



The Message

Issue 285

February 2011

Public Hearing

Tuesday, February 1, 2011
Council Chambers, Upper Level
7:00 PM, City Hall

The Mayor and Council will take public comment on declaring the corner 35th and Shepherd a NO Parking Zone.

Mount Rainier's Centennial Year

CITY HISTORY---2010

[This is a continuation of the city's history published in *Centennial of a Streetcar Suburb* which is still available at City Hall for \$5. The book contains numerous photos, maps, and stories about the development of Mount Rainier.]

Mount Rainier's centennial year was one of great celebration and forward movement for revitalization efforts, but also one of economic difficulties, and a tragic loss.

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS

• The city held a "kickoff" event for the centennial on Jan. 23 with the attendance of many dignitaries and citizens. Banners were hung around the city to proclaim the centennial. The year's events were organized by the Centennial Committee (Mayor Miles, Rev. Brian Adams, Janis Lomax, Jeannelle Wallace, and Graciela Carbonell) which was chaired by Councilmember Tarlau.

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In February, the combined snow of two storms brought the region to a halt for a few days. Snow plows broke down under the weight of the three feet of snow and streets were impassable. In February, the combined snow of two storms brought the region to a halt for a few days. Snow plows broke down under the weight of the three feet of snow and streets were impassable. City Hall and the police department remained staffed as other area jurisdictions closed down. Public Works struggled with broken equipment but worked to exhaustion to clear streets. Contractors were called in to use trucks to haul away snow. Fortunately, electrical power was only sporadically disrupted when branches fell on wires. The expenses for just that storm were \$134,000 (the city had budgeted \$55,500 for the whole year). The city applied to the Maryland Emergency

Management Administration for disaster relief funds to help cover some of those unexpected costs.

• On April 9, a special meeting organized by Mayor Miles was held to commemorate the signing of the city Charter in 1910 and to

recognize citizens who have lived in the city more than 50 years. Secretary of State, John McDonough, attended as the governor's representative.

- As part of the celebrations, dozens of historic photographs were framed and put on display by business owner Cheryl Fountain at her gallery, 3311 Rhode Island Ave. On May 1, Councilmember Knedler presented a lecture on the

“The performance by Silver Spring-based dance company Fraternidad Folklórica Bolivia during Mount Rainier Day helped ring in the city's 100th birthday. And it was a fitting representation of the community's cultural diversity, said Mayor Malinda Miles, a characteristic that is one of the most drastic changes in the city's history.” (Gazette, 5/18/2010)

- Over 150 people attended the Home Tour on Oct. 17 (the first such tour since 1996). The tour included historically renovated homes, “green” homes, and homes renovated to include artist studio space. The committee members were Jimmy Tarlau, Sara Lilly, Michelle Lee, Rhonda Dent, and Sandy Smiroldo.

- In November, over 100 trees were planted along city streets. The Centennial Tree Planting used a combination of city money and grants from the Anacostia Trails Heritage Area and the County's Re-Leaf Program.

- A Centennial Holiday Soiree was held on Dec. 10 at Joe's Movement Emporium as a finale to the 2010 historical events.

- Also in December, interviews conducted by Councilmember Tarlau with long-time residents began to air on the city cable channel and website. The first

city's history using some of the framed items (available on the city's website).

- On May 10, a ceremonial council meeting was held in the Star-Potts Hall to commemorate the first town council meeting held 100 years prior on the same date and in the same location. Past mayors and councilmember's were recognized and given time to speak.

interviews were with Jim Rice and Marilyn Mowatt.

POLITICAL CHANGES

Tragedy struck on July 8 with the sudden death of Councilmember Alta Morton who had struggled with the pain of sickle cell disease for many years. A memorial service was held at First Baptist Church of North Brentwood on July 22 and at Joe's Movement Emporium on July 24th. Morton was especially involved in redevelopment issues in her time on council. On Sept. 28, the Council appointed William Updike to serve until May 2011 when an election will be held to seat someone for the remaining two years of Morton's term.

REDEVELOPMENT CONTINUES

- An economic recession continued to grip the nation in 2010, but the city took advantage of opportunities that arose using grants, low-interest loans, and a reserve fund built during the previous boom years. The city purchased the Star-Potts Hall, 3405 Rhode Island Avenue, in January 2010 from the Adah Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star which had owned the building since 1921. (Res. 14-2010) This long-desired strategic purchase

- On May 15, Mount Rainier Day was celebrated with a parade and festival. The parade included three high school marching bands and many dignitaries. The eastbound lanes of Rhode Island Avenue were closed from the traffic circle to 37th Street to accommodate the stage and dozens of vendors.

consolidated the city's landholdings and allowed for the concept of a civic complex that would connect City Hall with the “old city hall”/library at 3409 Rhode Island Ave. Later in the year, the county designated the Star-Potts Hall as a county historic resource.

