



BNA Newsletter



A publication of the South Baltimore Neighborhood Association Apr/May 2012

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD ... HAPPY SPRING !!!

PRESIDENTS CORNER:

Tough LOVE

LOVE your NEIGHBORHOOD is the theme of this month's newsletter as we continue to build a community on Love! This article expresses some tough love as SBNA looks forward to springtime and a fresh face for South Baltimore. If after reading this article you feel a little guilty for apathy then I've done my job! SBNA is YOUR neighborhood association. We strive to be knowledgeable in a number of civic issues and understand the process in dealing with city and state agencies. It is important to understand we want to join efforts where your concerns exist but YOU too share responsibility for your block and community. YOU need to participate in our spring clean up or pound the pavement with a petition or volunteer for a specific committee or attend a general meeting to support an initiative. The SBNA board and membership can provide additional muscle that lends gravity to the matter at hand. We can build upon your concerns through our newsletter, web site, facebook, emails, hearings, and meetings. We will debate controversial issues before the

general membership and vote to determine a formal position from SBNA.

I did testify in Annapolis on February 27th before the House Economic Matters Committee regarding liquor license for the Video Lottery Facility. The casino will be open until 4am on Friday and Saturday nights. SBNA expressed concerns regarding the neighborhood impact with drunk patrons going from the Federal Hill bars to the casino at 2am. While we may not change the hours of operation for the casino, SBNA was assured we will have future opportunities to meet with the casino owners and city officials to disburse funds for additional security/policing in our neighborhood. We also may receive funding for community projects.

In closing I'll return to our theme and take liberties in modifying a famous quote from President JFK, "Ask not what SBNA can do for YOU rather ask what YOU can do for SBNA"

Love,
Amy

Community Meetings:

April 3, 2012

May 1st, 2012

7:00pm

Church of the Advent
1301 S. Charles Street
(enter on Patapsco)

April Social:

When : April 24th from 7-10

Where: Brewers Cask. 1236
Light Street.

Happy hours prices... please
bring donations for the Kids
at the Rec Center if you can!
Cant wait to see you there!

Our meeting minutes are now published on our website at
www.mysobo.org. Look under "About Us" for a directory!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS !!!

AN HISTORIC PICNIC ON FEDERAL HILL

Sunday, May 6 from 12noon-2pm

Our beloved Federal Hill was named to mark Maryland's ratification of the U.S. Constitution, an event celebrated with a huge picnic atop the hill on May 1, 1788.

The Neighborhood Associations of Federal Hill, Federal Hill South, and South Baltimore have joined together to celebrate this historic milestone with a picnic of our own!

All residents of the areas represented by these neighborhood associations are invited to attend.

Bring a dish to share and celebrate spring and our wonderful Federal Hill community with your friends and neighbors!



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Baltimore City Council

WILLIAM H. COLE IV
11th District

City Hall, Room 527
100 N. Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Office: 410-396-4816
Cell: 410-960-6622
Fax: 410-545-7464
william.cole@baltimorecity.gov

SBNA is a monthly production of the South Baltimore Neighborhood Association whose mission is "to encourage, through regular meetings, the formal exchange of ideas; to work with local law enforcement in promoting safety; and to assist individuals and families in the continuing process of neighborhood renewal." We welcome articles, ads and photo submissions via mail or email:

South Baltimore

Neighborhood Association

P.O. Box 6474

Baltimore, MD 21230

Newsletter@mysobo.org

We reserve the right to edit or reject submissions. Articles represent the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of SoBolmCo. We believe all sources of information are reliable, however, we do not guarantee completeness or accuracy.

Membership

Residents of South Baltimore are encouraged to become members of SBNA. Just contact an SBNA officer for more information.

Meetings

Community meetings of SBNA are usually held on the first Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. at the Church of the Advent located at the 1301 S. Charles Street.

Website

www.mysobo.org

The South Baltimore Improvement Committee is now operating as the South Baltimore Neighborhood Association.

MEETING MINUTES

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

02/07/12 Theme "Love Thy Neighbor"

NEXT COMMUNITY MEETING – Tuesday 3/6/12 –

Treasurer's Report – Dennis Plouff

Current account status: General Fund	= \$3,211.74
Heath St. Garden Fund	= \$2,955.00
Light St. Garden Fund	= \$ 2.13
Sitting Park Fund	= \$18.30
Teen Council Fund	= \$2,324.53
Tree Fund	= \$ 97.00
Total	= \$8,608.70

Minutes Approved

Introduction of Guests: Councilman William Cole – Will explain with a live entertainment license is; Brian McComas – President of the Federal Hill Business Association; Liam Davis Community Liaison from the Mayors Office.

