

MEMORANDUM

To: Residents of Lower Merion Township, Ward 3

From: Michael McKeon, Ward 3 Commissioner (email: mmckeon@lowermerion.org)

Re: Lower Merion Township, Ward 3 Report #33

Date: Oct. 19, 2019

CURRENT EVENTS

MEDICAL MARIJUANA UPDATE

McKee Group (PharmaPenn, LLC d/b/a MedGarden) recently submitted an application to open a medical marijuana facility at **232 Rock Hill Rd** (next to CVS). Separate from the Township application, McKee Group will need the State of Pennsylvania to issue it a permit in Phase III of the State's medical marijuana program before it can go forward at 232 Rock Hill Rd. This is the second application at this location, as Main Line Pure Care, LLC c/o Kenneth Smukler was previously approved at 232 Rock Hill Road but the project was abandoned. Also, 1776 Ventures, LLC c/o Stuart Dessner was previously approved at 214 Rock Hill Road (formerly Lee's Hoagies) but that project was also abandoned. Projects can be abandoned for many reasons, including the failure to obtain a State permit. The three projects are marked with green stars:



There are already numerous medical marijuana facilities on the other side of City Line Avenue from Bala Cynwyd in Philadelphia. And it seems a little unusual to see three applications in such a small area on Rock Hill Rd, next to a CVS which could also eventually sell medical marijuana (CVS sells cannabis in 8 states, as close as Maryland). I was advised that medical marijuana facilities would not want to be too close to each other to avoid competition, but they could end up clustering around Rock Hill Rd, which would be imbalanced from other areas of the Township.

Commercial development is critical to the future of Rock Hill Rd, so please support our great local businesses which you can find on Rock Hill Rd.

NEW PUBLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL: On Oct. 16, the Board of Commissioners approved the School District's Preliminary Land Development Plan at 1860 Montgomery Ave subject to some conditions by a 9-4 vote. I voted in favor of the plan although I remain concerned that the school does not have adequate sidewalk coverage.

BELMONT HILLS LIBRARY UPDATE



Congrats to the Belmont Hills Library, which was recently honored as a Bronze Level Library by PA Forward for its educational and literacy programs.

The Library is open 5 days a week. All other Township libraries are open 6 or 7 days per week. The Belmont Hills Library Board has asked for a program which would allow it to be open on a 6th day (likely Fridays). Library attendance is much higher now than it was before the library closed for renovations in 2017, and I absolutely support a 6th day.

ROCK HILL ROAD APARTMENT PROJECT(S)

Two apartment projects were recently planned for Rock Hill Rd. Developer Hanover sought to construct a **332-unit, 5 story** project at **131/151 Rock Hill Rd**, but it has abandoned the project. It is possible that a new project may spring up at that location, and if you are concerned about the site, please keep an eye out for activity.

A **34-unit, 5 story** project is planned for **21 Rock Hill Rd**. This location is considered a flag lot, as it has a narrow path to the street which opens into a larger lot. I believe the developer plans to make presentations about the project at upcoming meetings of the Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd and Belmont Hills Civic Association. The application is tentatively scheduled to go before the Planning Commission on **Dec. 2, 2019**.



ARDMORE HEIGHT REDUCTION

There is big news in Ardmore, or maybe smaller news depending on how you look at it. The Board of Commissioners voted to approve an Ardmore height ordinance for advertisement. **The proposed ordinance would reduce the height limit to 39 feet in the Ardmore Mixed-Use Special Transportation (“MUST”) Overlay District, and allow a maximum of 52 feet subject to meeting additional standards. Buildings would be a maximum of 3 stories, with incentives permitting 4 story buildings.** The ordinance is needed to limit excess residential overdevelopment (Ardmore has seen recent apartment projects of 7-9 stories). The Commissioners will hold a hearing to vote on whether to adopt the ordinance in November, 2019. Video of the Oct. 12 meeting to advertise begins here at 3 hours/14 minutes: <https://lmtv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=h0IoQP1LwEUY>

BILLBOARD APPLICATION BEFORE THE ZONING HEARING BOARD

A developer submitted an application to challenge the validity of a Township ordinance and construct a billboard in (1) Belmont Hills (near the River) and (2) Bryn Mawr. The Township is opposing the developer’s application. A hearing is scheduled for **Nov. 7, 2019 (7:15pm)**. Public comment is permitted and the process will likely require multiple hearings.

TRAFFIC SAFETY

On Oct. 7, the Belmont Hills Civic Assoc. and residents met with LMPD traffic safety officer Charlie Farrell to discuss **TRAFFIC SAFETY in Belmont Hills**. As a result, residents are attempting to complete a traffic calming petition for **Ashland Avenue** per the Township traffic calming policy, found here: <https://www.lowermerion.org/services/police-department/traffic-safety-unit>

To qualify for traffic calming, the petition must be supported by 80% of the households on the affected street (Ashland). If you live on Ashland and would like to get involved with the petition, please contact me and I can connect you to the Ashland residents.

