

Tuscany-Canterbury Neighborhood Association Works for You

Tuscany- Canterbury Neighborhood Association

2 -Year Report

submitted by

Co-Presidents, Linda Eberhart and Anne Perkins

***Fall 2017 – Problem and Reorganizations***

In the fall of 2017 the neighborhood learned that 33 Warrenton Road was for sale. The property included 2.8 acres of forested land that became known as “the Woods”. The land runs along the north side of the 200 – 300 blocks of Tuscany Road, directly across the street from the Gardens of Guilford Condominiums and several town houses and adjacent to the Calvert School and Tuscany Court. The sale of the land and any subsequent redevelopment would have a major impact on the neighborhood.

At that time the Tuscany Canterbury Neighborhood Association (TCNA) was in no shape to take on a major challenge to the quality of life in the community. TCNA had a Board, but except for Treasurer Bill Bass it had no officers; no one had been willing to take on the role of President after Sue Talbott stepped down. In September 2017 Linda Eberhart and Anne Perkins volunteered to become Co-Presidents of TCNA. They were elected at the Fall Membership Meeting of the Association. Garth Thompson was appointed Vice President and acting Secretary.

The first changes under the new leadership were to the organizational structure of the Board and Association.

The Board agreed to meet monthly though as time moved on, meetings were held every other month. It was agreed that meetings would last no longer than 1½ hours and begin at 7 pm. During 2017-18 meetings were held in the homes of different Board members to acquaint Board members with the diversity of housing in the neighborhood. In 2018-19 meeting were held at the Broadview.

In the fall of 2017 the Association had no approved FY ’18 budget and a budget was not passed until February 2018. Because the Association’s fiscal year begins on July 1, the budgeting process was modified so that the outgoing Board votes on the next fiscal year’s budget each spring before the beginning of the fiscal year and before the election of the new Board and officers at the spring membership meeting – usually June.

In 2017 the outgoing Board had identified several issues that TCNA needed to focus on in addition to their work on ongoing quality of life issues in the community. TCNA needed to increase membership ; explore ways to control costs associated with communications; and improve communications with the neighborhood. The Board’s committee structure was modified to address these priorities – fewer committees and the requirement that all Board members be active on a committee. (See fuller explanation of the committees below.)

* The Streets and Greens Committee, chaired by Chris Whitaker, provide oversight over the 3, now 4, community gardens and work with Friends of Stony Run on issues related to the park, walking path, and stream. It also provide oversight and direction for traffic issues, including snow removal.
* The Events Committee, chaired by Ann Christopher, oversees the Fall Picnic, socials before/after TCNA membership meetings, and other events such as the architectural tour associated with the neighborhood’s 100th Anniversary. First Friday, chaired by Roz Mansouri, is another cherished TCNA event.
* The Communications Committee, chaired by Steve Summers and Dave Baker, provides oversight for the TCNA Website, the Newsletter and membership communications.
* The Membership Committee, chaired by Hannah Mazo, is responsible for enrolling new members and communicating with existing members about dues payments and renewals.
* The Calvert School Liaison Committee was established in the 2008 First Amendment to the Covenants TCNA has with the school. It meets four times a year to iron out any town-gown issues and was chaired by Brooke Murdock.
* The Crime and Safety Committee, chaired by Maria and Paul Gallo, was created in 2018. The committee works with Northern District Police Community Relations and develops strategies to fight crime in the neighborhood.

From time to time there are ad hoc committees, such as the Woods Committee, that come and go depending on need and volunteer interest and availability. The 100th Anniversary Committee is planning ways to celebrate the neighborhood’s 100th.

The 2017-19 Fall and Spring General Meetings were held at the Calvert Middle School and featured a variety of speakers. For instance, Tom McGilloway spoke about the Master Plan for the parkland along Stony Run, and Gillian Storms spoke about the architect who provided the impetus for the original development of Tuscany Canterbury.

In June 2019 TCNA hired a part time staff person to relieve the volunteer board of some tasks. Since some of the TCNA garden volunteers have aged out, TCNA also employs part time help to oversee the maintenance of the gardens.

***Fall 2017-June 2019 – What Happened***

**The “Woods” Committee**

After learning about the possible sale of 33 Warrenton Road, including the wooded acres in the 200-300 blocks of Tuscany Road, a “Woods” Committee was formed. It was chaired by Deborah Callard and oversaw all the activities associated with the sale of the forestland along Tuscany Road and purchase of the land by the Calvert School.

The Woods Committee included residents of the Gardens of Guilford, Tuscany –Lombardy, Ridgemede - Ridgewood Apartments in all communications, meetings and asked for representatives of each to be on the negotiating team. During past negotiations with Calvert the community had been divided at times, so it was important now to be negotiating as one.

The Committee immediately hired Rachel Edds, a Planning and Zoning Consultant, to help prepare a fact sheet outlining possible outcomes of the sale of the “Woods” and to identify where and when there would be opportunities for community input.