- The city also purchased 3200 Rhode Island Avenue (funeral home) and the adjacent house as additions to the previously purchased Bass Liquors property. The City Council hired a consultant to create a request for proposals from private developers that have an interest in revitalizing the “gateway” to the city, county, and state.

- After months of meetings with the architects, the City Council voted to approve the design for the proposed civic center that will connect the City Hall, Star-Potts Hall, and the new building to be erected at 3409 Rhode Island Ave. In 2011, the city leaders will begin the tough job of lobbying for state and federal funding in the midst of an economic recession. The estimated cost of the complex is \$5 million.

- The Prince George's County Planning Board approved the revised guidelines for the Mount Rainier Mixed Use Town Center. The revision came after many

public meetings with citizens and businesses. The new plan not only provides guidance for signage and infill buildings in the business district, but also provides a vision for the downtown. Among other visions in the plan-- a "civic green" to replace the WMATA bus lanes in front of City Hall.

- The 34th Street mini-park at the corner of Upshur Street was completely renovated by M-NCPPC and the skateboard park at Wells and Otis continued to be popular with the skaters, but a source of complaints from surrounding homeowners who endured noise, graffiti, and vandalism.
- In December, to cap off a year of purchases, a contract was placed on the unofficially named Bluebird Cab parking lot, 3411 Perry St., using Federal Transit Administration funds (an appropriation sponsored by Congressman Van Hollen in 2007) with a 25 percent match by the city. The purchase will provide additional parking for City Hall, WMATA, and local businesses.
- Renovations (using federal funds provided through the county) began at Rainier Manor Senior Center which is under new ownership. The city was assured that the complex will remain as senior housing. (Res. 5-2010)
- The other big real estate news was not positive. The national economy still struggled in a recession and the bursting of the real estate bubble in 2007 left many newer homeowners in debt and with homes worth less than the mortgage owed. Foreclosures rose not only in Mount Rainier but across the country. In addition, lending for new construction projects dried up. A dramatic decrease in property values resulted in a significant decline in tax revenue.

GREENING OF MOUNT RAINIER

- As a result of a multi-city grant funded by the federal economic-stimulus plan, the city received \$100,000 to install solar panels on City Hall. The goal is to reduce City Hall energy costs by \$8,000 annually.
- The city partnered with the Neighborhood Revitalization Program through the Community Legacy Program and Washington Area Community Investment Fund (WACIF) to sponsor a Green Home Initiative. Fifteen households received free environmentally-sound home improvements (up to \$5,000 of energy audits, insulation, Energy Star appliances and windows) to help them reduce energy costs and to help the environment.
- The city received notice of a \$35,000 grant to redesign Buchanan Street as a "green street" that would reduce storm water flows into the Anacostia River. Funds come from the Chesapeake Bay Trust in partnership with the Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources, the Maryland Dept. of the Environment, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
- The City Council established an Environmental Protection Board of citizens to review and propose "green" projects.
- Mount Rainier became a founding member of the Sustainable Maryland Certified program which is an initiative of the Environmental Finance Center at the University of Maryland. The program will assist municipalities as they look for cost-effective and strategic ways to protect their natural assets and revitalize communities. The municipality is awarded points for using best practices.
- Zip Cars placed its first vehicle in the City in October. The city dedicated a parking space on Rhode Island Avenue to the company which provides short-term rental cars to its members.

PUBLIC SAFETY

- The city continued to address public safety issues, and under the leadership of Chief Michael Scott acquired 80

MHZ radios to enhance emergency communications between the county and other municipalities. The department also acquired new license tag readers for identifying stolen vehicles.

- The City Council recognizes that criminal activity deters legitimate customers of our small businesses from coming into the town center for fear of harassment. After complaints from women who were propositioned, the City Council insisted that our police department enlist the help of the county's vice unit and begin undercover operations to arrest the clients of prostitutes. To anyone's knowledge, this had not been done on this scale before and the three stings resulted in 21 men arrested for soliciting and 2 women for prostitution. In addition, during the operation arrests were made for drugs and a loaded Glock handgun confiscated. The D.C. border makes such crime easier since the prostitutes can simply walk across the jurisdictional boundary to avoid arrest. The City Council also asked that a sign be placed in the area where prostitutes worked to warn potential clientele of our zero tolerance.
- January 2010 saw the introduction of speed cameras on Arundel Road. Later, speed cameras were placed on Queens Chapel Road and Rhode Island Avenue, and generated 41,406 tickets (the bulk of them on Rhode Island Avenue). 27,377 had been paid by the end of 2010 (generating over \$1 million). The state caps the amount of revenue that the City can keep at 10 percent of the City's total budget for that year. The contractor that operates the speed cameras keeps 38 percent of each paid ticket. In the end, after

expenses, net fines reached \$602,595, but of that, the City can keep only \$454,425 (10 percent of FY11 budget). By State law, the revenue from the tickets must be spent on public safety for the City.

