

LPCA General Meeting Minutes - February 19th, 2025

Held at The Knights of Columbus Hall

Preliminaries:

- Pledge of Allegiance
- New Neighbor Introductions
- Treasurer Update:
 - 2025 Budget
 - The budget reflects committee allocations, including:
 - \$30,000 for the festival (Social Committee)
 - \$6,000 for the holiday party (Social Committee)
 - \$3,000 for the Parks Committee
 - \$3,000 for the Garden Committee
 - Additional funds allocated for grants, trees, and composting
 - Copies of the budget were made available.
 - Funds have been set aside for legal fees.
 - Total expenses: \$63,800
 - Total revenue: \$50,202
 - Projected deficit: \$13,000 (intentional, assuming a loss on the festival; budget is very conservative).
 - A motion to approve the 2025 budget was made, seconded, and passed unanimously.
 - \$72,517 - General Fund
 - \$3,744 - Dog Park
 - \$8,892 - Park Fund
 - Paypal payments for \$5 annual memberships now accepted (and checks to PO Box); cash will be accepted at meeting, and checks can be mailed to Locust Point Civic Association, PO Box 27097, Baltimore, MD 21230-0097
- Please renew your membership for 2025.
- November & January Minutes Review/Vote:
 - Minutes were made available online.
 - A motion to approve the November minutes was made, seconded, and passed unanimously.
 - A motion to approve the January minutes was made, seconded, and passed unanimously.

Committee Reports/General Updates

Safety:

- A BPD Southern District representative was in attendance.
 - Officer Rivera can be reached at Raul.Rivera@baltimorepolice.org.
- Crime metrics in Locust point were down 43% year over year.
- Please notify 311 if you notice any street lights out.
- There was no DoT representative in attendance.
- As a reminder, if you open a 311 ticket please email the board with the ticket number.
- Safety concerns can be sent to contacts@mylocustpoint.org.

Parks & Beautification:

- Next meeting: Wednesday, the 26th at Cheryl's House at 7 PM. The team will discuss park updates and events for the year.
- Looking for new ideas for Latrobe Park. While the focus this spring will be on planting beds, other suggestions are welcome.
- The committee works closely with Baltimore City Parks & Recreation.
- There have been fallen trees, trash, and leaves accumulating. Residents are encouraged to help clean up the area and submit 311 tickets for tree-related issues.
- Question: Is the Locust Point Litter Committee affiliated with the Parks & Beautification Committee?

A community grant application was submitted for review, but it has not yet been approved.

- If you are interested in joining the parks and recs committee in one of the targeted task forces, questions can be directed to parksandbeautification@mylocustpoint.org. (?)

Education & Schools:

- No update
- Harris Teeter is no longer donating back to schools for VIC card users. You must register for the Harris Teeter delivery service to earn a \$10 credit back to your school.

Social:

- Locust Point Festival is 9/13/2025

UA Community Garden Updates:

- Garden Update
 - The garden is planned to move to Latrobe Park, but there are ongoing issues with soil testing.
 - On January 15th, a meeting was held with BCRP, BCPSS, the Mayor's Office, the Baltimore Health Department, MDE, MDH, EPA, District 46 representatives, Councilman Blanchard, Zeke Cohen, and SBYSL. Special thanks to Team 46 for coordinating.
 - The original soil testing conducted by BCRP was invalid—it tested two feet deep instead of at the surface level. The EPA recommended retesting at 2-4 inches.
 - Retesting has been completed, but results are not yet available. They are expected within the next 30 days.
 - Once results are received, BCRP will likely take 12-16 weeks before officially releasing them. The committee will follow up on the timeline.
 - In the meantime, since the soil status is unknown, the city assumes it is not contaminated. However, residents are advised to wash hands after contact and avoid bringing outdoor shoes into the house.
- Banner Project
 - Many neighborhood banners are faded and damaged and need replacement.
 - A community survey will be published to gather input on the new banners. Email and Facebook notifications will be sent out tomorrow.
 - The project is not currently funded. Estimated cost is \$15,000–\$20,000 and requires city approval.
 - The process is expected to take about a year.
 - In the last installation, 36 banners were installed. The committee is currently evaluating how many to install this time.

- We are still working with Fort McHenry on planning Long Nights for the summer. However, due to NPS budget and staffing cuts, it is uncertain if the event will take place this year.
- A new park superintendent is set to arrive in mid-March.
- Questions can be directed to locustpointcg@gmail.com.

Communications/Newsletter/Website:

- Please check out mylocustpoint.org for information and opportunities.
- If you would like to receive our emails, send a note to contacts@mylocustpoint.org and like our page on Facebook for updates. Send any editorial ideas or interest in volunteering on the newsletter - communication@mylocustpoint.org.

Community Improvement Grants:

- These grants are available to the entire neighborhood. Projects may beautify, benefit, or otherwise enhance the community with a preference given to those ideas with lasting impact or creating broad new connections. Please consider submitting a grant to contacts@mylocustpoint.org. The grant form is available on the website <https://mylocustpoint.wordpress.com/about-the-lpca/community-improvement-grant/> and on Facebook.