President's Report: Peninsula is getting a Circulator route –

The Banner Route, on 2/13 there will be a meeting @ the Baltimore Metro Council Office to discuss the route.

2/14 – Neighborhood clean up competitions – Amy will attend the meeting

South Baltimore Video Lottery Liquor License conference call – Amy will be on the call, along with Bill Romani

Festivall – it was sold out last year, so get your tickets

Starbucks opening in Thursday 2/8/12 and are welcoming neighbors from 6-8

Federal Hill Book Signing party @ Mother's 2/16 7pm.

Reminder – It's important to keep the neighborhood integrity it is a pass thru area; SBNA we take our positions from our residents – we take special consideration of the neighbors with most impact; we encourage the neighbors to speak up; we all have the right as a citizen to voice their own opinion.

Committee Reports

Liquor Advisory Committee – Justin Wilde – Corks sold liquor license to Rowhouse. We need to invite bar owners to our meetings to discuss the bar and it's business. Deb mentioned Mad River is filthy and we need to engage the bars and the owners so we can get a better response from them.

Clean & Green – Thomasina – Spoke with Eric Deihl from Balto City – there are 3-4 tree pits dug- goal is to increase the # of trees in SOBO

Police and Community Relations – There is a new Major of the South Baltimore District – David Reitz – Maj.

Reitz stresses the importance of community involvement and has an open door policy; he encourages citizens to contact him. Maj. Reitz reacted to our concern about the nuisance crime stating that they are beginning a new initiative to reach out to bar owners and the department has overtime money that they will use to more actively patrol the area and will issue more fines where they deem appropriate. He also stated he will send an officer out to catch speed offenders upon request – if we know of a area that is particularly bad let him know. His email is david.reitz@baltimorepolice.com

Parking – Cynthia & Deb– This was the smoothest renewal to date. Area 42 renewed in September and they are completely self-sustaining. CVS Parking Lot – a woman's car was towed and she claims no one warned her in enough time to move it. The management company has a lot of issues with people parking in the lot during the weekend. You can park there to go to CVS during the day and on weeknights. CVS will announce a warning prior to towing.

Teen Council - Melissa Wooster – Teen CSI – The teens are investigating a crime scene in a couple of weeks. Councilman Cole met with the Teen Council and played laser tag.

Social - Danny Young –The next party is the 3rd Thursday in February at Bluegrass. The charity is the teen council. Bring, balls stationary, crayons, etc.

Design Review – We are submitting and looking into a master plan – this is important to the health, growth and development of the neighborhood.

1834 S Charles – they want to purchase a sliver of land that the city already makes them take care of. They are looking into putting a German Brewery in that location. They need two separate licenses – a brews license and a restaurant license. Neighbors signed a petition with 175 signatures against the placement of a bar. Parking a large concern for this location.

Live Entertainment: Bill Romani, Councilman Cole; Brian McComas: in 2009 there was legislation introduced enabling bars to have live entertainment. Some concerns are how will this affect the neighborhood. This is a Conditional Use License

Federal Hill Business Association – There will be an Irish Stroll on March 10th – They will get spot-a-pots to help prevent public urination. They are well aware of the havoc this cause in the area

There are 18 members of the association – they pay for the cleanup of are business district and contribute \$72k per year towards police overtime.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melanie A. Ambridge, SBNA Secretary

SBNA Executive Board Members

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Police/Community Relations

John Karabias
PoliceRelations@mysobo.org

Blockmaster Captain

Jaclyn Grigoli
Blockmasters@mysobo.org

SO, THE HOUSE NEXT DOOR IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION...

Having a significant construction project immediately adjacent to your home can be challenging and disruptive, especially if you are a house spouse, have young children, or work during the night. General Contractors tend to start work early in the morning so they can finish by early afternoon to avoid rush hour traffic in either direction, and maximize their daylight hours. This is also the time that the average worker is away. Demolition of an existing structure, excavating and creation of a buildings landscape are particularly difficult as they involve heavy equipment. Above grade construction is also challenging due to the noise from power tools and hammering. Aesthetically, construction sites somehow almost always cause excess dust to overflow, no matter how diligent the contractor's preventative measures.

The above is typically the extent of disruption one can expect from the average construction site. A General Contractor, by law, cannot perform any work on your property. They are legally responsible for any damage that they inflict, either intentionally or unintentionally to your property, or the public area's around their site. All contractors also have to abide by the terms and conditions listed on their building permits. Building Permits only allow construction between specific times and only within the work week. Contractors are not allowed to work on the weekend or holidays unless they have a special exemption which is filed for on a per case basis. Not abiding to agency criteria or approved plans can result in heavy fines, and even a stop work order from Building Inspectors.

