

Greenbelt News Review

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

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GHI Starts Issuing Warning Notices To Greenbelt Dog-Owners

By Al Skolnik

"Do you want your children to grow up so that they have to visit a zoo to get to know what a dog looks like?"

With words of this stirring nature, pet-fanciers appealed in vain to the Greenbelt Homes, Inc. board of directors last Friday night for revision of its stepped-up policy of getting rid of Greenbelt dogs. This policy went into high gear last week when eight GHI members received notice that because of failure to dispose of their dogs or cats by the August 1 deadline, cancellation of their mutual ownership contracts would be considered.

Turning a deaf ear to all pleas, the board pushed its plans to evict owners of unauthorized pets. It approved the issuance of 30-day notices of the effective date of the cancellation of contracts to all persons who ignore advance warning notices to dispose of their pets. (Of the first eight violators to receive such advance warning, two have already informed the board of their decision to remove their pets.) Members receiving 30-day notices will have the right to appeal their case to the entire membership body, provided the board is informed of this desire within 10 days after receipt of the eviction notice. It is expected that a special membership meeting will be convened to hear such appeals.

Two of the eight violators of the dog ban, Charles Kendall, 7-U Research, and Melvin Fields, 56-D Crescent, argued strenuously that their dogs were not public nuisances. "We always take care," said Kendall, "to keep the dog on a leash when outside our property. He doesn't bother anyone." He demanded to know who filed complaints against his dog and why he was included among the first group to receive notices.

GHI president Ed Burgoon explained that the first warning notices involved cases which had been repeatedly brought to the attention of the board during the last year. However, he added, no discrimination was intended since similar notices would be sent this week to all other members known to have pets, warning them that cancellation of their contracts would be considered at the next board meeting on Friday, August 23, unless word is received of the disposal of their pets.

Burgoon further emphasized that the question of whether a dog is or is not a public nuisance or a good or bad dog is immaterial. "It is the mere retention of a pet that is a violation of the mutual ownership contract and the corporation's rules of occupancy," he stated.

But Kendall and Fields argued that the board should be more flexible in its application of the prohibition. Kendall stated that there are good dogs and bad dogs, just as there are good people and bad people in Greenbelt. The board shouldn't apply a blanket prohibition, he pleaded, but should take into consideration each individual situation.

Burgoon replied that the board was following the mandate of the membership in enforcing the prohibition against pets. "By the most democratic means possible—a referendum—the membership voted last spring by over 2½ to 1 to enforce the curb on dogs and cats and to take drastic action against violators." He declared that "we are merely carrying out the will of the members as expressed in that referendum. The board will be glad to hear pleas for individual exceptions to the ban," he continued, "such as the need for a 'seeing-eye' dog or a dog for the protection of elderly persons. But as for a change in policy, the only recourse is an

appeal to the entire membership body at a membership meeting."

GHI secretary Bruce Bowman pointed out that it would be highly impractical for the corporation to attempt to set up a body to investigate each home with a dog to determine whether the dog was a public nuisance, whether it was being kept on a leash, etc. "Just think of the controversies that would be stirred up if such a body decided that one member could keep his dog but his next-door neighbor could not!"

Kendall suggested that the board adopt a policy followed by a local Virginia housing project whereby those with dogs at present could retain them, but no new dogs would be allowed in the community. Fields added that "as it stands now, the ban does not take into consideration the human element. We've had our dog for many years and have grown very attached to him. He's like a member of the family. And now you ask us to dispose of him."

Bowman replied that as a dog-lover, he has refrained from getting a dog all these years precisely because he knew he would grow attached to the animal and might then be forced to dispose of it. "Practically all the present pet owners in Greenbelt knew that they were violating GHI rules when they acquired the pets," he said. "They took the risk that they might some day have to give up a pet which they or their children had become fond of. Yet they went ahead and took that chance, and they shouldn't now come complaining to us because the majority of the membership have decided to enforce the ban."

