [trees@mvba.org](mailto:trees@mvba.org).

We also need some volunteers to continue cleaning our gator bags so that we can store them over the winter and stencil them with our MVBA Trees logo. If you'd be interested in helping with gator bags, please indicate that in your email sign-up. We hope to see you on the 25th!



## Midtown Annual Fall Meeting

Midtown's Annual Fall meeting takes place on Wednesday, October 29, beginning with a desert reception at 7pm. Meeting begins at 7:30pm. The primary purpose of the meeting is to vote for the annual members at large from each of the 4 communities. Those chosen will take their seat on the Midtown board on January 1, 2015. In addition, there should be an update on Midtown's relocation to 815 N. Howard Street.

Midtown will be moving out of its current offices at the end of October. The building, which has been owned by the University of Baltimore, has been sold to a private couple who plan to renovate and create a single family residence. The building has also served as MVBA's address, even before Midtown was created. Because of the sale of the property, MVBA has changed its address to 1 East Chase St, Suite #2.

**Our thanks** to the University of Baltimore for the many years of providing/donating space to both the Midtown Benefits District Office and MVBA.

**Midtown will be re-locating** to temporary space on 11/01/2014 while its permanent home on Howard Street is being renovated. The space owned by the University of Baltimore, is

located at 1107 Cathedral Street, Baltimore, MD 21201. The phone number remains the same, 410-528-1512.

### **MVBA Elections**

This year's annual election involves filling two directors seats. Steve Ruckman, currently occupying one of the seats whose term will expire at the end of the year, has expressed interest to continue serving on the board.

The nominating committee interviewed several persons to serve on the board for 3 years, beginning on January 1, 2015. The committee has proposed a slate of two candidates for the vacant seats, Steve Ruckman and Jason House. Both have been active participants in the organization, Steve Ruckman as a current board member and chair of the Property Stewardship committee, and Jason House has been active in the tree planting efforts. Both candidates will be introduced at the upcoming general membership meeting and there will also be a call for nominations from the floor. Nominations may only be made by a member in good standing of the Mount Vernon Belvedere Association, and the nominated candidate must also be a member in good standing of the organization. In November, the election or confirmation of the slate of candidates will take place.

**Stephen Ruckman** is a longtime resident of Mount Vernon, and a homeowner here since 2009, moving here to enjoy its history and culture and its great walkability to downtown. He has been a board member of the MVBA since 2012, and serves as chair of its Stewardship Committee. In his time living in Mount Vernon he has worked to improve residential parking, combat neglect and blight (graffiti, code violations), and strengthen communication between city agencies and the neighborhood. He and his wife are committed to this neighborhood, and hope to raise their family here, and he is seeking to stay on the board so that he can help the MVBA to continue to work cooperatively and effectively to respond to the needs of all residents here.

**Jason House** is a lifelong resident of Baltimore City who moved to Mount Vernon two years ago. I was drawn to Mount Vernon for its vibrancy, tranquility, diversity, beautiful architecture and place in history as well as Baltimore's bright future. I joined the Mount Vernon Urbanites which allowed me to get to know a lot of great people and local businesses and also introduced me to the Baltimore Tree Trust and MVBA. Through volunteering with the Baltimore Tree Trust, I have enjoyed the ability to not just be a spectator in Baltimore's positive transformation, but to be an active participant. Through all of these organizations I have received a great feeling of community that I would like help become stronger.

### **Liquor licenses**

#### **Nepal House, formerly Mughal Gardens**

A request for transfer of a Class B license from the former operators to new ownership was approved by the Liquor Board at the October 16 hearing. In addition, the applicant was seeking permission for outdoor table service, off-premise catering, and live entertainment. MVBA generally supports and did

not object to outdoor table service and off-premise catering. Requests for permission for live entertainment are always cause for concern.

Fortunately, the owner, Prem Mahat, was very agreeable to restrictions on the live entertainment permission. The restrictions include, no dancing, no DJ's, and no bands. Mr. Mahat explained that it his desire to offer occasional music in the form a single instrument, such as a piano, guitar, flute or other similar instrument. With that in mind, it was agreed that there would be no amplified music, except for major holidays, both US and Nepal origins where this could be done up to 8 times per year.

Mr. Mahat also indicated that it his plan to generally close around 10pm Sunday through Thursday, and close around 11 on Friday and Saturday. As such, any live entertainment must end at 10pm Sunday through Thursday and by 11pm on Friday and Saturday.