A meeting of all residents of Ridgemede and Tuscany Roads, the Gardens of Guilford, the Tuscany-Lombardy and Ridgemede Condominiums who might be impacted by the sale and redevelopment of the “Woods’ was held at Deborah Callard’s house during the summer of 2017. They were alerted to the issue, heard explanations of the materials that Rachel Edds had prepared, and asked questions. The broader community was informed at the fall membership meeting and through articles in the ENewsletter.

Committee members met with Councilwoman Mary Pat Clarke and the Baltimore City Director of Planning to solicit their advice and support. The Woods Committee prepared testimony for the TCNA Board to give before the Planning Commission in support of subdividing the 33 Warrenton Road property into two parcels. The TCNA testimony emphasized the neighborhood’s concerns about the impact of any future development on the high population density neighborhood and the Jones Falls/ Stony Run watershed. Over 40 residents of the neighborhood attended the hearing. Councilwoman Clarke testified in support of the neighborhood.

After the Planning Commission hearing, the Calvert School expressed its interest in purchasing the “Woods”. Because the 2000 TCNA-Calvert Covenants prevent the school from purchasing any additional property in Tuscany-Canterbury without the neighborhood’s prior approval, the school and the neighborhood needed to agree about the conditions of Calvert’s purchase of the ”Woods”.

TCNA alerted its lawyer, Jeff Scherr, who had worked with TCNA before and a neighborhood negotiating Committee was appointed to meet with Calvert.

The Committee continued to keep the TCNA Board and community involved and informed.

The Woods Committee met many times with Calvert’s team and reached an agreement in the spring of 2018. The agreement is memorialized as the Second Amendment to the 2000 Covenants and is on the TCNA website. The Agreement allows Calvert School to purchase the “Woods” and to build an educational building on it. The building entrance will face the Middle School sports field. Ingress and egress to Tuscany Road will be limited and there will be a green forest buffer zone along the Tuscany Road and Tuscany Court alley sides of the property. The agreement lasts for 20 years. Mike Travieso and Fred Lazarus were especially helpful in the negotiations.

The school has hired an architect but does not expect to begin construction for a year or so.

**Membership and Communication Committees**

The Board had agreed that TCNA should communicate with more residents (not just TCNA members) more quickly (not just via a two times a year hard copy Newsletter) and target communications when the message only affected a small area of the neighborhood. It was felt that all this could to be done at a reduced expense.

The 2-3 times a year paper newsletter that was circulated to members only was replaced by a monthly ENewsletter that now goes out to anyone in the neighborhood whose email address TCNA has. (Paper Newsletters are being hand delivered to several families who don’t use email.) The TCNA email list has doubled to about 500 individuals so TCNA is communicating with more residents more often

Targeted communications have been sent to affected residents several times:

* Information pertaining to the sale and subsequent purchase of the ”Woods” by the Calvert School;
* Information about the timing and inconvenience caused by the resurfacing of the alley running from Linkwood Road to Ridgemede Road behind the Tuscany Road townhouses and the Ridgemede Apartments
* Advance warning to homes that may be impacted by Calvert heavy traffic days.

A new easier to use and less expensive mailing list program is being used.

The Website has been updated, redesigned and beautified. Because it is easier to manage, the information on it will be more current and useful. It is hoped that we can track the hits the site gets and possibly solicit ads in the future.

A new and less expensive method of collecting dues has been instituted and as an incentive to join TCNA, the Hopkins Deli provides a discount to TCNA members.

**Streets and Greens Committee**

In October 2017 TCNA helped with the celebration surrounding the ribbon cutting of the two new bridges over Stony Run. For over 8 years several T-C residents had spearheaded the efforts to make the walking path along Stony Run continuous and to raise the money for planning the path alignment and constructing the two bridges near the intersections of Linkwood Road with Stoneyford and Ridgemede Roads. T-C resident Delegate Maggie McIntosh was instrumental in securing Program Open Space money from the State for the Stony Run Walking Path project and Councilwoman Clarke helped clear the way of obstacles with the City.. In 2108 TCNA, Friends of Stony Run and the Lake Roland Garden Club paid for additional planting near the larger bridge. Clean ups are scheduled from time to time in conjunction with other organizations.

The Committee manages the 4 community gardens and for the past few years has hired a helper to plant and weed the gardens.

In 2017 the Committee met with Councilwoman Mary Pat Clarke and the Department of Public Works to clarify responsibilities for snow removal. The snow removal plan was circulated in the ENewsletter and is on the TCNA website.

As part of their marketing efforts several of the Charles Street and University Parkway apartment complexes had been using signs that violated the City zoning ordinance. TCNA worked with the apartments’ management and Councilwoman Clarke on the issue. An amendment was added to city-wide sign legislation that prohibited any feather flags and similar signs in all residential areas. This legislation became law in January 2019.