David Champion, member of the GHI audit committee, had this to add: "I think it is a mistaken assumption of pet owners that the majority of members voting for the ban are dog-haters. Rather, many of them represent persons who, in recognition of the fact that Greenbelt, because of its close living quarters, could not permit everyone to keep dogs, have deliberately refrained all these years from imposing on their neighbors by keeping dogs. They now feel that it's unfair for others, who have less regard for their neighbors, to insist upon keeping their dogs in total disregard of the sacrifices the majority of the members have made in abiding by the anti-pet rules of the co-op."

In other action, the board approved a roadside landscaping plan presented by director Hans Jorgensen which calls for the planting of 4-foot evergreens, probably pine trees, next January and February. During the last two years, shade trees and flowering crab trees were planted as part of a joint landscaping program with the city. This year's program will be done without the help of the city.

The board decided to renew its fire and extended coverage insurance with Nationwide Insurance Company after receiving word that renewal of the policy at this time would avoid a hike in insurance rates.

Registration

The City Clerk's office will be open on Saturday, Aug. 17, 1957 from 10:30 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. to permit citizens to register to vote in the September Council election.

Winfield McCamy
City Clerk

Seven Candidates So Far For City Council; 160 New Voters Register

By Isadore Parker

Deadline for registration of voters and filing for candidacy for the city council election is 4 p.m. August 19, city clerk Winfield McCamy reminded residents this week. To be eligible to register, a citizen must be a resident of Maryland for 1 year and of Greenbelt for the past six months. The same qualifications apply to candidates. Those who have registered previously but have not voted in either of the past two elections must register again, McCamy added.

Almost 160 new registrants have been enrolled in the past month, McCamy disclosed. Citizens filing for candidacy include three incumbents: Mayor Tom Canning, Ben Goldfaden and James C. Smith. Alan Kistler is expected to file but had not done so as of last Tuesday. Incumbent Robert Hurst has disclosed that he will not seek re-election. Other aspirants for the council job who have filed their intentions to run are: Henley Goode, 23-P Ridge; Joseph Cherry, 13-F Laurel Hill; Stanley R. Edward, 4 Forestway; William Seigel, 23-D Ridge. One other resident who is expected to file is Mrs. Haward Hunt.

To run for office, citizens are required to submit a petition (which can be secured from the city clerk) and have a minimum of 29 registered voters (or maximum of 49 signatures) sign their names. Council members are paid \$500 a year, and tenure is for two years. In the last 1955 election, according to Miss McCamy, there were 976 registered voters and 743 ballots cast. Election day is September 17.

The city charter, which governs election procedures, requires that a candidate receive a majority of the votes to be elected. If less than five candidates receive a majority, a "run-off" election is held the following week. The next two candidates with the highest number of votes are selected for each vacancy. (Example: for two vacant seats, the next four candidates in voting popularity are eligible to be placed in the "run-off.") In the past, many run-off elections have been held, particularly when more than eight candidates are running for the council. Provision is made in the budget

Laurel Hill Court Persuades City To Revise Parking Arrangement

By Russell Greenbaum

The night of Monday, August 12, a regular city council meeting night, will long be remembered up on Laurel Hill Road as the night the 11-court took the council to camp. Overwhelming the council members with huge charts and carefully drawn plans plus an eloquent speaker to represent them, this Laurel Hill court talked the council into ordering the city's new lay-out of the court parking area changed to conform to a plan prepared by one of the court residents. In addition, the 11-court persuaded the city to do away with the cinder block markers for the parking strips.

Although the court's position was explained in a formal petition to the council, the court residents left nothing to chance in their campaign to improve what they considered the city's poor parking arrangement in their court. Prior to the council meeting they got two of the councilmen, James Smith and Alan Kistler, interested in their problem, and at the meeting they fired at the council their sharp-shooting leader with the fitting name of David C. Champion of 11-L Laurel Hill.

The chief complaint of the 11-court was that parking was no problem in the court area until the city put in its new lay-out. The arrangement of the parking strips now made it difficult to maneuver cars. The marking of each parking strip with a house number has also created animosity where none existed before. The cinder blocks set in the ground to mark the individual parking spaces have proven to be a hazard both to cars and people, especially children.

Champion then explained what the 11 court had done to alleviate this situation. Eleven of the residents of the 16-unit court met together. A number of parking arrangements were considered, and four were formally approved by the residents and numbered in order of preference. The plans were drawn

by residents of the court who are engineers, and several copies were made so each council member could have one.