On a related note, the Commissioners unanimously approved traffic calming on **River Road** on Oct. 16 in response to a traffic calming petition and police study which recommended traffic calming. It should now be more difficult for the Mario Andrettis of Chester County to rampage through the Township on his or her commute to Philadelphia. I referenced the issues on Ashland Ave during the River Road vote around the 34 minute/30 second mark of the Oct. 16 meeting: <https://lmtv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=AMILgR9cSloh#>

At the Oct. 7 meeting, the Belmont Hills residents/Civic collectively declined the addition of a fourth Stop Sign at the intersection of Jefferson and Highland on the basis that the Stop Sign would not improve pedestrian safety and could hinder traffic during inclement weather. However, the existing signage at that intersection is being upgraded to improve visibility and safety.



The **Belmont Hills Community Halloween Parade** will be held on **Friday, October 25 at 7:00 pm**. The Parade will begin at the Belmont Hills Library and a Pizza Party will follow at the firehouse.

Participants will have the opportunity to pay your civic dues, which are needed for the operation of the Civic Association. Dues are as follows:

Family household – \$20

Individual – \$10

Seniors (age 60 and above) – \$5

PLEASE RSVP IN ADVANCE: mjspatacco@bancroft4vets.com

Zoning Code Update: The Township is in the process of issuing a new zoning code. The Township is scheduled to discuss proposed changes to the draft code at the Oct. 30, 2019 Building & Planning Committee meeting: <https://www.lowermerion.org/Home/Components/Calendar/Event/12188/1719>

Registration for **Main Line Girls Basketball Association** is open until Nov. 1. Girls in grades 1-12 can play, and this league provides a fun introduction to basketball and then builds skills. Sign-up here: <http://www.mlgba.com/>

Long time Belmont Hills resident **Patty Reich** is battling colon cancer, and a GoFundMe page has been set up to help her fight: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/patty-reitch-fighting-back>

Recycling Tip: Township paper recycling will accept: newspapers, notebooks, school paper (including spiral bound books), soft and hardback books, textbooks, paper shopping bags, beer and soda cartons, cake and cereal boxes and corrugated cardboard. Please try to get these materials out of your standard trash and into the recycling cans. In addition to the environmental benefit, this practice can save money, as residents pay per trashcan for standard waste but do not pay for recycling cans. If you transfer enough recyclable material from trash to recycling, you can reduce the amount of trashcans used during the week. Lists of what can be recycled are here: <https://www.lowermerion.org/services/public-works-department/refuse-and-recycling/what-to-recycle>

The Oct. 16 Public Works committee meeting featured a **recycling update** from Director Paul McElhaney at the 1 hour mark: <https://lmtv.viebit.com/player.php?hash=AMlLgR9cSI0h>

CRIME & POLICE ACTIVITY REPORT Below is a summary of recent police activity in Ward 3:

Date	Type	Location	Comments
10/3/19	Vehicle Accident	Consh State Rd & Rock Hill Rd	
10/5/19	DUI	Hollow & Sprague	Drugs
10/8/19	Vehicle Accident	260 Rock Hill Rd (CVS)	No injury; on private property
10/13/19	Vehicle Accident	801 Consh St Rd (Wawa)	No injury; on private property
10/13/19	Vehicle Accident	Belmont & Schuylkill	Injury
10/13/19	Criminal Mischief	Jones Street	
10/13/19	Theft from Vehicle	700 Block Belmont Terrace	Over \$200
10/13/19	Family Disturbance	Harvest Circle	Domestic
10/15/19	Vehicle Accident	Belmont & Old Belmont	

PLEASE LOCK YOUR CAR DOORS! Theft from unlocked vehicles is a big issue in the Township.

UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

Oct 20	9am-3pm	Household Hazardous Waste Collection, Koegel Complex
Oct 20	2:00 p.m.	Penn Valley Fall Social & Hike, Flat Rock Park (River Rd)
Oct 25	7:00 pm	Belmont Hills Halloween Parade, begins at Belmont Hills Library
Oct 26	10am-2pm	Prescription Pill Takeback, LM Police Dept, 71 E Lancaster Ave Turn in pills they cannot be stolen, lost or misused
Oct 29	7:00 p.m.	Narberth Civic Assoc. Annual Meeting, 100 Conway Ave
Oct 30	6:00 p.m.	LM Building & Planning Committee Meeting, 75 E Lancaster Ave Discussion re: proposed changes to new zoning code
Nov 5		General Election
Nov 6	6:30-7:45 pm	Belmont Hills Civic Assoc Meeting, Belmont Hills Library
Nov 6	7:00 p.m.	Penn Valley Civic Assoc Meeting, WVMS Library
Nov 7	7:15 p.m.	Zoning Hearing Board Billboard Application Hearing
Nov 9	Evening	Belmont Hills Library 50th Anniversary Trivia Night, B.H. Fire Hall
Nov 11		Friends of the Cynwyd Heritage Trail Annual Meeting
Nov 12	7:30 p.m.	Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd Meeting, Academy Building
Nov 18	6:00 p.m.	Police Department Briefing re: Body Cameras, Ardmore Library To be followed by a Police & Minority Relations Comm. Meeting
Nov 20		Township Meetings re: Budget and Capital Improvement Plan
Dec 4		Township Meetings re: Budget and Capital Improvement Plan

I maintain a Facebook page. To receive updates in your Facebook feed, like/follow my page: <https://www.facebook.com/LowerMerionWard3Commissioner/>