

Mount Vernon - Belvedere Clarion



This month's general membership meeting will be on Tuesday, April 21, 2015, beginning promptly at 7:30pm at The Belvedere Condominiums, lobby level. All are welcome to attend, members and non-members alike.

April 2015, Volume 30, Number 4

Visit MVBA at www.mvba.org

New Cycle Track Will Potentially Result In Loss Of 75 Residential Parking Spaces And Damage The Walkability Of Our Neighborhood

At the recent March MVBA general meeting, DOT representatives presented their latest draft of the Downtown Bicycle Network. The plan for the Centre Street/Madison Street cycle tracks was presented to the public for the first time on March 17, 2015. The proposal envisions a one-way cycle track on Centre Street and another one-way cycle track on Madison Street. Because of the narrower width of the roadway on Madison Street, and in order to maintain two vehicular travel lanes, DOT proposes to eliminate one parking lane, resulting in a loss of 75 Residential Parking Permit (RPP) spaces between Guilford Avenue and Eutaw Avenue. These 75 RPP spaces amount to approximately 10% of the total RPP spaces in Mount Vernon. Not only will this loss of parking impact those who live and park on Madison Street, but the replacement of a parking lane with travel lane running adjacent to the curb and sidewalk will be detrimental to the walkability of this section of our neighborhood.*

In contrast, the revised plan presented at the general meeting for the cycle track on Maryland Avenue/Cathedral Street was greatly improved, with a new design requiring the removal of only 5 Residential Parking Permit spaces. The design places a two-way cycle track on the east side of the roadway, protected by a parking lane, and

maintains the parking lane along the west side of the roadway. One vehicular travel lane will be removed to accommodate the cycle track, which should also improve the walkability and livability of the corridor.

MVBA has already received considerable feedback from residents who would be adversely affected by the loss of on-street parking on Madison Street. The negative impact to residents and visitors in the southern half of the neighborhood would be even more profound, where more than 600 new residential units have been built in recent years and further development is planned. MVBA is opposed to the removal of 75 RPP spaces on Madison Street and wants to work with the city to find a solution that embodies the principles of "complete streets" which includes both residential parking and bike infrastructure.

Click here to send an e-mail to bike@mvba.org to register your concerns and/or to learn how to provide feedback about the cycle track to DOT.

*Jeff Speck, a renowned urban planner and walkable city advocate writes in *Walkable City: How Downtown Can Save America, One Step At A Time*: "What makes a sidewalk safe is not its width, but whether it is protected by a line of parked cars that form a barrier of steel between the pedestrian and the roadway.... Stripping a sidewalk of its protection in order to add bike lanes is just sacrificing one form of non-motorized transportation for another.... If they are truly to offer an alternative to the automobile, bikes and trolleys must displace moving cars, not parked ones."

Spring Tree Planting & Maintenance Events - Save the Dates

Our thanks to Ryleigh's Oyster Mount Vernon for hosting the very successful second spring 2015 tree fundraiser on Monday, April 13th from 6-9 p.m. The event was held in the Atrium Bar where they donated 50% of proceeds from drink sales during the event to MVBA's tree effort. All money raised will go to pay for mulch, compost, and gator bags for newly planted trees.

We'll be doing three volunteer tree planting days this spring. Mark your calendars now for the following Saturdays:

- Saturday, April 25 - Eastern portion of Mt. Vernon
- Saturday, May 9 - Western portion of Mt. Vernon
- Saturday, June 13 - Charles Street (partnership with Charles Street Development Corporation)

Mark your calendars now to volunteer for these events. As always, we are excited to be working with the Midtown Community Benefits District and TreeBaltimore on these plantings. Send an email to trees@mvba.org with any questions.

Window Box & Planter Competition - Returning in Summer 2015

Now that the weather has turned, start working on preparing your window boxes and planters. MVBA will be holding our second annual Window Box & Planter Competition this summer. Details on how you can nominate yourself or a neighbor will be coming out soon.

Liquor Happenings

Midtown BBQ & Grill changes ownership

The class B restaurant license was transferred on April 9th to Vanna Belton, who, with her wife Julia Belton, will be transforming the the former operation into FLAVOR, Happy Hour Lounge. Julia Belton, is a classically trained Chef from The Culinary Institute of America with experience at one of New York City's finest 3 Star Michelin restaurants, Eleven Madison Park. Julia will transform the current BBQ menu into a chic tapas-style happy hour restaurant, where they plan to provide Mt. Vernon with a dining experience that parallels the artistic and sophisticated community in which it is located. The food will be fresh and sourced from local farms, as well as fresh ingredient cocktails. Our new hours of operation will be Sunday-Thursday 3:00pm-10:00pm and Friday-Saturday 3:00pm-2:00am.

Midtown Liquors

Located at 17 W Biddle Street, the Class A liquor store has been the subject of two hearings recently at the liquor board. The first hearing was the result of residents, lead by nearby resident David Placher, petitioning the liquor board for a hearing in February to address primarily on-going CHAP building code violations, as the residents believed that the condition of the property was affecting adjoining property values. At that hearing, the liquor board instructed the owner, Alexander Wolde, to work with the neighborhood and MVBA to address the code violations.

The most recent hearing was the result of another resident petition by Mr. Placher, to challenge the renewal of their liquor license for the continuing code violations. All liquor licenses are renewed annually around April and May each year where an opportunity is provided to challenge renewals by citizens.