The contractor is directly responsible for limiting the extent of construction to within the property lines of his own project. He is not allowed to put a foot on a neighbors property unless given written or verbal consent. The contractor will shore within the hole that he digs for any subsurface work within his property line. This is a very important preventative measure that the contractor does to prevent surrounding buildings from being damaged due to grade shift, or undermining. The contractor will also put silt fences

around the perimeter of his property, to help minimize the amount of dirt that blows away, and storm drain filters, to prevent flooding due to debris clogging the storm drains. If the project site is large enough, they will even establish a designated construction entrance, which will be the only area that heavy vehicles will enter and leave the site.

An additional level of concern exists for row home owners as most older buildings have a shared party wall. Because one wall is used to support two buildings, a home can suffer the direct results of a neighboring project. A recommended course of action is to photo document the party wall from the basement to the attic as well as the exterior and roof, only if it can be safely accessed, at a high resolution with the time stamp on. This way, if any cracks form as a result of work being performed, you have proof that it was not there prior to the construction.

Many often feel the need to consult lawyers or engineers to pre-emptively examine their home. This is generally premature and expensive. Some also feel the need to repair their own homes or perform protective work. Having pre-emptive repairs performed to your own building may actually undermine your case if something does happen as the contractor could easily argue that the work you performed was not up to standard and resulted in the damage.

Another essential is to maintain proper communication with the site superintendent and the owner, if possible. Contractors will try to maintain positive relationships with adjoining neighbors. An angry neighbor is a potential liability as they can easily call city building inspectors (311), file complaints, and generally increase the costs and difficulty of their job. Also, owners may like having an extra pair of eyes on their construction project as they are a large investment of capital. What you learn about the contractors performance is also a great litmus test to determine whether you could use them for your own future project as a good contractor is hard to find.

Submitted by: Stephan Lawrence, Design Review Chair

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Angie's list



NO TRUCK OVER ¾ TONS by Melanie A. Ambridge

No that's not another earthquake that's just a heavy truck driving through our neighborhood. I am sure the rumbling of the heavy trucks on our streets is a concern to many of you - it should be. I started sending emails voicing my concern last summer. I finally got this in front of the right person and got a response. One of my biggest questions was why wasn't any one enforcing these violations.

I would like to share a letter I sent to the Baltimore City DOT and their response to my letter.

"As many of you already know there are signs all over the Federal Hill/South Baltimore neighborhood that read, "No Truck over 3/4 tons." These signs are blatantly ignored and never enforced. I am fed up with the damage the big trucks have done to our streets, our homes and hearing them!! I see the bulk of them going from Hanover to Ostend and Ostend to Hanover. I am not sure why these signs are ignored by truckers and not enforced by the police but I want to make it my goal to stop this from happening. The attached photo was taken this morning at approx 8:15am. This is just one of many. I have spoken to many neighbors that have the same feelings I do about this. Now that I have your contact information I will let them know how to contact you. I will also ask them to send photos of this very same thing. In fact all you have to do is come to our neighborhood and you'll see these trucks all day long (and all night and in the middle of the night while everyone is trying to sleep)

These streets were not made for this amount of truck traffic. Better yet, our homes were not made to withstand this traffic. Hence

the reason many of us have had to make repairs to homes!

These trucks illegally use South Hanover as an alternate route between 95 and the city. There are street signs on every block that state NO TRUCKS OVER ¾ TONS. The trucks ignore these signs and use South Hanover all hours of the day and night. I have NEVER seen these long haul, 18-wheelers and various big rigs receive tickets for their infractions. Disregard of our traffic laws is allowing these drivers to destroy Baltimore.

South Hanover Street has suffered great wear and tear because of their presence. The weight of these trucks creates potholes and fractures in the street. Vibrations from their illegal transit cause the brick mortar on the facades of our homes to erode. The costs of these repairs are funded from the pockets of tax paying neighborhood homeowners. By continuing to let tractor-trailers use South Hanover Street we are allowing them to destroy the charm of Charm City.

These existing traffic laws need to be enforced in order to preserve the historic appeal of Baltimore, generate revenue for the city, and lessen the repair burden of home ownership on our tax paying citizens. Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter."

The following is the last response I received from Valorie LaCour, City Planner III, City of Baltimore, Department of Transportation and the response I received from the Director of the BCDOT Khalil Zaied:

Continued on page 7....