LPCA Website:

- Please check out the website at <https://www.mylocustpoint.org>.

New/Old Business

Digital Bay Update

- The LPCA continues to monitor the situation and is discussing possible Receivership action with Councilman Zac Blanchard.
- The owners have not made any repairs or maintained the property. Receivership would allow the City to take control of the vacant, hazardous property, make necessary repairs, and sell it to an interested party.
- A fire occurred at the property in August, but no action has been taken since.

Tide Point Taskforce

- Cheer building & nearby land has been sold to Mark Sapperstein, who is joining us at our meeting tonight to introduce his proposal. He plans to turn the parcel into townhomes. See the FAQs provided at the meeting for more information on this parcel and project.
 - The development plan requires an amendment to the PUD (document that provides additional zoning restrictions) as well as a zoning change.
 - We are not voting on anything tonight.
- Mark Sapperstein provided an overview of the planned development.
 - He previously developed McHenry Row and the Banner Row Apartments over the last 15 years.
 - Did not purchase the triangle lot currently used by Under Armour (UA) as a passthrough.
 - Has approached UA about removing the pedestrian bridge that crosses the railroad tracks to the building.
 - Project Details
 - Property size: 7 acres

- Cheer Building: ~140,000 sq. ft.
- Current zoning allows for: Industrial use, 65 townhomes, and a 500-car garage.
- Proposed plan:
 - 119 residential units
 - Removal of the existing building
 - Continuation of the street grid with uniform-sized homes
 - Two-car garages per unit, plus 130 additional street parking spaces
 - Create another entrance on Key Highway, with three blocks of two-way streets within the development
- Approval Process
 - The Planning Department will need to review and evaluate the proposal.
 - To proceed, Mark would need to remove the property from the PUD (Planned Unit Development) and seek a zoning change.
 - Both actions require approval from the City Council.
- Question: Does the church lose all parking?

Mr. Sapperstein: The church does not have parking on its property.

- Question: Was the 65-unit allocation negotiated?

Mr. Sapperstein: The overall lot was originally zoned for 140 units, with 65 allocated to this property.

- Question: Which direction would the outermost houses face?

Mr. Sapperstein: They would face the community.

- Question: Do you plan to develop the triangle lots?

Mr. Sapperstein: Not at present; I do not own them.

- Question: What is the project timeline?

Mr. Sapperstein: The next step is to gauge community sentiment. Then, I would work with Councilman Zac Blanchard and the Planning Department to draft a bill. If initiated next month, approval could be completed by July. Demolition would take time. Groundbreaking on utilities could begin in the 3rd or 4th quarter. Some testing has already been completed, with no issues found.

- Question: Have you confirmed with CSX that the easement is transferable?

Mr. Sapperstein: Yes.

- Question: If approved, what is the plan for traffic lights and pedestrian crossings?

Mr. Sapperstein: No traffic lights are currently planned. The need will be assessed during the Planning Department review. Traffic flow will also depend on Under Armour. Stop signs and green space will be incorporated where necessary.

- Question: What are the sizes of the planned green spaces?

Mr. Sapperstein: Several 20x40-foot spaces.

- Comment: There's a quasi-dog park consisting of at least four full-sized contiguous lots. It would be great to preserve the mature trees.

- Question: If the PUD is not rezoned, do you have alternative plans?

Mr. Sapperstein: The property would be leased to industrial tenants. The existing building, formerly occupied by Under Armour, is difficult to lease to a single tenant, so it would likely be repurposed for multiple users.

- Question: What will be the price points of the townhouses?

Mr. Sapperstein: Market rate, estimated at \$600K-\$700K.

- Question: What will be the energy mix for the homes?

Mr. Sapperstein: This would be determined by the builder.

- Comment: Concerned about Decatur becoming a through street from Fort to Key, increasing speeding and truck traffic. Lowman and Beason are truck routes. Hull and Decatur are not.

Mr. Sapperstein: This is the intention but is subject to community consensus and Planning Department recommendations. Some of it is dictated by the Fire Department.

- Question: Will there be street parking?

Mr. Sapperstein: Yes, 139 on-street spaces in addition to two-car garages for each unit.

- Comment: This plan creates parking by taking away parking lots. Also people use these places as communal space, for instance riding bikes.

- Comment: Under Armour moved out in November. These lots will not remain empty forever.

- Comment: A resident advocated for removing parking and increasing green space.

- Comment: The overflow parking the Ruppert Homes developer built works great for community gatherings.

- Question: How will water storage be handled?

Mr. Sapperstein: This would be handled by the builder.

- Comment: A Delaware sand filter system is effective.

- Question: Is anything considered historic on the current site?

Mr. Sapperstein: There are audiovisual items, a basketball court, and kitchen equipment, but nothing historic.

- Comment: There is concern about commuters using new parking spaces for water taxi access.
- Question: Could the parking lot on Towson lot be made free?

Mr. Sapperstein: That is private property.

- Question: What would you classify as green space?

When infill developments are completed, green spaces are typically not fenced off. They are usually used by the residents closest to them, while others may go to the park. At Banner Row, there is an open space at the back of the project for everyone to use, with planting scheduled for spring. Additionally, there is a green space along Fort Avenue that needs to be addressed. These areas would be part of the HOA.

