

The Echo

The Town of GLEN ECHO, MARYLAND

Chartered, 1904



April 1988

COUNCIL QUESTIONS ITS AUTHORITY TO APPROVE BUILDINGS University Avenue Construction Raises Issue

By Dave Robinson and Carlotta Anderson

Expressing dissatisfaction with the fact that it was not consulted in advance about lot size or building plans, the Town Council last month discussed at length the house currently under construction on University Ave. on an undersized lot and whether the town has any authority to approve or disapprove such construction.

While agreeing that probably all legal requirements were fulfilled, council members appeared unhappy that Mayor Kuster, who is building the house with business associates, did not inform them in advance of his plans as other builders have done. "A different standard is required of us because of our profiles in the community," Councilman Shultz said.

The mayor responded that when other residents showed the council their building plans they did so as a courtesy and not as a requirement.

He maintained that he had told the council about the matter in executive (closed) session. Councilman Odell disputed this, saying that the discussion at that time only was involved with asking the town attorney about buying the

NEW HOUSING CODE IN EFFECT; RESIDENTS NOTIFIED OF VIOLATIONS

A new, stricter county housing code, which went into effect in March, will have an immediate effect on some town properties. The revised code automatically becomes law in Glen Echo unless the town decides to opt out of it, Mayor Kuster told the council last month.

He recommended that the revised code remain in effect in town. Enforcement will be done by the county. Copies of the revised County Building Maintenance Standards will be distributed to all town residents in April.

Under the new standards, grass and weeds may not grow more

The Echo

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Bill Shultz 229-1269
Renny Springuel 320-2599

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POST OFFICE LEASE RATIFIED

The town has signed a five year lease with the U.S. Postal Service for the post office at the Town Hall, Mayor Kuster announced at the March Town Council meeting.

The agreement provides for rent of \$12,000 for the first three years and \$13,000 for the following two.

Councilman Shultz asked if it would be possible to get a special exception that would enable the town to rent the post office space for commercial use in the future.

He was informed that a special exception could not be granted in advance but only if the town already had a signed contract with a lessee.

---Pat Nadonley

HOUSING CODE (from page 1)

than 12 inches high. Shrubs, trees and vegetation must be maintained and not constitute a public nuisance. Exteriors must be completed within one year of issuance of a building permit and be maintained in good repair.

Smoke detectors are required in each sleeping area and in or near each stairway.

A housing code enforcement inspector has already noted some "deficiencies" in town properties, the county informed the mayor in a March 23 letter. The inspector happened to find himself in Glen Echo because he was conducting inspections for home owners applying for accessory apartment licenses, the letter said.

The inspector observed several homes with "obvious exterior housing code deficiencies," according to the letter, and was sending written notices to the owners informing them of the necessity to correct the deficiencies.

The letter also requested that the mayor pass on information about any other houses that were in need of exterior maintenance.

--Carlotta Anderson and
Bonnie Whyte

**COMMITTEE SUGGESTS NEW SITE FOR BASKETBALL COURT**

By Pat Nadonley

Bertha Smith, representing the Open Space Committee, presented a proposal for a new basketball court site on the O. Roy Chalk property located between Cornell and Bryn Mawr avenues. This is the land formerly used as a trolley right-of-way.

The Committee suggested placing two basketball courts back to back. Barriers would be constructed at the two streets to keep vehicles off the area. There would be six benches and a path of wood chips, with the rest of the area to be seeded with grass.

Town Council members expressed some reservations about the plan. Councilman Shultz felt that the proposed back-to-back configuration of hoops was not so practical as placing them at the perimeters of the courts. Warning that courts located in that place could draw children from out of town, he said that supervision, insurance and vandalism could all be problems.

His preference was to try to negotiate with Rev. Cole to have a court located on the Baptist church parking lot. Two residents objected that the noise of the ball bouncing would be too annoying at that site.

Councilwoman Long was concerned that the right-of-way plan "doesn't conserve green space."

Councilman Odell was in favor of repairing the court that already exists on Tulane Ave., on the southwest side of town, but Councilman Shultz objected that it was too remote for children to naturally group there.