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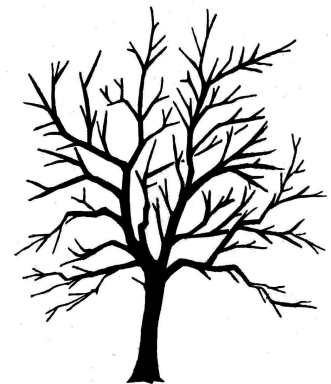
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NEW LISTING



1708 S Charles Street:

\$300,000 - Incredible Federal Hill home offering over 2400 sq ft of wide open living space! Home has amazing finishes-exposed brick accents, arched doorways, tray ceilings, built-in shelving, columns & hardwood floors. Enjoy an eat-in kitchen with granite counters, a separate dining room, a large Master suite with a private bath, a 4th level wet bar/entertainment room which leads to the roof deck, a lower level family room & more!

UNDER CONTRACT



1619 Belt Street:

\$229,900 - Beautiful 2 BR, 2 BA home in Federal Hill situated only steps to Riverside Park! Home features a gorgeous kitchen with granite counters, a breakfast bar & the entrance to a private rear deck, the basement is partially finished with tons of storage & a separate laundry room, discover the huge Master bedroom with high ceilings, the bath offers a whirlpool tub, the 2nd bedroom has its own private deck & more!

JUST SOLD



1535 S Hanover Street:

\$292,000 - Unique & Beautifully Designed Federal Hill Renovation! Home is gorgeous with an open floor plan, wood floors, crown moldings & exposed brick. The eat-in kitchen has granite counters, a slate tile floor & tray ceiling. The finished lower level is perfect for a family room or entertainment area. The Master Suite is huge with a walk-in closet & Master bath which boasts a whirlpool tub & a separate shower. The granite wet bar leads you to a roof deck with unbelievable city views & more!

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Continued from page 5....

"Outreach to truck drivers and major employers in Baltimore City has started. BCDOT expects to implement the new truck routes during 2012.

- Legislation has been introduced in the Maryland General assembly 2012 session.

- The legislation will enable Baltimore City to enforce truck routing using technology resources to cite drivers unwilling to comply with the City-wide truck routes.

- BCDOT is testing virtual enforcement technologies to allow the BCDOT to enforce routing restrictions.

Regarding Hanover Street, BCDOT is reviewing all complaints and looking at strategies for enforcing routing along this corridor. Hanover Street is one of the corridors BCDOT is testing the virtual enforcement technology. In the interim, BCDOT will identify and contact companies and employers to inform them of the restrictions on Hanover

Street and work to get these companies to comply with the routing and restrictions."

Here is the response from the Director:

"Ms. Ambridge, truck enforcement is very difficult and at this time is not the responsibility of the Department of Transportation. We will continue to work with Police Department on this issue until a long term solution for this problem is achieved"

If any of you have the same concerns you can reach Valorie at:

Valorie LaCour City Planner III
City of Baltimore Department of Transportation
417 East Fayette Street, Room 559 Baltimore, MD 21202
Valorie.Lacour@baltimorecity.gov
443-984-4094 (O) 410-547-1036 (F)

As of now, I am happy I got a response. The next step is trying to get the violations enforced. I encourage all of you to reach out to the BCDOT and the Southern District Police Department.

INSIDE SBNA:

I have been serving on the board going on 2 years now and it has been a rewarding and educational experience. We meet twice a month (one community meeting and one executive board meeting) and we correspond through email. Our February executive board meeting was filled with guests and hot topics such as the new casino, 1834 S. Charles street project, parking for large new development on Wells and a liquor license for Taco Spot. We talked about Clean & Green projects and the wonderful possibilities that we can focus on when springtime rolls in.

What I noticed about the February meeting was how much fun it was to be there. Our current board members are warm and interesting people and our meetings have felt like friends and neighbors coming together to make a positive impact on the neighborhood. It really doesn't feel like work at all! So if you are interested in joining the board and you are worried that it will just add to the workday- let me assure you that instead of dreading a board meeting - you are more likely to dread missing one.

Submitted by Lisa Wilde, Newsletter Chairperson

DUES AND FACEBOOK!!



Want to be a member of SBNA? \$5 a Year- per person, not per household...

Please send your check to : SBNA, PO Box 6474, Baltimore MD 21230 Duration: Oct 2011-Sept 2012.

We are having a membership drive.. Help us by sending in a check and getting on board! Check our website for the membership drive info under "how to get involved" to see our growth progress.

If you haven't done so already, check out our Facebook group. We have neighbors posts tips for fellow neighbors... please utilize this resource to communicate up-to-the minute info about what is happening around the 'hood.

