



AHCA Community Meeting  
December 5, 2017 - 7:30 PM  
[AcademyHeightsMD.org](http://AcademyHeightsMD.org)

Called to Order at 7:35pm with President Joe Shinault presiding.

Board members in attendance (11): Linda Barnes, Chris Burk, Jeannette Bonomo-Thomas, Mischa Bowen-Kreiner, Mike Granito, John McSweeney, John O'Ferrall, Joe Shinault, Becky Stoll, Chris Waterman, Patrick Young

Members absent: Nikki Green, Matt McKnight, Beth McSweeney, Troy Smith

Minutes from November 7, 2017 were approved.

Many neighbors were welcomed; see sign-in sheet for details.

Joe Shinault summarized recent criminal activity in the neighborhood and reminded residents of Northfield and Whitfield that they may be ticketed for parking opposite to the flow of traffic.

**Community Outreach** – Officer Boone shared that Baltimore City is experiencing a significant carjacking problem that has spread to the county. There have been 3 carjackings in the Wilkens precinct area. The BCPS has started a new unit, made arrests, and recovered some vehicles; additionally, this is a multijurisdictional problem and effort. As stationary, locked vehicles have become more difficult to steal, carjackings have increased.

Per Officer Boone, many suspects are repeat juvenile offenders who have been released to their guardians and/or with ankle bracelets; it is rare for juveniles to be held to await trial. Sometimes the offenders rear-end motorists in order to carjack them. If someone rear-ends you, look in the rearview mirror. If the driver appears to be a juvenile, call 911, pull into a well-lit area, and request an officer.

A resident asked whether an arrest had been made and/or the vehicle recovered following the carjacking in Academy Heights last week. The daughter of the victim was in attendance and shared that her mother's car had not been recovered. Another resident asked about the current communication between the county and the city since Officer Boone had shared that most recovered vehicles have been found in Southwest Baltimore. Officer Boone reviewed the process.

A resident asked whether anyone had been hurt among the three recent carjackings in the Wilkens precinct area. Another resident asked what percentage of those attempting these carjackings are armed. To Officer Boone's knowledge, the "bump-and-runs" are more common. A fifth resident asked about similarities in modus operandi. Other than the perpetrators, the only

similarity has been that the incidents tend to occur after dark. On Greenlow, the offenders asked for directions. Be wary of anyone who you do not know to be a resident of the neighborhood.

A resident asked what we can do as a neighborhood. In addition to the above guidelines, be aware of your surroundings. Be aware of your neighbors—know who frequents your street and who does not—and their habits. Call with any suspicious activity or uneasy feelings. One resident asked for a typical response time to Academy Heights. There is no typical response time; it all depends on the responding officer's distance from the scene. Another resident shared that the response time to his home when his monitoring system was activated while he was on vacation had been approximately 5 minutes, and then asked about tagging. Officer Boone referred the tagging question to Joe Shinault who provided additional details.

A resident asked about a subpoena she received and whether responding would require facing the accused. Receipt of a subpoena indicates that an arrest has been made and the state's attorney is looking to demonstrate victim impact. Officer Boone suggested that another concerned about facing a defendant reach out to the state's attorney, but added that the presence of those affected lends weight to the case.

Chris Waterman advocated residents walking in pairs, including with dogs, to demonstrate that the neighborhood is being watched. Residents also requested keeping porch lights illuminated.

**Treasurer's Report** – Chris Waterman shared the checking account balance, \$7136.12, and the money market account balance, \$19,501.72.

**Architectural** – John O'Ferrall invited additional participation on the Architectural Committee and provided an update. The railings at 443 Whitfield Road are out of compliance. The homeowner has responded to the Board's letter. The Board and Architectural Committee need to discuss soon. Joe Shinault has additional applications for the committee. John O'Ferrall asked about when the upcoming rodent sweep should be scheduled. One resident asked who is responsible for maintaining alleys in which leaves may pile up. Alleys are the responsibility of residents abutting them.