Mayor Kuster proposed that the town do a cost analysis of the alternatives and decide the matter within 60 days.

BUILDING APPROVAL (from page 1)

land, owned by Alberta Bartkus, for a town park. What he wanted to know, Councilman Odell said, was whether the town could get two-thirds reimbursement by the state for property acquired for public use.

At that time the mayor said he represented the owner and could not comment because of potential conflict of interest. However, he said that the owner did not want to sell to the town, Councilman Odell said. "Then we dropped the subject."

Councilman Renny Springuel indicated that the mayor said there would be "plenty of time to review the subject later," but others on the council did not remember this comment.

Councilman Odell said that when he saw a real estate sign at the building site, he thought the property was being offered for sale, with the thought that "maybe the town should make another try." He called the agent and was informed that the property had been sold and the sign referred to the house that would be constructed there.

Much discussion at the March council meeting centered on what power the town has regarding building in town. The ordinances require a building permit, which may be issued by the clerk-treasurer without approval by the council, as happened in this case. The mayor pointed out that the town gave up its zoning powers in 1956, and "we can't get them back." He said unless the town exempts itself from the county building code, it cannot have requirements that are more restrictive than the county's.

Councilman Odell responded that even if the council could not prevent a building from being erected it could amend the ordinances in order to have a look at the plans so that "if a proposed structure is tot ally out

CORRECTION

Last month's issue incorrectly indicated that the town had in the past gone to court to prevent the approval of a resubdivision on Wellesley Circle for a lot of under 6,000 square feet.

As the mayor pointed out at the March council meeting, the town in opposing the resubdivision was represented by its attorney before the Planning Board. The Planning Board is not a court.

After the Planning Board voted to approve the application of Louise Engelhardt and Jack Gunnell in 1980 for a building lot smaller than allowed under the R-60 zoning code, the Town Council voted to appeal the decision to the Board of Appeals. In May, 1981, it decided to drop plans for an appeal after the town attorney said he thought the chances of winning the appeal were not good. He said at that time that dropping the case did not establish a precedent and that each future attempt to build on a substandard lot should be considered individually.

NEXT TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Monday, April 11 -- 8:00 p.m.
Glen Echo Town Hall

Contact the mayor if you wish to add an item to the agenda.

of line at least we have an opportunity to say so."

Saying he wanted to make the town's building code "stiffer," he introduced a proposed amendment to the building code ordinance (see p.5). It will be acted upon at the April meeting. He said he wanted the town attorney to be present to determine if "the town has any legal muscle."

If not, he said, then "let's repeal the ordinance."

EXCERPTS FROM THE TOWN BUILDING CODE ORDINANCE

The town requires the obtaining of building permits for all new buildings and for alterations, with the exception of those specified below, according to Article 3, Section 3.1, of the town ordinances. These permits are in addition to those required by the county.

The fee for a town permit is \$2. Applications for permits are to be made in writing to the Clerk-Treasurer and must be accompanied by drawings, tracings or blueprints. Either the Clerk or the Mayor and Council can issue a permit.

Permits are not required for minor interior repairs where there is no interference with the construction of the building, or for alterations in buildings which do not involve any change in their structural parts or stairways, fire escapes, doorways, or light or ventilation.

Fewer than 10 building permits have been issued by the town since 1981, all for obvious construction.

CHANGES IN THE BUILDING CODE PROPOSED BY COUNCILMAN ODELL

At the March Town Council meeting Councilman Odell proposed changes in the town building code which would provide that:

--Permits would only be issued after approval of the Mayor and Council, instead of the Clerk or the Mayor and Council;

--Reference to a Town Inspector of buildings would be deleted, and substituted with the provision that the Mayor could designate someone to determine the facts in any case;

--Documents depicting the proposed building would be sufficient to enable the Mayor and Council to determine how it would appear in relationship to existing neighboring structures.

The proposed amendment will be discussed at the April Town Council meeting.

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* * * *

Classified ads are free to Glen Echo Residents. Fee to Non Residents: \$.50 per line of 30 spaces or fewer. Display ads, \$2 per column inch. Ads may be left with Carolyn Reptsik, or mailed to *The Echo*, P.O. Box 598, Glen Echo, MD 20812. Deadline: 24th of each month.