At the hearing, the attorney representing Mr. Wolde, Mr. Herbert Bergunder, responded that the licensee has hired an architect and has come up with plans to renovate the premises, which have been approved by MVBA. In addition, Mr. Bergunder argued that Mr. Placher's complaints did not relate to the operation of Wolde's establishment, which is what the law requires for a protest of renewal. Rather, the code violations relate to the building. However, Chairman Ward disagreed and said that the CHAP violations were related to the operation of the business.

In the end, Chairman Ward said there wasn't enough evidence to deny Mr. Wolde his renewal. He thanked Mr. Placher for coming to the Board to express his concerns, but they were not sufficient to deny the renewal. He told the licensee that he will have to complete the work that he has promised to do.

One nearby neighbor testified on behalf of the liquor store. There were no testimonials against the liquor store by nearby residents. MVBA Liquor Committee Chair did not testify as the complaints were not directly related to liquor.

Although Midtown Liquors was successful in renewing their license, the liquor board re-iterated to the owner that the exterior work needs to be done.

Charles Street Dollar Stroll

The most affordable festival comes to Baltimore!

Historic Charles Street Association is excited to announce our 100th anniversary this year and we're turning to merchants to help us celebrate! The Charles Street Dollar Stroll will generate foot traffic in the area and entice new custom-

ers to your business by offering an item for \$1. This is an easy and exciting way to highlight your latest goods, move older merchandise, or create something special just for the day – all while attracting hundreds of potential new customers! From \$1 pours of craft beers to ethnic bites to special memberships and ticket offers, we hope to provide something for everyone. The event takes place on June 20, 2015, 1 pm – 6 pm and participation is free!

Participating merchants will be listed in all promotional materials, including:

- Eye-catching fliers
- Social media campaign
- Press releases

Immediately following the Dollar Stroll, HCSA will celebrate with a birthday party at 910 N. Charles Street lot (next to Marie Louise Bistro). This free event will give residents & visitors a chance to enjoy birthday themed cocktails, food and desserts from local restaurants from 5 – 10 pm. If you are a merchant and would like to participate, please, Contact Amelia Rambissoon at arambissoon@charlesstreet.org or by phone at 410-659-7768. Deadline for applications is May 1.

City of Baltimore to Begin Enforcement of Vehicles Double-Parked by School Grounds

New legislation will address double-parked vehicles that impede traffic flow and jeopardize student safety. The Baltimore City Department of Transportation would like to advise citizens of new legislation intended to deter motorists from double parking near school grounds which impedes vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

The new legislation allows the city to impose a \$250 fine on motorists that park, stop or stand in a manner which obstructs or impedes the free flow of traffic near school grounds. This includes areas around kindergarten, elementary and secondary schools between the hours of 7:00 - 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 - 5:00 p.m. on school days. The legislation enables officers to issue citations for this offence without first providing a written warning.

“The new legislation will allow the Department of Transportation to address significant traffic issues in communities throughout the city during peak hour drop-off and pick-up times”, said Department of Transportation Director William Johnson. Transportation Enforcement Officers will now be able to cite vehicles illegally stopped by school grounds for the safety of students and motorists.

The Department of Transportation frequently receives complaints from parents, residents, school principals and others regarding the flow of traffic at schools during busy morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up times. Drivers routinely double park in front of schools and block traffic, which endangers children by forcing them to maneuver through uncontrolled parked and moving vehicles. In addition, cars that are double parked impede the flow of traffic and often exacerbate aggressive driving in school zones, as motorists try to pass the ille-

gally stopped vehicles.

Under previous law, DOT’s Transportation Enforcement Officers were unable to enforce most double parking violations, including those around school zones where double parking often occurs and is the most dangerous. Officers will now be able to cite vehicles double parked near school grounds with the new legislation which will make conditions safer for pedestrians and motorists. The new law, which falls under Article 31, Section 36-4 of the Baltimore City Code became effective April 1, 2015.

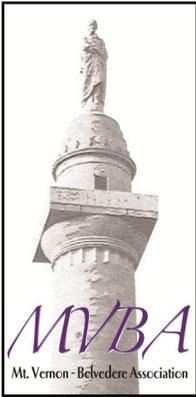
Two New Hotels Opening in Mount Vernon

They’re finally here. The Ivy Hotel and Hotel Indigo, long-awaited boutique hotels, will soon open their doors in Baltimore’s Mount Vernon neighborhood. Opening in historic properties, both are prime examples of adaptive reuse.

The Ivy Hotel, located at the corner of Biddle and Calvert Street, will be opening sometime in early June and will be one of the pricier hotels in the area with room rates ranging from \$500 to \$1,500 per night. The hotel will have 18 rooms and suites that includes many extras. The 75-seat restaurant **Magdalena** will be open to the public.

The Hotel Indigo, 24 W Franklin St, will be opening mid-May and features **Poets**, a 125 seat restaurant in the lobby. MVBA’s Jason Curtis who is the hotel’s general manager, says “he thinks the hotel will appeal to folks who don’t want to stay in a beige box”. Hotel management firm **Chesapeake Hospitality** spent \$20M to renovate the former site of the **Mount Vernon Hotel** and the state’s first YMCA building.





Mount Vernon - Belvedere Clarion

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 2015

President..... Jason Curtis president@mvba.org
Vice President..... Barbara Gilbert vicepresident@mvba.org
Treasurer..... Steve Johnson treasurer@mvba.org
Secretary..... Photini Sinnis..... 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

Board Members 2015

Cheryl Paschall
Steven Shen
Antonio Rivera
MJ Dame
Stephen Ruckman
Jason House

Appointed Members:

Ex-officio Members
Jack Dana

This month's general membership meeting will be on Tuesday, April 21, 2015, beginning promptly at 7:30pm at The Belvedere Condominiums, lobby level. All are welcome to attend, members and non-members alike