Champion, an accountant by profession but who obviously belongs in the legal profession, was armed with several pages of notes in presenting his case. He challenged the contention of City Manager Charles McDonald that a court parking area 60 feet wide was suitable for right angle parking (which the city lay-out followed), according to the American Automobile Association. Champion had taken it up with the AAA and found they considered 59 feet a bare minimum for right angle parking.

The 11-court's plan number one, the parking plan the city agreed to accept, features parking at a 45-degree angle for all cars except two at the center rear of the court and the first space on each side of the court, which were retained at a right angle. Both corners of the court are also utilized for diagonal parking. This plan permits the comfortable parking of the longer cars currently in style and a wider parking strip than that set up by the city together with a wider walking space between the cars.

Champion told the council that the city's arrangement made backing out hazardous, particularly since youngsters used the parking area for play. The latter were also constantly tripping over the cinder blocks and could conceivably do themselves serious damage. The blocks were also an added hazard to drivers. He suggested that the city simply smash them with sledge hammers.

Councilman Smith made the motion to accept the 11-court plan and was seconded by Kistler. Mayor Tom Canning, in expressing his agreement, noted that the city's program for laying out parking spaces in court areas was designed to solve the parking problems of court residents, not to create new ones. McDonald pointed out that the program had developed because of the complaints from a number of courts that parking was unsatisfactory and that he understood they were generally happy with the new arrangements. He indicated that the 11-court was apparently a rare exception in having had no parking problems before.

Councilman Bob Hurst noted that he had previously stated his view that the cinder blocks was not a good idea, and he also stated that the marking of a parking strip with a house number implied that the resident "owned" the parking space, which is not the case. Champion commented that this had led to fist fighting in a neighboring court. In regard to the 11-court's cinder blocks, Mayor Canning directed the manager to knock off their blocks.

The 11-court parking plan may start a trend for the rest of the city. The 53-court of Ridge Road, which earlier had presented a parking layout problem that had apparently been satisfactorily solved by each car moving down one space, later came back and was granted a modification of its layout similar to the 11-court.

One serious parking problem remains—the question of the growing number of residents with two cars. Mayor Canning reported that the city is planning to get more land from Greenbelt Homes, Inc. (GHI) which will be developed as additional court parking space as soon as funds can be made available to carry out the construction of more parking space. Meanwhile, he said, the principal objective was to assure that every court resident had at least one parking space he could regularly use.

VOLUNTEERS, NOTE!

Members and their families will meet at Meyer's place for their annual picnic, Saturday, August 17 at noon. Directions: through Glenn Dale to U.S. 50. Turn left on 50 to Md. 556. Turn right on 556 to Central Ave. Turn left on Central Ave. and follow signs to Triton Beach. Just before Triton entrance, turn left, then next right to Bay Acres and continue to picnic area.

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Deadline - August 19

There is still time to register to vote in the September 17 city council election. There is still time to file petitions for candidacy in the election. The city clerk will be on duty in the city offices all day Friday, from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Saturday, and until 4 p.m. Monday.

The next elected city council will be faced with many problems that affect the community and its citizens. A few months after the council takes office, it will be knee-deep in the annual budget debate. This all-important subject has a profound effect on the services that will or will not be provided to the community. It will establish a tax rate that may affect the future growth of the city. In the next year changes in our water and sewage system will be debated. Zoning recommendations made by the outgoing council will be discussed by the new council. The parking problem will be considered; the recreation program dissected and analyzed; the new "city center" and fire department building will be at issue. Vandalism and juvenile delinquency will be another problem to vex the new council.

There is hardly a single debate or action by the city council that will not affect in some way each citizen in Greenbelt. We are a tightly-knit, isolated community with several unique qualities that need wise and judicious handling. It is imperative that we elect a city council that will give intense consideration to all these matters.

It is a civic responsibility for all citizens to vote in the next election. The city council will represent you, and will be sensitive to your needs and desires. There is no better way to demonstrate to the new council the close relationship between citizens and our elected representatives than a large registration and an equally large turnout at the polls.

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