

ORCHARD HILLS-MAPLEWOOD HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

www.ohmha.org

OHMHA NEWSLETTER

February/March 2011

Q&A with City Councilman Stephen Rapundalo, March 8

What are the hot topics right now in Ann Arbor city government? How does City Councilman Stephen Rapundalo view the issues of importance to you?

Please join the OHMHA board:

**Tuesday, March 8 from 7:30 pm - 8:00 p.m.
Thurston School Library**

for an update and Q & A session with City Councilman Stephen Rapundalo.

Afterwards, please feel free to stay for the OHMHA board meeting. The board appreciates your input and participation.



Photo at right: City Councilman Rapundalo briefed the OHMHA board and neighbors on city issues in Jan. 2009. On March 8, at 7:30 p.m. it's time for another update. Join us in the Thurston Library!

Got Stuff?

Need Stuff?

**Neighborhood
Garage Sale !**

Save the date:



Saturday, May 14, 2011

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Thurston Pond Berm and Outlet Repair Application Approved

- by Neal Foster

Late in the spring of 2010, the berm for Thurston Pond failed, caused the water level in the pond to drop and threatened to drain the pond. Volunteers placed sand bags and did other repairs to stop the berm from being completely washed out. The berm failed due to the poor soils used to reconstruct it in 2009.

The Thurston Nature Center Committee (TNCC) contacted Ann Arbor Public Schools (AAPS) and the company responsible for berm reconstruction. AAPS worked out an agreement with the company to do the needed repairs and contacted the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment (MDNRE) about the proposed work. MDNRE responded that a permit would be required. A Public Notice was issued.

The application to MDNRE for the required permit describes the proposed work as including the following:

- 1) Excavation of sediment that has migrated into the low forested area as the result of berm erosion,
- 2) Excavation to enlarge the pond outlet channel that leads to the outlet structure,
- 3) Exposure of the existing concrete emergency spillway that lies under a portion of the berm/ woodchip path, and
- 4) Repair and reconstruction (raising) of the eroded berm in the area just northwest of the outlet structure.

The TNCC responded in November 2010 to

the MDNRE Public Notice that had requested comments about the application submitted by the Ann Arbor Public Schools. However, the permit as issued (late January, 2011) does not clarify how the concerns that the TNCC has raised would be addressed.

This article summarizes those concerns and recommendations. The TNCC believes that the berm and the outlet channel (photo) will function more effectively if the Ann Arbor Public Schools (AAPS) and its contractor carefully consider our comments.

Our major concern is that compacted clay was proposed to be placed on top of the existing poor berm material. **Simply put, unless the poor material (sand and silt) is removed, the berm will fail again (posing a renewed safety hazard to the children and adults who routinely use the pathway thereon).** The berm in the section that failed should be excavated to existing clay and then backfilled with clay to an elevation of 908.8 feet.

Then topsoil and wood chips could be added to the top and west side of the berm on top of the clay without fear of erosion due to overtopping (Clay will not support the establishment of good vegetative cover, as required by the permit).

A second concern is that the drawing submitted with the permit application did not accurately reflect actual conditions existing at the site. A (now buried) existing concrete spillway covers only the front (pondward) side and the top of the berm. The landward

edge of the spillway ends at the top of the berm. Beyond the spillway edge the berm slopes sharply downward into the forested area behind the berm. If there was significant outflow via the spillway,



Outlet channel from Thurston Pond to the overflow drain (grate in foreground) to Millers Creek. This channel, dug by neighborhood volunteers, soon became high and dry after the berm failed and the pond's water level dropped below that of the overflow drain.

(Photo: Neal Foster, late April 2010)

almost certainly there would be rapid erosion of the berm's west side.

We recommended adding riprap or other non-erodible material to the steeply sloping west side of the berm at the spillway discharge point.

We look forward to the berm and outlet repair work being completed and regularly and consistently supervised to ensure that the most sensible plan is followed. TNCC members include active and retired environmental professionals (two are environmental engineers) and have been working to improve Thurston Pond and the surrounding Nature Center for the past 45 years. We hope the AAPS contractor will work closely with the TNCC.

Grant Submission

In other Thurston Nature Center news, TNCC members are preparing a preproposal for submission to the Sustain Our Great Lakes Community Grants Program, a public-private partnership among ArcelorMittal, U.S.E.P.A., U.S.Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S.Forest Service, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The new project's goals are

- (1)To restore, protect and maintain a more optimal water quality in Thurston Pond;
- (2)To create greater habitat diversity in the pond;

and

(3)To restore a more diverse plant and animal community in the pond, restore its full usability as an outdoor classroom for elementary and middle school children, enhance its use as a public recreational resource and build community stewardship capability. Invasive species will be controlled or removed in support of this goal.

Removal and control of invasive species also would be done in support of these goals.

Leadership and Getting Involved!

Finally, the current TNCC Chair (Neal Foster) soon will be stepping down. We are grateful to Colin Brooks (colin.brooks@mtu.edu), a Thurston parent and current TNCC Secretary-Treasurer and Webmaster, for volunteering to take over as new TNCC Chair sometime this Spring.

If you would be interested in joining the TNCC and helping improve the Nature Center, please contact nealfost@umich.edu so we can add your name for announcements of upcoming meetings. Also, please be sure to visit the website at www.thurstonnaturecenter.org



Winter Fun on Thurston pond.