OTHER EVENTS

- May 2010 was declared as "Peace Month" by the Council in recognition of the work of the local group, "Little Friends for Peace" and the nationally recognized peace program at Mount Rainier Elementary School.
- In June, a farmers' market began operating on Saturdays on the city-owned vacant lot in the 3200 block of Rhode Island Ave. The effort was led by

Councilmember Thompson who also organized free outdoor movies on Friday nights in Sept. and Oct. (in the 3300 block of Perry St.)

- The Mount Rainier Community Fund was established (as part of the Prince George's County Community Fund) as a method to raise money for worthy projects. (Res. 4-2010)

ADDITIONAL 50 YEAR RESIDENTS

After publication of the centennial history book, the following names were added to the list of persons with at least 50 years living in the city: Martin Amt and David Pfeil.

NEWS COVERAGE

- "Mount Rainier Celebrates Its Centennial." By Elahe Izadi. *Gazette*, 5/18/2010.

- "Mount Rainier Celebrates Its Centennial." By Elahe Izadi. *Wash. Post*, 4/29/2010.
- "Joe's Movement Emporium Celebrates 15 Years of Movement and Art in Mount Rainier." By Daniel Leaderman. *Gazette*, 11/4/2010.
- "Mount Rainier Council Selects New Member." By Daniel Leaderman. *Gazette*, 9/30/2010.
- "Mount Rainier Photographer Captures the Faces of the Gateway Arts District." By Daniel Leaderman. *Gazette*, 10/21/2010.
- "Mount Rainier Lego Enthusiasts Design Machines to Help Doctors and Patients." By Dan Leaderman. *Gazette*, 10/13/2010.
- A photo of the Mount Rainier traffic circle appeared in a *New York Times* article (11/19/2010).

[To Be Continued For 2011]

CITY OF MOUNT RAINIER FAIR SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CHARTER AMENDMENTS

This is to give notice that on January 4, 2011, the Council of the City of Mount Rainier adopted Charter Amendment Resolution No. 1-2010 which amends Article V (Registration, Nomination, and Election Procedures) of the City Charter to provide that a person appointed to fill a Councilmember vacancy shall serve until the next biennial City election when there shall be a special election for that Council office; to provide that if a special election to fill a Council vacancy is required, then the person elected shall serve for the remainder of the unexpired term of the vacant office being filled; and to provide for nomination procedures for 4-year and 2-year terms of office in the event that, due to a Councilmember vacancy filled by appointment, both Council seats in a ward expire at the same City biennial election.

For further information, contact City Manager Jeannelle B. Wallace, City of Mount Rainier, 1 Municipal Place, Mount Rainier, MD 20712, telephone (301) 985-6585.

WARD TWO REPORT FROM COUNCILMEMBER KNEDLER

Support your local schools by registering your Giant bonus card at http://www.giantfood.com/our_stores/bonus_bucks/index.htm. The schools earn money each time you use your card. You can select up to 3 schools. You must re-register every school year (no automatic rollover occurs).

Parking a car at City Hall will be less of a problem. The City acquired 3411 Perry St. in mid-January. Thank Congressman Van Hollen for securing Federal Transit Administration money back in 2007 for improvements to our transportation hub (and thank our city manager for struggling with the federal bureaucracy to actually extract the money from the federal agency so we could use it). The lot was purchased with only a 25 percent match to the federal funds. Unspent federal grant money will be used to install bike racks and resurface the lot.

Gateway Arts District GLBT residents continue to attend potlucks and happy hours. See the new Facebook page (Gateway GLBT Social Group) for upcoming events. Or, email to glmrmd@aol.com.

The sound of gunfire (presumably into the air) on holidays to celebrate has become more common in past years. This is a very dangerous practice that can result in damage to roofs and cars, as well as human fatalities. The bullets return to earth at fatal speeds. Bottom line, if you must do it, why not shoot into the ground? It makes just as much noise.

Message from Chief Scott

Speed Camera Calibration

Over the course of the past few weeks I have received several inquiries regarding the calibration procedures used to ensure that the speed cameras the City deploys operate correctly. Some of the following information was originally posted to the Mount Rainier Yahoo Group in March of 2010, but I thought it would be prudent to publish the information here in *The Message* to ensure that as many residents and business owners as possible received the information.

