

HCA Bulletin
February 2024

Hillandale Center Makeover

The Hillandale Center, near the corner of New Hampshire Avenue and Powder Mill Road, has been open for business since 1950, and was ready to elevate its game. In part thanks to the Countywide Façade Improvement Program (CFIP), the revamped Center is now more enticing than ever and features an entirely new mural painted by a professional muralist. On October 12, 2023, Hillandale residents and supporters showed up for a festive ribbon-cutting to celebrate Hillandale Center's colorful new façade.

Mr. Paul Bran, Hillandale Center's owner who spoke at the event, noted that his family built the shopping center in 1950 and has continued to nurture it for the past 73+ years; his company recently spent around \$580,000 for the facelift. He thanked Montgomery County, particularly the CFIP, for its assistance. Other speakers included Montgomery County Executive **Marc Elrich**, Montgomery County District 5 Councilmember **Kristin Mink**, and Delegate **Jheanelle Wilkins**, who has represented District 20 in the Maryland House of Delegates since 2017. Delegate Wilkins also heads the 66-member Black Caucus, which is the largest state black caucus in the United States.

When you have a chance, please stop by and explore our neighborhood stores!

Ribbon-Cutting/Re-opening of Hillandale Park

The long-awaited re-opening of the completely renovated Hillandale Park on the sunny afternoon of November 4, 2023, was a gala event that drew a large and enthusiastic crowd of Hillandale residents, including many children who swarmed the brand-new, three-level playground. The park now features a brick-and-mortar picnic shelter, public restrooms, a softball field that overlays part of the full-size soccer field, two lighted basketball courts, a log exercise area, a paved walking trail and ADA-accessible walkway from the WeAchieve/CHI Center, and a 95-vehicle parking lot with two entrances. The two tennis courts will soon be re-paved and re-striped for pickleball.

Joining community residents were members of the Hillandale Volunteer Fire Department, Montgomery County Police, and National Park Police. Local notables were present for the ribbon cutting, which followed remarks given by Montgomery County officials, including **Mr. Artie Harris**, chair of the Montgomery Planning Board; Montgomery County **Councilmembers Kristin Mink** and **Andrew Friedson**; and **Mr. Jewru Bandeh**, Director of the Eastern Montgomery County Regional Center. In his remarks, **Mr. David Moon**, who represents District 20 in the Maryland House of Delegates, noted that the state gave \$4 million of the total funds for renovating the park. Also in attendance was **Delegate Lorig Charkoudian**, who represents District 20 in the Maryland House of Delegates, and whose face-to-face talk with the head of the State Highway Administration resulted in the painting of the striped pedestrian crossing across New Hampshire Avenue only days before the opening.



HCA lobbied tirelessly for the park for years, an effort that was crowned with success in 2018 when Montgomery County Councilmember Tom Hucker pushed the renovation through the County Council—a great example of HCA advocacy and effectiveness!

October HCA Meeting and Hillandale Executive Board Election

The October 2023 HCA meeting was a well-attended and engaging gathering that featured comments by Montgomery County Third District **Police Commander David McBain**, who offered a candid perspective on crime in the Hillandale community. Commander McBain noted that while we are living in a low-crime island, our proximity to downtown Silver Spring, P. G. County, and Washington, D.C. presents unique challenges in addressing crime—and in fully staffing the Third District with enough officers. **Montgomery County Councilmember Kristin Mink** offered her thoughts on law enforcement issues in the community and discussed difficulties faced by residents of the Enclave apartments. Attendees shared their concerns about speeding on New Hampshire Avenue, car thefts, fireworks, and traffic stops, and **Commander McBain** and **Ms. Mink** urged residents to contact them when they have questions or problems. A list of HCA Executive Board members elected at the end of the meeting is listed in this newsletter and posted on the HCA website at www.hillandale-md.org

Hillandale public safety at a glance written by JJ Green

A casual walk and talk with neighbors in Hillandale in recent weeks revealed happy memories of the recent holiday season. But they were shared along with disturbing stories about an all-night cascade of fireworks activity during the Christmas holidays. One person spoke of a late-night traffic crash that left his wife's car on their lawn with a broken axle, and others detailed growing concerns about strange cars and people sitting in front of their houses, packaging, selling, or smoking weed.

More and more frequently, these "low-level" offenses are happening during a prolonged period of escalating violent crimes-- including car-jackings, burglaries, and murders--in Montgomery County,

Scenes like these are happening across the vast majority of the Washington D.C. region.