Significant renovations included removing the original long bar and creating a small service bar for serving restaurant customers. Nepal House is Located at 918 N Charles Street and should be open by December.

### **520 Park Avenue**

The first floor space at 520 Park Avenue is in the process of being transformed into a market style retail space. The Time Group, which manages the building, has applied for a Class B restaurant license. The applicant's representative, Dominic Wicker, met with the MVBA board of directors to discuss the license application as it relates to the space. In addition, they are seeking permission for live entertainment. However, they are willing to consider restrictions to minimize the impact of live entertainment to not only its residents, but also in the surrounding community. Details of the restrictions remain to be worked out, but MVBA is generally in support of the application.

## **Other Happenings**

### **First & Franklin Presbyterian Church, The Spire Series**

#### **Bay Street Brassworks concert, Friday, October 24, 2014, 8:00PM**

Bay Street Brassworks (BSB) is an internationally acclaimed touring ensemble and one of America's finest and busiest brass ensembles. This award-winning quintet was founded in 1995 and performs everything from Bach to Be-Bop. BSB is the premiere educational brass ensemble of its kind, and currently a performing ensemble for Young Audiences of Maryland. BSB has performed hundreds of educational programs, masterclasses and clinics for kindergarteners through high school seniors.

BSB's discography includes Fresh Off The Boat - Folk Music From Around The World (2002), American Escapades (2006), and Brass on Fire (2011). BSB received the Grand Prize at the 2003 New York Brass Conference International Brass Quintet Competition.

A reception follows the concert where you can meet the musicians and enjoy food and drink. Tickets available through our

website: [www.firstfranklin.org](http://www.firstfranklin.org) (PayPal) or at the door. Students \$10/ General \$20. 210 W. Madison St., Baltimore, MD 21201

## First Unitarian Church

A **Winter Solstice Ritual** at the First Unitarian Church of Baltimore (Charles and Franklin 21201), 7 p.m. Sunday, December 21, will include songs, poetry, drama, symbolic extinguishing of the old year's fire and lighting of the new, turning the Wheel of the Year, welcoming the newborn babes, giving thanks for seasonal blessings, tasting seasonal sweets, rejoicing in the return of the light. For additional information, contact Pat Montley at 410-252-6074 or [solstice@firstunitarian.net](mailto:solstice@firstunitarian.net)

## Mayor signs bill offering tax credits to residents who move but stay in Baltimore

We know that when people own their homes, they become more invested in their neighborhoods and care more about the future of our city. For many families, the choice between staying in the city or relocating to other jurisdictions comes down to tax relief.

Under current law, longtime Baltimore City residents with an existing, accumulated Homestead Tax credit are discouraged from relocating within the city due to an often prohibitive increase in real property taxes, should they purchase a new city residence. That means families across Baltimore—from empty-nesters looking to downgrade to younger couples hoping to grow their families—are often forced to look outside the city for their next move. This is not a strategy for growth.

This week we took action to help more of those families stay in Baltimore City. Thanks to the Resident Retention Tax Credit, we will create a "homestead carryover," allowing homeowners to forward the amount of credit on their current city homes to their new city homes, with the amount declining by 10 percentage points each tax year thereafter. This first come, first served credit will begin in 2015 and will change how people shop for homes in Baltimore. It will provide relief for current city residents who wish to remain in Baltimore but think it might be too expensive.

## Apartment, Condo Residents Now Can Recycle Where They Live, New Maryland law requires recycling in buildings of at least 10 units

No longer will living in an apartment building keep many Baltimore City residents from contributing to the benefits of recycling. As of Oct. 1, Maryland law requires property owners or managers of apartment buildings or condominiums with at least 10 units to provide recycling services to their residents.

For years, Baltimore residents who live in single-family homes have enjoyed convenient weekly recycling pickup from their alley or front curb, courtesy of the Department of Public Works' Bureau of Solid Waste. But those in apartment buildings received no such guarantees, and in many cases had to transport their own recycling to one of the DPW's Citizens' Convenience Centers.

"We are working with residential property owners and managers to make sure that for even more Baltimore City residents, the opportunity to recycle much of their waste is just a few steps away," said DPW Director Rudy Chow, P.E. "We are committed to the 'Drive to 35' recycling goal to increase the City's recycling rate to 35% and plugging in thousands of City residents to the recycling stream will be a tremendous help - for everyone."