Tip of the month from Facebook:

"Make sure to shred all important documents before putting them in recycling...just caught someone sifting through my neighbor's recycling (and checking receipts as he found them)."

BOOK SALE: The Friends of the Light Street Branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library will be holding their spring 2012 book sale in the lower level of the library on Thursday, May 3 (1 to 7 p.m.), Saturday, May 5 (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.), and Monday, May 7 (12 to 6 p.m.). The last day of the sale is "bag day" ... bring your own bag and fill it up for only \$5.00! There will be new and used hardbacks, paperbacks, DVD's,

CD's and much more! All proceeds go to benefit the Friends' sponsored programs at the library. Donations of new and gently used books are always welcome to help support the sale and may be dropped off at the desk in the library. No encyclopedias or textbooks, please. The Light Street Library is located at 1251 Light Street, Baltimore, 21230, (410) 396-1096. We hope to see you at the sale!



KICK OFF THE FEDERAL HILL FESTIVAL SEASON WITH MAIN STREET!

Federal Hill's annual Spring Block Party is on Sunday, April 29, 11 am

to 7 pm. Lots of great live music, food & drink, arts & crafts, and friends and neighbors will fill the street to celebrate spring and the kick-off of festival season! Appearing on two stages include popular favorites Nelly's Echo and Can't Hang, along with The Players, Soul Island Rebels, The Reserves, Federal Hill's own Jenny Freeman Band, and more.

Spring Block Party will take place on East Cross Street, on the south side of Cross Street Market. Admission: \$5. Don't miss out on all the fun!

For more information and to volunteer, email admin@historicfederalhill.org or call 410-727-4500.

MY PARKING STORY:

A few emails have circulated about the Abandoned Car Law this March. I was once a victim of this law and its abuses. The law states that cars cannot be left "inoperable" on the street or city property for more than 48 hours and the DOT relies on citizens to report abandoned vehicles. The response team is pretty quick- they come out and place a warning on your car that requests you move your vehicle within 24 hours or it will be ticketed/towed. The ticket costs \$152. (which if you think about it, your car is not abandoned if you are retrieving a ticket off of the windshield).

Anyways, my neighbor who did not like that I was parking in a spot next to his house, called 311 and reported my vehicle abandoned. The parking authority placed a warning on my vehicle during a snow storm and the warning was hidden from view under a blanket of snow. Then I received the ticket on top of the snow. I re-

quested a trial.

Once I requested a trial, I was unable to attend the hearing due to a conflict with work so I petitioned the court (wrote a brief letter requesting a new trial date to District 1 courthouse on Patapsco) and they approved the request but I never received another trial notification. Unaware of the trial date, I missed the trial date again. I petitioned the court again and again I was approved but never received notification. I petitioned the court again and was denied because too much time had passed. So I just petitioned again and I was approved. I was sent a notification of trial and off I went.

3 years after the original date on the ticket, I had my trial and I won because I explained that it had snowed on the date that the warning was issued and the car was never abandoned. I told the judge that I drove the car in question to court that day and it was out in the parking lot.

Submitted by: Lisa Wilde

CLEAN AND GREEN COMMITTEE REPORT:

Spring has come early this year and SBNA can earn up to \$5,000 for our neighborhood with your help!

SBNA has entered our neighborhood in a Clean Community Competition! From April 21st to October 19th, neighborhoods will be competing in a competition to increase recycling and decrease trash in our neighborhoods. What can you do to help score us points??

* Increase the amount of recycling

*Use Trash cans!

*Place LIDS on your trash/recycling receptacles to reduce the amount

of paper that blows into the streets

*clean our streets and alleys

If you decide to clean up our neighborhood, PLEASE take pictures of before and after so that we can document our progress and get closer to the \$5,000 grant to benefit our community. You can email pictures to clean-green@mysobo.org.

Also, please partake in Spring Cleaning! We have arranged for a dumpster to be at the corner of Fort & Charles on Saturday, April 21st from 8am to 1pm; please take this opportunity to clean up your home and yard and remember, its the first day of the competition so document your progress!

War of 1812 Bicentennial Celebration in Baltimore

The War of 1812 Bicentennial Celebration will launch in Baltimore on June 13, 2012. The week-long celebration will begin with an international flotilla of ships sailing into Baltimore Harbor and will feature land and water tours, a variety of

rich family and group activities, and an amazing air show featuring the Blue Angels on June 16 and 17, 2012. Visit the historic shrine at the Fort McHenry National Monument, tour the Star-Spangled Banner Flag House, and see the original draft of the Star-Spangled Banner at the Maryland Historical Society. Info: www.baltimore.org