All speed cameras operated by the City are calibrated twice each day. First, there is an internal calibration done automatically by the camera system. If that calibration fails the camera shuts down and no further citations are issued until it is fixed. Second, each day a Mount Rainier police officer and a speed camera technician from our vendor Optotraffic go out to the camera to physically retrieve the data storage device that records violations. At that time they both check to make sure the camera is properly calibrated. If it fails that check then any citation recorded for the day is automatically voided and the camera will not record any additional violations until it is fixed. In short, it is only possible for an individual to receive a citation when, and only when, the camera has passed the two daily calibration checks for the day the citation was issued.

Several people have asked if the police department uses a police car to check the cameras' functioning and accuracy. The answer is, no, we do not drive a police car by the camera to see if it is operating correctly. There are too many variables involved, i.e., is vehicle's speedometer is accurately recording the vehicle's speed; and with all the other checks and balances in place there is no need to include those variables in the equation.

In addition to the daily calibration checks each violation recorded by the camera is reviewed three times to ensure that the image recorded actually shows a speed violation by a specific vehicle. The vendor first reviews all cameras images and discards any violation that fails to meet our exacting identification standards. Images that may be too dark, fuzzy or that otherwise fail to clearly record the license plate number of the violating vehicle are discarded and no citation is issued. Those images that pass the vendor's review are reviewed a second time by the police department's night shift administrative assistant. He reviews each violation to ensure that the recorded image is clear and accurately identifies the offending vehicle. He also ensures that the license plate number matches the registration information provided by MVA. Any violation that does not meet our identification standards is discarded and no violation notice is issued. Once the night shift administrative assistant has completed his review, a Mount Rainier police supervisor reviews each violation a third time to ensure that the image recorded by the camera actually documents a speed violation. The officer will also discard any image that does not clearly document a speed violation. It is only after the police supervisor's review and certification that a violation notice is mailed to the owner of the vehicle in violation.

Speed Camera Relocation

On or after January 28th, 2011 a speed camera will be put in place on Arundel Road between 32nd Street and 34th Street. This camera will assist the police department in enforcing the 25 mph speed limit east and westbound on Arundel Road. The camera will be operational from 6 a.m. until 8 p.m. Monday through Friday. Effective immediately violations recorded by this camera will result in the violator receiving a notice of violation.



Comcast Channel 71 Verizon Channel 21

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banner and chose your program to watch! Each selection has a title, length of program and a program description. When you select a City Council Meeting or Work Session, you will see the agenda items that will be discussed.

What Shows to look for Now?

Be sure to watch the Mount Rainier History Talks with long time residents Jim Rice and Marilyn Mowatt hosted by City Council Member Jimmy Tarlau. Also, watch highlights from the 100th Anniversary Soiree, and the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. memorial program that was held January 17th at Joe’s Movement Emporium.

MRTV comments, suggestions, volunteer opportunities and show ideas contact: mrtvchannel71@yahoo.com or call 301-985-6585 ext. 28 voice mail, Graciela Carbonell, Department Director

Anacostia Heritage Trails Association (ATHA)

Tuesday, March 1, Fund Raiser for Anacostia Hours, day into evening, Franklin’s Restaurant and Brewery, Hyattsville

20% of your purchases in the restaurant and general store will support the local currency movement. Mention AH when you pay the bill. Come in the evening and meet members of Anacostia Hours.

Saturday, March 26, 1-3 PM, Annual Membership Meeting for Anacostia Hours, Joe’s Movement Emporium

For more information, contact Nick Williams, nwilliams550@gmail.com, (443) 722-0528 (c) Watch for notices on www.anacostiahours.org

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS RECYCLE AND TRASH COLLECTION NOTICE

All recyclables (aluminum cans, bottles, paper and cardboard) can be put in the same yellow recycle bin which will be picked up Friday of each week. These items will be taken to the County recycle plant as they now have the capability to separate the items.

PUBLIC WORKS CALENDAR

February and March 2011 Schedule

Listed hereunder is the scheduled pick up dates for trash in the City of Mt. Rainier, for February and March 2011.

