

Roland Park E-letter

Web Editor's E-letter July 21, 2009

1. Property Tax Summit, Wed., July 22.

Baltimore City's property-tax rate is over the double that of the surrounding counties and Roland Parkers' tax bills are among the highest in the city. For example, a house assessed at \$500,000 in Baltimore City and absent assessment-increase caps would pay about \$11,340, while, all other things being equal, the same house in Baltimore County would pay \$5,500 and, in Anne Arundel, \$4,380. (Source: Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation, <http://www.dat.state.md.us/sdatweb/taxrate.html>. Calculations do not include municipal or special-tax-district surcharges, nor various formulas that mitigate increases at the local level.)

You may be interested to know that Frank M. Conaway, clerk of the Circuit Court, will hold a summit conference of citywide leaders to discuss implementing a plan to reduce property taxes for Baltimore City at 6 p.m., Wednesday, July 22, 2009 at the War Memorial Building across from City Hall.

When: 6 p.m.-8 p.m., Wednesday, July 22, 2009.

Where: War Memorial Plaza (101 N. Gay Street Baltimore, MD 21202).

Conaway will, according to a press release received by RolandPark.org today, lead a panel of speakers that will propose a gradual reduction in city property taxes over a period of 10 years. "High property taxes are draining the life out of Baltimore," says Conaway. "It's an impediment to home ownership and a drain on landlords and tenants alike. We have to turn things around or the city will die."

Conaway will propose that the city adopt a phased reduction in property taxes, either by legislation or through charter amendment. His plan is based in part on a study by Ph.D. economist Anirban Basu which calls for a 10-year program to reduce property taxes by 50 percent. Under that plan, the city would recoup lost revenues by drawing new investment into parts of the city where houses and lots have been abandoned.

Conaway will be joined at the July 22, 2009 meeting by David Rudow, Esq., a longstanding efficiency-in-government advocate, and Rev. Jamal Harrison Bryant.

2. Firehouse Drawing.

The drawing for the firehouse "Win a Carpenter for a Day!" raffle will be held at 10 a.m., Saturday, July 25 at the Roland Park firehouse itself, at the intersection of Upland Road and Long Lane (behind the Tudor-style shopping center).

It's not too late to buy tickets. Win a master carpenter for a day, plus materials (an \$800 treat from Plumb Construction); or a \$250 professional landscape consultation from Mark Willard Landscape Architects; or a \$40 toy basket of fun from A Child's Play in Cross Keys. Tickets are \$5. Contact Katy Couch for ticket delivery to your door, or buy them at Schneider's Hardware at 700 Wyndhurst.

For details, contact Katy Couch at katy@katycouch.com or 410-889-7604.

3. Crime Notes.

Local resident Colin Drane attended the July 15, 2009 meeting on crime in the Northern District and submitted the following notes:

Violent crime, down 9 percent.
Property crime, down 10 percent.
Burglaries, up 7 percent.
Homicides, up (percentage not disclosed).

The body found on the porch of an unoccupied building on Falls Road is not a homicide. There is no district deputy major assigned yet. There should be one assigned in a couple of weeks. Most of the discussion was focused on the recent shooting in Pen Lucy. Comments from the community indicated that it is seeing a dramatic increase in drug activity. Another interesting comment made by the major: over 100,000 people are arrested annually in Baltimore. The presenter asked for assistance/donations for a hand-held thermal imaging camera (base cost: \$14,000). David Hill from the Charles Village Community Benefits District announced that CVCBD has hired Walter Brown (former BPD officer) for security consulting; he's at walter@charlesvillage.org. Last, Better Waverly is having a benefit for its fire station.

Video clips of the meeting may be viewed here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zpo8aRb5q4Y>,

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WI4wJekz-8M>, and

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=88DHvUYoHEg>.

Thanks, Colin — Ed.

4. Roland Park Office Manager Position.

The Roland Park community organizations are seeking an office manager to provide part-time administrative assistance and constituent services for the Roland Park neighborhood of Baltimore City.

This position will work with volunteers from the Roland Park Civic League (CL), the Roads and Maintenance Corporation (R&M) and the Community Foundation (CF), as well as current and prospective neighbors, in managing the day-to-day office functions. Additional information on the Roland Park organizations may be found at www.rolandpark.org.

Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- Responding to calls, e-mails, and drop-in requests related to Roland Park community issues;
- Staffing the community organizations' office currently located in Roland Park;
- Preparing monthly and other periodic financial reports for the CL, R&M and CF;
- Conducting invoice processing and other banking functions;
- Retrieving incoming mail from off-site post office boxes;
- Preparing mailings and community outreach efforts;
- Supporting and working with board and other volunteers on local initiatives and community issues; and

- Organizing and accessing files and other administrative duties.

The ideal candidate will have the following attributes:

- Excellent communication skills, oral and written;
- Ability to work with a wide variety of people;
- Highly organized and detail oriented;
- Proficiency with computer software including word processing, accounting (Quickbooks), and database management (Filemaker Pro); and
- Flexibility in working hours.

Position is approximately 20 hours per week on average and is expected to pay \$17.00 per hour. Interested parties should send resume and/or pertinent information to civicleague@rolandpark.org by August 15, 2009.

Best regards,

D.P. Munro
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RolandPark.org