Construction at the Ambassador Apartments created inconvenience for much too long. Councilwoman Clarke and TCNA encouraged management to move things along and the construction was finally completed in June, 2019.

Residents living on University Parkway across from the JHU athletic facilities were worried about lighting for the new baseball field. Negotiations produced good results.

**Events Committee**

The Fall Picnic was held in the Linkwood Park in 2017 and 2018 with food and drink contributed by the Hopkins Deli and Alonso’s and by residents. The 2017 Picnic was held in conjunction with the Ribbon Cutting event for the opening of the two new bridges over Stony Run. The picnic organizers invited our Wickford Road neighbors to join T-C. The park proved a great place for a variety of games for children of all ages.

The enhanced social hour before and after the Spring and Fall Membership meetings at the Calvert Middle School has been a great success because it allows neighbors to meet one another and to talk with the guest speaker. Wine and cheese are contributed by residents.

Roz Mansouri continues to chair the very successful First Fridays Happy Hours at the Alizee Restaurant in the Colonnade. The hotel provides free hors d’oeuvres and a cash bar. From time to time questions are raised about whether or not the Colonnade is the best site for First Fridays. As part of a continuing effort to make this event even better, other sites are being explored now.

There are several events in the planning stages: a 100th Anniversary Celebration, a welcome event for the new Police Commissioner who moved into the neighborhood last winter, and a second architecture walk.

**Calvert Liaison Committee**

The first Amendment to the Covenants with Calvert (see website) created a Liaison Committee that must meet 4 times a year. The Committee continued to monitor traffic problems related to morning drop off and the afternoon carpool line. With the exception of the first two weeks of school in September, there has been improvement because Calvert is staggering times for parents to pick up their children in the afternoon.

For several years the Roland Park Elementary/MS bus has picked up and dropped off students at the corner of Tuscany and Canterbury Roads. This caused a problem in the afternoon because Calvert students were dismissed at almost the same time as the bus drop off of neighborhood students.. TCNA ran interference with Baltimore City Schools. The bus added an additional stop near The Broadview for T-C students. This has resulted fewer students and parents at the corner of Tuscany and Canterbury Road in the afternoons and improved the ability of Calvert to move its carpool line more expeditiously. The Broadview stop has made it more convenient for the RP students, too.

The school provides a list of dates, such as graduation and grandparents’ days, when it anticipates extra traffic in the neighborhood. TCNA is able to use this information to notify affected residents.

During the summer of 2018 the entrance to the Lower School on Tuscany Road was reconstructed. The Committee passed along this information to the neighborhood.

Deliveries to the school must occur between the hours described in the Covenants with the school. From time to time if deliveries occurred earlier than they should the committee passed along the complaint to the school. Signage and lighting have also caused problems and the school has been considerate and responded promptly.

**Crime and Safety Committee**

A Crime and Safety Committee was established in 2018-2019. Paul and Marie Gallo agreed to chair the committee.

The Gallos attend the Northern District Police Community Relations meetings and pass along information to the neighborhood through the ENewsletter.

In 2018 drug dealing was observed on Linkwood Road between Ridgemede Road and University Parkway. Working with Councilwoman Clarke a strategy was developed that included increased police patrols and recommendations to the neighborhood about what to do if they saw something suspicious happening and defensive measures they should take to make the neighborhood less inviting to criminals. A neighborhood watch was formed and police recommendations were included in the ENewsletter. After a month of intensive neighborhood and police activity, the drug dealing disappeared. Residents are advised to lock their cars at all times; turn on their outdoor lights at night; at 9 pm every night check to make sure that all doors and windows are locked; and call 911 to report any suspicious activity.

There continue to be car break-ins when owners forget to lock their cars.

During the spring of 2019 a package thief was in evidence in T-C and other close-by neighborhoods. His picture was taken by one resident’s security camera and circulated to the police and the neighborhood via the ENewsletter. An arrest was made in the summer of 2019.

**Other Services**

In addition to the work of the Committees and Presidents the Board continued to provide other services for the neighborhood

North Baltimore Neighborhood Coalition - TCNA is a member of the NBNC, a group of 13 neighborhoods that surround Loyola University . A TCNA Board member meets with the Coalition several times a year.

Dumpsters - Twice a year TCNA contacts the City for dumpsters – one at Linkwood and Tuscany Roads; the other at Highfield and Canterbury Roads – so than residents can get rid of large trash items.

Parking Permits - Each year the Presidents appointed a Coordinator who contacted the City Parking Authority to find out about its yearly plans. The Coordinator picked up the neighborhood’s materials, notified residents when and where the materials would be available and returned materials to Parking Authority.

Answer inquiries about the neighborhood from residents and others.

Resolve issues between residents.

This neighborhood is a wonderful place to live. We have enjoyed working with two terrific volunteer boards that, like us, realize that keeping our community beautiful, safe and fun takes time and hard work. We are all so lucky to have such great neighbors who share their time with the rest of us.

Anne and Linda