- Question: Could the community garden be relocated to this site?

Mr. Sapperstein: No.

- Question: Would it be possible to preserve the existing green space?

Mr. Sapperstein: This would need to be discussed with the developer.

- Comment: Some trees in the existing green space, like Bradford Pears, will eventually fall and need to be removed. Not all residents prioritize green space. Also, other developers may not be as appealing as Mr. Sapperstein.
- Comment: Mr. Sapperstein has been open and transparent in supporting the LPCA year-to-year.
- Question: Any thoughts on the impact of 130 homes on local schools?

Mr. Sapperstein: The school is at capacity, but I do not have an answer yet.

Councilman Blanchard: I met with the Chief of Staff of City Schools for an estimate based on the recent Banner Row (104 homes resulting in 15 students, primarily pre-K and kindergarten). They estimate about a 20-student increase from this development as not all children will attend the local school. Baltimore Peninsula is zoned for Thomas Johnson. At FSK the largest percentage of out-of-zone students come from Federal Hill. The city expects Federal Hill students to remain in Federal Hill rather than transition elsewhere.

- Request to Councilman Blanchard: Help educate the community on PUD modifications and their implications. There is concern if the PUD is opened the changes could negatively impact the community.

Councilman Blanchard: PUDs are uncommon in the city. Jasmine Kimball (Planning) covers this area. I would not propose something that removes the PUD entirely.

- Comment from Vice Principal at Francis Scott Key Elementary/Middle School: FSK leadership has reached out to Mr. Sapperstein and found him responsive. They seek advocacy for the school from Mr. Sapperstein. The building is too old to expand and mobile classrooms are not an option on site. We are hoping it is possible to get a 21st century building and hoping to get continued support while the school supports the potential new families.
- Question: Has anyone approached you about what they might want if the PUD is reopened (e.g., Under Armour)?

Mr. Sapperstein: There are two options: Repeal and replace the PUD to remove this parcel while leaving the rest intact. Rezone non-residential parcels to residential while keeping the original PUD in place.

- Point of Order: A motion was made to extend the meeting to 9:15, seconded, and was approved unanimously.
- Question: Do you know anything about the future of Tide Point property?

Mr. Sapperstein: No, but the current PUD does not allow multi-family housing.

- Question: Is this lot part of the Under Armour PUD?

Mr. Sapperstein: Yes, it is all part of the same PUD.

- Question: Will there be a specific task force for this development before opening the PUD?

LPCA Board: The Tide Point Task Force is open to the community and is the current task force for this issue. No date is set for the next meeting, but it will be announced.

- Question: Any plans for a five-year tax credit phase-in study?

Councilman Blanchard: This is part of a large conversation about which credits are creating positive outcomes for the city. The city is currently reviewing its ten-year financial plan, including serious conversations about these tax credit structures. R-8 tax revenues are about eight times those of Light Industrial zoning. I am happy to continue the conversation.

- Comment: In 2006, the initial request was for 1,000 units but was negotiated to just over 100. The proposed site plan is maxed out. More green space should be considered (at least twice the existing and configured in a usable format).
- Comment: Please look for the intersection at Lowman and Beason to be normalized.

- Question: Have you considered a mix of home sizes?

Mr. Sapperstein: 16-foot-wide homes are too small, leading to garage use for storage. The plan is for 20-foot-wide homes, which are in higher demand.

- Question: Has a traffic impact study been conducted?

Mr. Sapperstein: Not yet, but it can be done. This plan discussed tonight is based on prior experience.

- Question: The Baltimore Peninsula development is a mix of 16-, 20-, and 24-foot-wide homes. Have you thought about building 24-foot-wide homes in this development?

Mr. Sapperstein: I can discuss this with the developer.

- Question: What is the price difference between 20- and 24-foot-wide homes?

Mr. Sapperstein: It is substantial.

- Question: How much parking exists now versus what is proposed?

Mr. Sapperstein: I would need to evaluate the current parking lot capacity.

- Question: Will the frequency of CSX train crossings impact access through the proposed exit on Key Highway?

Mr. Sapperstein: Not sure but can request data from CSX.

- Question: Are train horns required during crossings?

Mr. Sapperstein: Yes, they are legally required at unprotected crossings.

- Question: What will be the height of the houses?

Mr. Sapperstein: Likely around 40 feet (approximately 12 feet per floor).

- Question: What will the height of the houses be?

Not sure, but 40ft is normal (12 ft per floor).

- Comment: Expressed concerns about the 4th floor massing. The homes in the recent P&Q development have a substantial structure on the roof that is out of character to the rest of the neighborhood and makes the effective height of the home much taller.

- Question: Who owns the Silo Point lot? Are you planning to buy it?

Mr. Sapperstein: Under Armour owns it.

- Please email contacts@mylocustpoint.org if you would like to participate.

Community Announcements / Guests

- Please renew your membership for 2025!

Motion and Second to Adjourn the Meeting

- Motion was made and seconded.
- Our next meeting is March 12, 2025.

Adjourned 9:07 pm