CONSTRUCTION SEASON STARTS

By Bonnie Whyte

With one house under construction and more than one roof needing work around town, the season of home improvements is upon us. Beyond getting price bids and plans for work, you must get the proper permits from both the county and the town.

The county will act relatively promptly on written complaints regarding the building code, permits or lack thereof. Complaints are kept anonymous.

When a property owner seeks a variance, the adjacent property owners are notified. A large placard announcing the variance application is posted on site for interested parties. Resubdivisions of property are not posted, although the adjacent owners are notified.

In neither instance is the town officially notified.

COUNTY BUILDING PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

By Bonnie Whyte

Montgomery County requires building permits for almost anything that requires wood or mortar. Property owners are responsible for all permits, not the contractor.

It is almost easier to say what does not require a permit. You do not need a permit for painting, replacement of siding or drywall, re-roofing the old roof as is, patios, sidewalks, driveways, swing sets, basketball hoops, playhouses and dog houses.

You DO need a permit if you add anything to anything. Specifically, central air conditioner condenser slabs, fences, walls, sheds, decks, porches and their enclosures, antennae, hot tubs/pools, additions, alterations, bay windows, carports and garages, woodburning stoves and flues, chimneys, gazebos, new roofs, skylights and solar collectors are included.

Applications must include site plans and structural drawings. Apply at the Department of Environmental Protection, 250 Hungerford (old Rockville Mall), 2nd floor, Rockville, MD 20850. Telephone: 738-3110.

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99 S. Washington Street, Rockville, MD 20850, 301/294-3130
7200 Wisconsin Avenue, Bethesda, MD 20814, 301/986-0101

CURRENT R-60 ZONING REQUIREMENTS

Area requirement: Min. 6,000 sq. ft.
Max. lot coverage: 35%
Min. front yard setback: 25 ft.
Min. side yard setback: 18 ft. tot. (one side can be 8 ft. min)
Min. rear yard setback: 20 ft.
Min. lot frontage: 60 ft. at bldg. line; 24 ft. at street
Height limit: 35 ft.

For further information, contact the County Park & Planning Board at 217-6600.

DOWN-ZONING TO BE AN ISSUE IN MASTER PLAN AMENDMENTS

Traffic, building density, sub-standard lots and other possible changes in the county's Master Plan will be the subject of a forthcoming Glen Echo public meeting, which residents are encouraged to attend.

Cabin John, Glen Echo Heights and Brookmont are pressing for down-zoning of local areas, according to Mayor Fred Kuster. Downzoning from the current R-60 designation of a minimum 6,000 sq. ft. to R-90, or minimum 9,000 sq. ft., would require larger lots to build houses, he said.

Representatives of the Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission, which controls the zoning laws, will be present at the meeting. The mayor said that local communities "have substantial input" in any amendment proposals, which will go before the County Council sometime in September.

--Carlotta Anderson

ECHO ANNIVERSARY

With this issue, The Echo begins its fifteenth continuous year of publication.

It is not the first newspaper in Glen Echo by that name, however. Some issues of a newspaper called The Echo exist as far back as 1948. Publication was apparently sporadic.

The last issue of The Echo that we came across was for May, 1960. At that time, current Councilwoman Nancy Long and resident Lee Clune were on the staff.

Current town residents who worked on the current incarnation of The Echo during its first year of publication in 1974 are, in addition to editor Carlotta Anderson, Tillie McNoldy, Rex Rhein, Tom Wolff and Nancy McDonald.