This pattern began here, and in many large metropolitan regions across the country, during and shortly after the COVID pandemic. Curiously, most other locations nationwide are now seeing crime rates recede. Why then are Hillandale and other local jurisdictions not seeing the same pattern emerge?

Part of it, according to research and conversations with law enforcement officials, has to do with a complex mix of elements specific to our region:

- Many criminal actors believe police are under pressure to avoid confrontations.
- Legislative efforts impacting policing tools (i.e. carjacking traffic stops).
- Crime spillover from other jurisdictions.
- A rise in the number of crimes involving drug-induced psychoses and attendant mental illness.

According to public safety data from the Montgomery County Police Department, in 2023 homicides, auto thefts, burglaries, and carjackings, across Montgomery County exceeded 2022 levels. Hillandale has seen significant increases in auto thefts and burglaries. A steady and unsettling rate of school threats, attempted sexual assaults, and recoveries of stolen vehicles has occurred on our streets.

The most glaring statistic is county-wide auto thefts. In 2023, there were 3,438 auto thefts, a 130% increase from the 1,499 in 2022. It was the worst year for auto thefts since at least 2016, according to DataMontgomery. This prompted county police to relaunch the auto crime unit that had been disbanded because of budget cuts in 2021.

Hillandale is by no measure unsafe. The reality is quite the opposite, but unchecked crime could possibly change that.

Coming soon: more information about the HCA Adopt A Road Program!



HCA Budget for 2023-2024

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Management [same as 2019-2020] | \$ 1,400 |
| Insurance Policy \$1,000 | |
| Website (paid through April 2025) | |
| SSL certificate | 80 |
| Grants [same as in 2019-2020, except. Schools*] | |
| We Achieve/CHI Center | 500 |
| Party Events [same as 2019-20, + c. 15%] | |
| National Night Out | 250 |
| Holiday Party | 750 |
| Beautification [same as in 2019-20] | |
| Corner greenspace maintenance, water bill | 420 |
| Publications = \$3,330 [\$2,900 in 2019-20] | |
| *Postcard in October 2023 | |
| \$715 postcard; \$400 Postage = | 1,115 |
| *Paper Bulletin (January 2024) | |
| Fundraising appeal + envelope + newsletter, c. 1,100 | |
| [cost in 2019-20 + c. 20%] | |
| *Postcard in April 2024 | 1,115 |
| Total Expenses | \$6,730 |
| Income dues from 350 members x \$20 = | \$7,000 |
| Fundraising campaign | |

Note 1: If HCA publishes a new directory, it might add another c. \$1,440 in costs and put the budget into deficit, which would require a transfer from reserves, which in Sept. 2023 amounted to \$20k. (Note: 2017 directory cost \$1,200 x 20% = \$1,440.)

*Note 2: If Budget appears to be in the black, then as in 2019-2020, we could give \$800 in grants to the four local schools, at the rate of \$200 per school (4 x \$200 = \$800).

Hillandale Executive Board

At the public HCA meeting held at the CHI Center in October 2023, the following people were elected to the HCA Executive Board:

| Officers | Committee Chairpersons |
|--|--|
| President: Jeremiah Pope  | Archivist: Paul Rood |
| Executive Vice President: open |  Beautification: Angie Logan-Pope |
| Vice President for Programs: Paul Rood | Editor, Hillandale Bulletin: Ann Perry |
| Treasurer: Mary Bergman | Housing and Permitting: vacant |
|  Secretary: Anita Ginyard – Rogers. | Membership: Margie Goergen-Rood, Kay Taub |
| Past President: Margie Goergen-Rood | Natural Resources: Eddie Hall |
| | Public Safety (Advisory): Jai J. Green |
| <p style="text-align: center;">At-Large Representatives</p> | Schools: Tom Helfand |
| Old Hillandale: vacant | Website Maintenance: Russ Harris |
| Hillandale Forest: Richard Sternberg |  Welcome: Melissa Knapp Marcy Schlissel |
| West Hillandale: Tom Helfand | Zoning and Planning: Eileen Finnegan |
| West Hillandale: Nancy Stark | <p style="text-align: center;">Ad Hoc Positions</p> |
| | Liaison to Friends of White Oak: Shana Davis-Cook |
| | Transportation: vacant |

If you are interested in filling our vacant positions, please contact HCA President Jeremiah Pope at president@hillandale-md.org