



ECA News

www.eastportcivic.org

Newsletter of the Eastport Civic Association

April 2005

General Membership Meeting: Thursday, April 21, 2005

All meetings begin at 7:30 pm and are held at the Eastport Elementary school unless otherwise noted.

ECA Board Members

President, Newsletter Editor - Ross Arnett
410 295-7531
rosses34@aol.com

Vice President - Michael Matthews
410 263-5944
MatthewsOpus@aol.com

Secretary - Dretta Peterson
443 482-9055
dpetersod@aol.com

Treasurer - Joe Haebler
410 626-2363
joehaeb@comcast.net

Todd Bruner
410 280-2460
todd.bruner@gd-ais.com

Dick Franyo
410 336-8880
dick@boatyardbarandgrill.com

Jeanne Langdon
410 267-0290
jeanne1768@aol.com

Gary Meyer
410 280-1461
gemeyer@comcast.net

Ted Morgan
410 268-1357
ted.morgan@comcast.net

Past President
Daryl Roberts
(410) 263 -8148
derannapolis@comcast.net

April Membership Meeting Agenda Items

From the Board

We will have updates on several issues including:

- **RCO Changes** – the long awaited revisions
- **Mercedes-Benz** – Design concept
- **Committee Updates**

We have a lot of information to give you, but we will try to keep the meeting brief and crisp.

Dues Are Still Due

By Joe Haebler

For those who have yet to do so, please take the time to pay your dues for calendar year 2005. You can find a membership form at the end of this Newsletter or on our website. Just fill it out and send it, with your check, to the address provided. This promises to be another busy year for ECA and we need your membership and financial support.

Inside this Issue:

April Meeting Agenda	1
Dues are Still Due	1
RCO Proposed Change	2
Mercedes Benz Exterior Alteration Proposal	2
Goings On in Eastport	3
Alderman's Notebook	3
Membership Application	5

RCO Proposed Change

The following is the posted notice of the proposed changes to the Eastport Residential Conservation Overlay. See the Alderman's Notebook for discussion of the proposal.

Residential Conservation Overlay - For the purpose of requiring for reconstruction and new construction that any exterior façade shall be reviewed, signs shall be posted for at least 15 days announcing exterior changes, single-family residences in excess of 3,250 square feet are subject to standard use, side yard setbacks on lots of 50 feet and wider are increased from 20 to 25 percent of the lot width; building height is limited to maximum of 26 feet or the average height of all structures on the block, three additional standards for height by which to judge the design of a structure built to the allowable height behind the ridgeline must be met, additional findings are required by the Department of Planning and Zoning; and that with respect to demolitions, the Director of Planning and Zoning may have conducted a structural analysis, a definition of demolition is established, adjacent property owner notification distance is increased from 200 to 300 feet, the posting period is increased from 10 to 30 days; and matters generally relating to the requirements of the Residential Conservation Overlay. (Referred to Rules and City Government Committee and Planning Commission).

Mercedes-Benz Exterior Alteration Proposal

By Ross Arnett

You may be aware that the Mercedes-Benz dealership has moved its service operations from Eastport to new quarters on Forest Drive, a move that has significantly reduced traffic on Sixth Street and Severn Avenue. The next step for the dealership is to make

major interior and exterior modifications to the remaining sales site.

At its February meeting, the ECA Board reviewed an early set of concept drawings with an unfavorable first impression. Subsequently, the ECA President met with Brian Fader, President of the dealership, and Jonathan Penny, architect for Lessard Commercial, the design group for Mercedes-Benz to discuss the joint interests of the dealership and the Eastport Community.

The meeting was cordial and productive. We toured the building inside and out to discuss the needed changes for the business. The Dealership needs to expand show room space on the first floor and expand second floor for a used car showroom. Mr. Fader also explained that he must follow Mercedes-Benz corporate image guidelines for site design.

I pointed out that Eastport also has design guidelines and that the Board was concerned about the current design proposal on several counts.

First, at this point the proposed design shows the building clad in metal with a tall tan brick tower featuring an unusual roof on Sixth where the current building juts out to the sidewalk. The Board's opinion is that the design is not consistent with the community. We would like to see elements of Eastport architecture incorporated into the design.

Our second concern is the view cone crossing the bridge entering Eastport. ECA wants a design sympathetic to Eastport architecture and to continue positive precedence set by BB&T and Rockfish.

The ECA Architectural Committee reviewed the concept drawings and plans submitted to P&Z. The application requires a variance because the current building has a portion that does not meet the required thirty-foot setback from the street. The Committee recommended that the Board oppose the variance, as it was integral to the tower design, and the Board did

so. The ECA President made a presentation to that effect at the Appeals Board hearing on the variance.