COUNTY ZONING REQUIREMENTS

By Bonnie Whyte

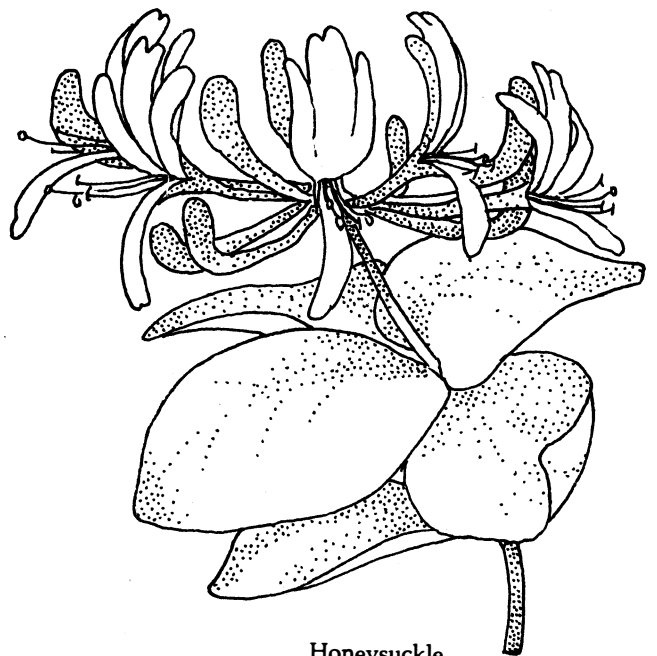
A far more arduous process taking at least three to four months is necessary for major work on most properties in Glen Echo. Most homes in town do not meet the current R-60 zoning requirements for setbacks from the street or property lines. Many fall into a grandfathered "non-conforming, non-complying" category.

As a result, homeowners must get a variance from the County Board of Appeals. A variance relieves the property owner from strict application of zoning requirements regarding area, frontage, setbacks and, sometimes, height limitations.

At the moment, there is a three month backlog at the Board, located at the County Council Building, 50 Monroe St., Rockville. Telephone: 217-2700.

DATE TO REMEMBER

Glen Echo Town Flea Market
Saturday, May 7



Honeysuckle

GROUP WANTS TRAIL TO LINK CANAL, BETHESDA AND SILVER SPRING

The creation of an uninterrupted 20-mile circuit trail, which would travel along the C&O Canal, Little Falls Park and through Bethesda and Silver Spring, linking up with an existing trail through Rock Creek Park, is the dream of a coalition of local citizens and sports and nature groups.

The realization of this dream depends on what will be done with an old railroad track that has not been used for almost three years by its owners, the CSX Corp. This 11-mile long railroad right of way, called the "Georgetown Spur" line, runs from M St. in Georgetown to Silver Spring.

The Montgomery County Council is interested in acquiring this land. The county will undertake an independent ridership study to determine how many passengers might use a trolley from the Bethesda to Silver Spring Metro stations.

It voted last month to spend \$375,000 to study two possible alternatives for its future use:

- a light rail line from Bethesda to Silver Spring; or
- a hiker/biker trail from Georgetown to Silver Spring, utilizing the C&O Canal towpath, following the old railroad track crossing MacArthur Blvd. near the D.C. line, then crossing Massachusetts Ave. near Westbard Ave. and across River Rd. to the Bethesda Metro station, continuing on to Silver Spring.

A trail is the goal of the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail, a group of 25 organizations which says it is part of a "rails to trails trend which is sweeping the country." The group is not totally opposed to the alternative trolley plan, however. What they don't want to see is the land being sold to private developers.

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up and down MacArthur Blvd.

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Eleanor

CSX Corp is seeking a high price for the property and has not yet been able to reach an agreement with the county or the National Park Service on its purchase.

The Coalition is seeking support from interested individuals and communities. For more information contact Val Kirkpatrick at 564-9177 or write the Coalition at P.O. BOX 30703, Bethesda, MD 20814.

--Carlotta Anderson

PANCAKE-GO-ROUND TO BENEFIT GLEN ECHO PARK FOUNDATION

A pancake breakfast and carousel ride are the fundraising activities planned by the Glen Echo Park Foundation for May 1 at the Town Hall. Tickets at \$25 each are available at the Foundation office in Glen Echo Park or by calling 320-2330.

Three wooden booths, once ensconced at Trav's tavern, have been donated by The Inn at Glen Echo for an auction. Bids will be accepted before and during the event.

WELCOME NEWCOMER

A hearty welcome to the new residents at 48 Wellesley Circle, Victor Gilinsky and his son, David, who moved here from Brookmont in February.

Victor, who has a Ph.D. in theoretical physics from Caltech, headed the physics department at the Rand Corporation. Thereafter he spent 10 years as commissioner on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). In 1984 he began working as a consultant.