A resident received a nonrenewal letter from his insurance company related to recurring sewage backup issues. Chris Burk and Delegate Sydnor are coordinating a meeting with the Maryland Insurance Agency to hear concerns. In order for the related pending capital improvement project to proceed, there is a need for one more easement, according to Cathy Engers from Councilman Quirk's office. She shared her phone number and email address: 410-887-0896 and cengers@baltimorecountymd.gov.

Mike Granito asked whether proposed revisions to the Architectural Guidelines would be addressed tonight. Granito summarized those revisions that are proposed. There was additional discussion of the scope of the proposed changes and their rationale. A motion to give 35-day notice of the revisions that Granito reviewed was approved without dissent.

**Website** – committee may be renamed to the communication committee. The new Facebook group has grown to 270 members and its administrator has received largely positive feedback. Dues reminders will be sent out. Gossip and insinuations will continue to be removed. Remember we are all neighbors. The page is moderated.

**Newsletter** – will go out at the end of January.

**Welcome Committee** – Since the beginning of fall, 10 new houses have received welcome baskets. More bakers would be welcomed by the committee. 4 homes are on the market. George Brookhart continues to keep us informed.

**Dues** – 2018 dues are being accepted. Volunteers will go door-to-door once the weather improves. Publicizing prior to door-to-door collection was recommended so that residents feel comfortable opening their doors.

**Bylaws** – see above. Approval for bylaw revisions comes from the general membership, as opposed to approval for revisions to the architectural guidelines, which comes from the Board; the general membership will have an opportunity to vote on proposed bylaw revisions in March.

### **Old Business**

**Citizens on Patrol** – Mike Granito provided information from the recent Citizens on Patrol training. Chris Burk attended, as well, but Burk and Granito were told that their training did not qualify them to provide training to additional interested residents; though all can provide “eyes and ears” support, any who plan to contribute to patrolling the neighborhood, either on foot or in a vehicle, must participate in the designated training by the county police. Granito is trying to set up another training for January.

Chris Burk provided additional information about the possibility of obtaining grant funds to subsidize start-up costs for Citizens on Patrol; he has been working on the associated proposal. He asked to list names of people who currently walk the neighborhood, such as when walking their dogs. Burk also shared about the BGE/County streetlight program. The new LED lights provide more concentrated illumination; we can apply for additional lighting to address dark spots, but adjacent property owners must approve. He is also considering asking BGE to donate energy-efficient lightbulbs to encourage neighbors to keep the neighborhood well lit.

A resident asked whether the restrictions or architectural guidelines address floodlighting, particularly on the front of properties; there is no relevant restriction or guideline other than that changes must be submitted for approval in advance. Chris Waterman reminded residents that battery- and/or solar-powered lighting may be an option for those who cannot otherwise illuminate areas such as their backyards.

**Architectural Guideline/Covenant Revisions** – were discussed. See above.

**Decoration Contest** – On December 14, the Mount de Sales photography club will take pictures of decorated homes and determine contest winners. Winners will receive personalized keepsake ornaments.

### **New Business**

**MDS Donation** – John McSweeney motioned that the association make a donation in the amount of \$200. The motion was approved without dissent.

**Election of AHCA Officers/Board** – Current officers were reelected by acclamation. Seth Wheeler was newly nominated to the Board. All remaining Board nominees were elected by acclamation. Joe Shinault thanked outgoing Board members.

**2018 Meeting Times/Locations** – The plan is to continue holding meetings at Mount de Sales. There are no general meetings in the summer, but the Board may meet.

**Open Discussion**

**Boats** – There has been a boat in the yard of an Academy Road property for three years. The home has been reported to Baltimore County, but the boat trailer is licensed. Mike Granito suggested that these types of concerns be communicated to the Architectural Committee.

**Maryland Legislative Session** – begins in January. Pat Young will be holding workshops at local libraries on how to effectively communicate with elected officials.

**Holiday Acknowledgment for Officer Boone** – Linda Barnes suggested and members discussed making a holiday gift to Officer Boone. Barnes motioned that the association purchase a gift card in the amount of \$25 to a local restaurant; her motion was seconded. Pending confirmation that Officer Boone would be allowed to accept such a gift, the motion was approved without dissent.

Next Meeting: January 2.

Adjourned at 8:40pm. Recorded by Jeannette Bonomo-Thomas.