Residents of buildings with at least 10 units who find that recycling is still not available may contact the DPW Office of Recycling at 410-396-1185. For more information about ways to reduce, recycle and re-use check under the Recycling tab of the [PublicWorks.BaltimoreCity.gov](http://PublicWorks.BaltimoreCity.gov) website.

## The former Brass Elephant on the market for \$795,000

Many of our readers/members will remember this location as the Museum Restaurant, that was everything else but a restaurant. MVBA successfully challenged the renewal of their liquor license in 2013 and the property has remained close ever since.

According to a recent article in the Baltimore Business Journal, the property is on the market for \$795,000. The property is apparently being marketed as both a single-family home and a restaurant, whichever comes first.

The building was built in 1870 as a mansion of 8,244 square feet. It apparently still contains seven full bathrooms across five floors, 15 customer fireplaces, crystal chandeliers, carved teak, Tiffany stained glass, a garage and three parking spaces.

## HALLOWEEN SPOOKTACULAR

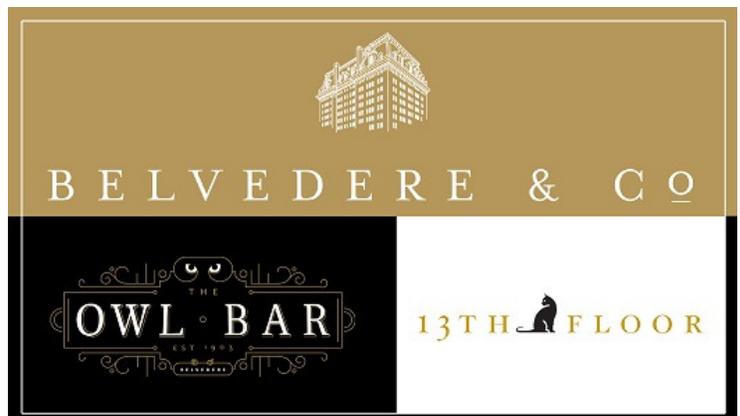
The entire East MVP Square will be decorated for Halloween for Saturday, October 25 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. All ages welcome!

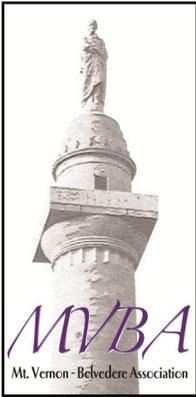
Upper section: Family friendly

Lower section: Older kids & adults

This free event includes Pumpkins to decorate Yummy Halloween munchies, and awesome photo-ops! Costumes welcome, but not required.

**VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED** to Decorate the East Square for Halloween and to help with the Spooktacular! Decorating takes place from 9 am to 1:00 pm, on October 25. If you are interested, contact the Conservancy at [Info@MVPConservancy.org](mailto:Info@MVPConservancy.org).





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1 East Chase Street #2  
Baltimore, MD 21202

To contact members by phone, call MVBA's main number 410-528-1919 and select the desired extension from the menu.

### Officers 2014

President..... Jason Curtis ..... president@mvba.org  
Vice President..... Barbara Gilbert ..... vicepresident@mvba.org  
Treasurer..... Steve Johnson ..... treasurer@mvba.org  
Secretary..... Photini Sinnia ..... secretary@mvba.org  
Corr. Secretary..... Jane Polanka ..... corrsecretary@mvba.org

### Committees

Architectural Review..... Steven Shen..... arc@mvba.org  
Sanitation..... Sandy Lawler ..... sanitation@mvba.org  
Property Stewardship..... Stephen Ruckman . stewardship@mvba.org  
Liquor..... Steve Johnson..... liquor@mvba.org  
Zoning..... zoning@mvba.org  
Development..... development@mvba.org  
Safety..... Jason Curtis..... safety@mvba.org  
Membership..... membership@mvba.org  
Parking, Area 28..... Steve Johnson..... parking@mvba.org  
Trees & Green..... Andy Smith..... trees@mvba.org  
Dog Park..... Samantha Braun  
..... Geoffrey Hart..... dogpark@mvba.org

**Visit MVBA at [www.mvba.org](http://www.mvba.org)**

### Board Members 2014

Andy Smith  
Stephen Ruckman  
Cheryl Paschall  
Steven Shen  
Antonio Rivera  
MJ Dame

### Appointed Members:

**Ex-officio Members**  
Jack Dana

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