David, 19, is a private pilot, currently going for a commercial and instructor rating with a view to becoming a professional pilot. His father is also currently taking flying lessons.

Victor's daughter, Anessa, 16, attends Colorado Rocky Mountain School in Carbondale, Colo.

Victor early showed his interest in the community by responding to last month's ad in The Echo and volunteering use of his laser printer for printing the town newspaper.

BETHESDA PARADE ON MAY DAY

The biggest parade ever held in Bethesda will take place beginning at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 1. The parade route will be along Wisconsin Ave. from Jones Bridge Rd. to the Bethesda Metro Plaza.

The Glen Echo Fire Department will participate in the parade.

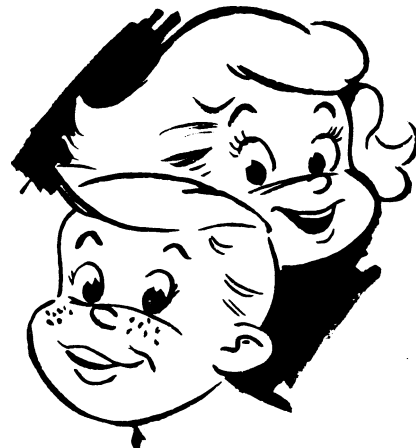
BANNOCKBURN SCHOOL MAYFAIR

Games, an international cafe, a silent auction and more fun are on the agenda at the annual Bannockburn Elementary School Mayfair, to be held Sunday, May 1, from 12:00-4:00 pm at 7000 Radnor Rd. (off Goldsboro Rd. behind the Kenwood golf course).

BANNOCKBURN KINDERGARTEN ROUNDUP

If your child is born in 1983 and will be five by December 31, 1988, he or she is eligible for kindergarten this coming fall.

Kindergarten roundup will take place on Thursday, April 28, in Bannockburn School's temporary quarters at 7000 Radnor Rd. Please call the school at 229-8823 for an appointment.



TOWN COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

March 14

The Council questioned how the new county ordinance banning smoking in public spaces might affect the town. Would it apply to town parties? Would it apply to private gatherings at the Town Hall? Councilwoman Long said the primary question will be how public space is defined.

Councilman Shultz raised the question of who would be responsible for enforcement and who would get arrested if the law is not obeyed.

The town plans to consult with the town attorney in the matter...

Councilman Shultz indicated that over the next two months council members will walk the streets and review needed repairs with next year's budget in mind. He noted that street sweeping should be done. The mayor said 26 signs need some attention. Councilman Springuel asked for assurances that estimates would be obtained before the start of any job and that insurance on the contractor would be current...

The Glen Echo Park Foundation has hired a professional fundraiser, Councilwoman Long reported. Council members wondered what kind of events the fundraiser might be considering and how they might affect the town. The Council agreed to invite him to the next meeting...

---Dave Robinson and Pat Nadonley

SHORT TAKES

The U.S. Postal Service has informed the town that it is now mandated by court order to have all post offices handicapped-accessible. Mayor Kuster said the Glen Echo post office will build some type of ramp at its own expense. He said he requested that the town approve plans before construction begins...

Councilmen Odell and Springuel, accompanied by Mayor Kuster, have walked through town to observe trees, bushes and foliage that overhang sidewalks or streets or obscure street signs. Residents will be sent letters notifying them of their responsibility to correct these problems. In the case of property owners needing assistance, the town contractor will be assigned to do the work and they will be billed, the mayor said.

--Carlotta Anderson

GLEN ECHO Pharmacy	
7311 MacArthur Boulevard Bethesda, MD 20816	
PAUL MILLER, R.Ph. ELLIE MILLER	(301) 229-5656

EXCERPTS FROM THE TREASURER'S REPORT--February 1988

Southern Speciality (Town Hall steel doors).....	\$2,091.00
Christopher's Hardware.....	82.82
Holiday Party reimbursements.....	135.70

ELDREDGE FAMILY TO MOVE

The Eldredges of 6004 Princeton Ave. will be moving back to Kansas in a few months, where Charles will teach American art history at the University of Kansas in Lawrence. Last month he announced his intention to resign from the directorship of the National Museum of American Art in Washington.