Though the Appeals Board asked several questions about the site design, their purview is zoning and they voted to approve the variance.

The next step in the process will be a design review by P&Z staff and we hope to have a meeting with staff, Mr. Fader and the architect soon.

We will have materials from the current design for viewing at the membership meeting this month.

Goings on in Eastport

By Michael Matthews

Summer Camp Scholarships - The Eastport Civic and Business Associations have combined resources and have made it possible to send seven children from Eastport to summer camp for eight weeks through the Annapolis Parks and Recreation Department. This is made possible through membership dues and generous donations sent in by members. Seven children will have a memorable summer thanks to the citizens and businessmen and women in Eastport.

Bike Annapolis - The first annual Bike Annapolis: Ride for Shelter will be held on May 14. Sponsored by Friends of the Light House Shelter, riders may chose from 5-, 15- and 25-mile courses on the streets of Annapolis and surrounding communities. All proceeds will benefit the Light House Shelter in Annapolis, the only homeless facility in the city, which provided beds, lunches, groceries and emergency utility funds to hundreds of area families. This will be daylong event for riders of all ages. So if you are interested in making an Eastport presence at this event please contact Debra Bird, volunteer chair at her email: dbird@birdsmail.com, or go to www.rideforshelter.com.

If you are interested in participating in Greenscape or would like to become involved in helping to make Eastport a better place to live please contact me at 410-263-5944 or matthewsopus@aol.com

Alderman's Notebook

By Josh Cohen

At the April 11th City Council meeting I introduced Ordinance O-15-05 to improve Eastport's RC Zoning Overlay. This ordinance is the product of more than two years of public discussion and input. It achieves a fair balance between preserving Eastport's special architectural character and scale while also protecting property owners' rights to build and expand.

The most controversial issue about the Overlay has been about limiting bulk and mass of buildings. Many residents have voiced concerns over the years that a few very large houses have negatively impacted adjacent properties and the neighborhood in general. To address this, the citizens' committee tasked with reviewing the Overlay recommended a formula to cap building size based on lot size. The ordinance takes a fundamentally different approach.

Put simply, the ordinance will not prevent larger houses; it will promote well-designed larger houses. The ordinance has no cap on building size. While size can be cause for concern, I believe size is not the main issue. Design is the main issue. A poorly designed small house can stick out like a sore thumb, and a large house done well can work. Therefore the ordinance requires an added level of review and public input for the very largest buildings. Any building larger than 3,250 square feet (not including basement, unfinished attic space, and accessory garages and sheds) will be subject to Planning Commission review and approval. This hearing process gives neighbors greater ability to address potential negative impacts of the largest buildings.

How large is 3,250 square feet? Of the 595 buildings in the Overlay today, 567 of them, or 95 percent, are below this 3,250 square foot threshold. In other words, this added review will apply only to buildings in the largest five percent of what we have today. This makes sense because after all it is only some of the very largest houses that have caused the most alarm in the community.

There will be more opportunities for public input once the ordinance is introduced. A Planning Commission public hearing will be scheduled for May or June, with a City Council public hearing the following month.

I encourage you to review the ordinance and submit testimony or contact me with any thoughts or questions. The ordinance is online at:

<http://www.annapolis.gov/info.asp?page=1337>.

As always you can reach me at 410-216-9449 or eastportjosh@yahoo.com to discuss this or other issues.

Eastport Civic Association **Membership Application**

Note: Dues are for the calendar year, January through December.
Dues paid after Sep 30 are for both the current and upcoming calendar year.

Individual Regular Membership-----\$15.00 each (\$30.00 per couple) \$ _____
(Resident or Property Owner)

Individual Associate Membership-----\$15.00 each \$ _____
(Non-resident)

Contribution ----- \$ _____
(Holiday sharing, Christmas in April, other _____)

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Committee Interest

Architecture

Audit

Development & Zoning

Maritime

Membership

Parking & Traffic

Safety

Tours

Nominating

Name _____

Spouse _____

Mailing Address _____

Property Address _____

Email Address _____

(An email address will enable your quick notification when the need arises.)

Phone - Residence _____

Phone - Business _____

To save our Association the cost of postage, I would prefer to receive the Newsletter via the ECA website. I understand that each member will receive an email with a direct link to the Newsletter each month of publication.

Please fill-in the blanks and check the appropriate boxes, make out your check to the Eastport Civic Association, and mail both this form and your check to:

Eastport Civic Association
PO Box 3539
Annapolis, MD 21403

Thanks for your support