DATE	PARTICULAR	DATE	PARTICULARS
February 2	Regular Trash Pick Up	March 2	Regular Trash Pick Up
February 4	Recyclables Pick Up	March 4	Recyclables Pick Up
February 7	Bulk Trash Pick Up (By appointment only, call 301 985 6558)	March 7	Bulk Trash Pick Up (By appointment only, call 301 985 6558) Yard Waste Pick Up
February 9	Regular Trash Pick Up	March 9	Regular Trash Pick Up
February 11	Recyclables Pick Up	March 11	Recyclables Pick Up
February 14	Yard Waste Pick Up (By appointment only, call 301 985 6558)	March 14	Yard Waste Pick Up
February 16	Regular Trash Pick Up	March 16	Regular Trash Pick Up
February 18	Recyclables Pick Up	March 18	Recyclables Pick Up
February 21	Presidents Day(City Hall and Public Works closed)	March 21	Bulk Trash Pick Up (By appointment only, call 301 985 6558) Yard Waste Pick Up
February 22	Bulk Trash Pick Up (By appointment only, call 301 985 6558)	March 23	Regular Trash Pick Up
February 23	Regular Trash Pick Up	March 25	Recyclables Pick Up
February 25	Recyclables Pick Up	March 28	Yard Waste Pick Up
		March 30	Regular Trash Pick Up

All bulk appointments must be made before 12 noon on the Friday proceeding the pickup day. All bulk and Yard Waste must be set out before 7:00 AM on pick up day.

www.mountrainiermd.org

Mayor
Malinda Miles
301-699-1378

mayormiles@malindamiles.com

City Manager
Jeannelle B. Wallace
301-985-6585, ext. 22
fax: 301-985-6595

jwallace@mountrainiermd.org

Asst. City Manager
Michael D. Jackson
301-985-6585 ext.30

mjackson@mountrainiermd.org

City Treasurer
Vijay Manjani

vmanjani@mountrainiermd.org

Councilmembers
Ward 1

Jimmy Tarlau
301-335-6099

Jtarlau@cwa-union.org

Bill Updike
301-367-5649

updikew@yahoo.com

Ward 2

Ivy Thompson
friendsforivv@gmail.com

Bryan Knedler
301-985-6585

bknedler@aol.com

Message

Jeannelle B. Wallace

jwallace@mountrainiermd.org

Important Numbers

City Hall open: Mon.–Fri., 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Police Department admin. offices open 9:00 a.m. to Midnight. Public Works open 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

47th District Reps
301-858-3745
Victor Ramirez

301-858-3326
Del. Doyle Niemann
Del. Jolene Ivey
Del. Victor Ramirez

Call-A-Bus 301-985-6586
(hours M–F, 9 am–2 pm)

City Code Enforcement Office
301-985-6551

City Hall
301-985-6585; fax: 301-985-6595

City Police Department
Chief Michael E. Scott
Mscott@mountrainiermd.org
301-985-6565 (emergency calls)
301-985-6566 (nonemergency calls)
301-985-6590 (administrative)
City Public Works 301-985-6583,
Bulk Trash Appts. 301-985-6558

Child Abuse
and Neglect Hotline
301-699-8605

Congressman Chris Van Hollen's
Satellite Office:
6475 New Hampshire Ave, Suite C-201
Hyattsville MD 20783
301-891-6982 (voice)
301-891-6985 (fax)
Monday–Friday 9:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

Consumer Affairs
301-470-7534

County Animal Control
301-780-7200

County Building Permits
301-883-5784

County Executive
Rushern Baker
301-952-4131

County Councilman
Will Campos
301-952-4436

CSX railroad
1-877-Tell CSX

Energy Assistance
301-422-5110

Family Services
301-699-2680

Fire Department
301-985-5406 (non-emergency)
911 (emergency)

Gateway CDC
4102 Webster Street
301-864-3860

Gazette Circulation
301-670-7350

Health Department
301-386-0300

Library 301-864-8937
Hours: M–W 10-6:30 (closed 2-2:30)
Sat. 10-5

Landlord-Tenant Commission
800-487-6007

Mt. Rainier Nature/Rec Center
4701 31st Place
301-927-2163

M–National Capital
Park and Planning,
Park Permit Office
301-918-8111

North Brentwood Comm. Ctr
4012 Webster St.
301-864-0756

Office of Handicapped Services
TDD 301-627-3352

Park Police
301-459-3232 (emergency)
301-459-9088 (non-emergency)

Parks and Recreation
301-699-2407

Pepco
Lights Out
1-877-737-2662
(you must give the 10-digit phone number
or 10-digit account number for location of
outage)

Live Wire, Other Emergency
202-872-3432

P. G. Animal Control
3750 Brown Station Road
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772
(301) 780-7201

Post Office
301-864-5168

Public Defender
301-699-2760

Public Schools
301-952-6000

State's Attorney
301-952-3500

Washington Gas Light
703-750-2500

WSSC
301-206-8000
301-206-4002 (emergency)

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