Jane, who is a tax attorney with Silverstein and Mullins in D.C., will follow when she has a new position in Kansas, which she hopes will be at the same time. She previously had a private practice in Lawrence and served as a state senator.

Gif, a sophomore at Amherst College in Massachusetts, and Nanny, who attends Masters School in Dobbs Ferry, N.Y., will continue their schooling there.

Charles is working on a book about artist Georgia O'Keeffe, the subject of his dissertation at the University of Minnesota.

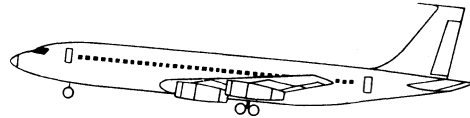
He said that after six years in Glen Echo he will miss much about the town and hopes to come back to visit "this pleasant place."

CITIZENS GROUP AGAINST JET NOISE WANTS CONGRESSIONAL HEARING

A citizens group concerned about the noise that will be generated by increased overflights from National Airport is encouraging residents to demand a congressional hearing to protest a newly-approved Master Plan of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority.

The plan will take effect on April 15 if it is not disapproved by a Congressional Review Board. CAAN (Citizens for the Abatement of Aircraft Noise) claims that the plan will give this area 24 hours a day jet overflights and does not give adequate consideration to noise problems.

CAAN is encouraging residents to express their concern and request an immediate congressional hearing by calling Rep. Constance A. Morella at 225-5341.

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

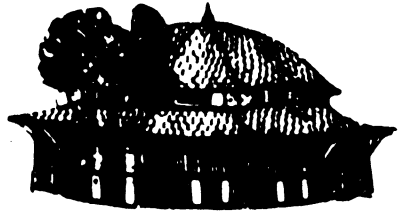
At the last Town Council meeting the topic of the town installing a basketball hoop came up again. The Open Space Committee recommended placing the court on Chalks right-of-way. But Councilman Shultz recommended that the town further pursue trying to place it in the Baptist Church parking lot.

During the discussion that followed a number of persons mentioned that the Baptist Church parking lot offered one advantage over all other locations--Passive Supervision. That is the neighbors of the parking lot would be keeping an eye on the kids playing in the lot.

We, the neighbors, object to this suggestion. We would like to state at this time that we are not and will not be responsible for any children who play in the church parking lot, except our own. We do not mind the children playing in the parking lot since this is not our property but we will not be held liable if someone gets hurt playing there.

Rene M. Springuel, M. Edith Springuel, M. Deebo

GLEN ECHO PARK ACTIVITIES



DANCES RESUME AT GLEN ECHO PARK

FRIDAY NIGHT DANCES:

Squares, contras and country dances. Admission \$4. 8:30 p.m., Spanish Ballroom.

SATURDAY NIGHT DANCES:

Begin April 16. Ballroom dancing. The Richard Bray Orchestra. Admission \$7. 9:00 p.m.

SUNDAY NIGHT DANCES:

Squares and contras. Admission \$5. 8:00 p.m.

DANCEFEST '88

Sunday, May 1, noon-10 p.m. Dance concerts, workshops, films. Most events free of charge.

Glen Echo Dance Theater Faculty Concert
8:00 p.m., \$5 general admission, \$4 students.

ARTIST HAS DUPONT CIRCLE GALLERY EXHIBITION

Jessica Damen of Princeton Ave. will have a showing of her art at the prestigious Foundry Gallery in D.C. "Bonding with Eternal Rocks and Water" is the theme of her mixed media work.

The show will take place from April 19 to May 8 at 9 Hillyer Court, N.W., just behind the Phillips Museum. Town residents are cordially invited to attend a reception at the Foundry Gallery on Friday, April 22, from 6-9 p.m. All Dupont Circle galleries are sponsoring an "Evening Art Stroll" on Friday, May 6, from 7-9 p.m.

Adventure Theatre

The Last of the Leprechauns
March 5-April 10

The Bee-Man of Orn
April 23-May 29

Weekends at 1:30 & 3:30
\$4. Call 320-5331



In cooperation with the National Park Service