Photo Credits: Colin Brooks (left photo) , Neal Foster (right photo)

Neighborhood Watch is Active in OHMHA

- by Greg Jagst

I've been involved as a Neighborhood Watch Block Captain for around a year now. I became involved in Neighborhood Watch to help maintain some of the features that drew me to buying a home in the Orchard Hills subdivision; I like the family friendly atmosphere where kids play in yards and residents frequently walk the dog or take a stroll down to Sugarbush Park or OHAC pool.

Initially, I was concerned that involvement in Neighborhood Watch (NW) would require a big time commitment, but that has not been the case. Deb Cauffiel, the Neighborhood Watch Coordinator with the City of Ann Arbor Police Department has been helpful in providing me with a packet of info allowing me to reach out to immediate neighbors close to my home

as well as the neighborhood at large.

Currently, I distribute via email a 'Notify List' of any Crime Bulletins or related advisories from the Ann Arbor Police

Dept. to a couple of dozen homes within OHMHA.

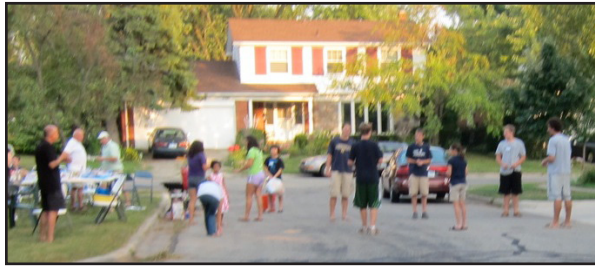
I encourage neighbors to consider becoming a part of Neighborhood

Watch and would be happy to answer any questions or add anyone to my 'Notify List.' Don't worry, I

won't spam you and you can be removed if you later choose to be.

My email is gjagst@aol.com and my cell is (734) 846-6332.

Deb Cauffiel, the NW Coordinator at the A2 City Police Dept. can also be reached at (734) 794-6900 x49346 and has many NW resources to share.



Neighborhood watch helps maintain our fun and friendly neighborhood.
(Photo from August 2010)

Three Benefits of Neighborhood Watch Participation

(Gleaned from the city's website)

1. We **reduce our risk** of becoming victims of crime
2. We **get to know our neighbors better** for our mutual protection
3. We can **address other issues of concern** in our neighborhood

Millers Creek Watershed Improvement Plan

- by Peter Mooney

At OHMHA's November 9, 2010 meeting, the Board and others heard a presentation in the Thurston multi-purpose room from Paul Steen about the Millers Creek Watershed Improvement Plan.

Steen is the Watershed Ecologist at the Huron River Watershed Council. During his presentation, which included a slideshow, he discussed the history of the Improvement Plan and described the Plan's purpose to moderate the flow of water into the Millers Creek.

Millers Creek begins in our neighborhood and runs east of Huron Parkway down to the Huron River. Because of the ubiquity of impervious surfaces such as driveways, sidewalks, parking lots and streets in our subdivision, Millers Creek became subject to a "boom or bust" cycle with excess water flowing into it from storm drains following hard rains and a very low flow rate at other times. The flow following heavy downpours was creating erosion issues and the unevenness of the water level was affecting biological diversity.

To retain rainwater, the Watershed Council, along with

many dedicated volunteers, installed a rain garden at Thurston School and also at the road stub on Prairie near its intersection with Briarcliff, where the pavement and road bed were totally removed and replaced with a large rain garden. Steen also reported that 76 rain barrels are now in use in our neighborhood. In the last year, each of these barrels collected approximately 60 gallons of water from downspouts, reducing the amount of water going into the storm drains. The water collected can be used on lawns and gardens, reducing residents' water bills while protecting the watershed.

These efforts have borne tangible fruit. The HRWC has measured the water flow rate in cubic feet per second in Millers Creek at regular intervals since the work began. After a heavy rain in 2003, they measured 184 cubic feet per second in the Creek. By 2010, that had gone down to 131 cubic feet per second. As the water level has become more even, Steen reported that stream biodiversity has improved.

For More Information

To learn more, check out the Millers Creek website, <http://wiki.mtri.org/display/milcreek/Millers+Creek+Website>, or the OHMHA website, www.ohmha.org (featuring a link to the slideshow).



Rain barrels reduce the amount of water going into the storm drains.



Rain gardens in place of pavement are part of the solution. (Photos courtesy of Huron River Watershed Council)

Conclusions on Watershed Improvement *(from the Huron River Watershed Council Slides)*

- Compared to before this project, Millers Creek is: – Rising more slowly after storms – Has lower flow rates after storms – Takes longer to return to pre-storm conditions – In general, water is moving more slowly through the system.
- Stream ecosystem seems to be improving.
- Millers Creek is not "cured" but real progress was made.

The 4th Fall Festival on October 10, 2010: A Success

- by Amy Seetoo

On the sunny fall afternoon of October 10th, more than 100 neighbors gathered for some biking, learning about our environment and local resources, enjoying performances by local talent, and taking home gifts donated by neighborhood businesses.

Mayor Hieftje led the parade of bikers and trikers of all ages by driving a city's electric car from Rumsey to the Festival on Yorktown. Tom Teller (stage name) from Cedarbrook kicked off the performance by rocking the tent with his rendition of the blues. Students from Huron High School played Taiwanese music and a quartet by Mozart. Dario Zullo of Rumsey played a piano piece by Mozart, making his second appearance in the festival since his debut last year. The Chinese yo-yo performers once again delighted the audience.

New features this year included Dr. Tenbin Juang's martial art demo and Kim Dalrymple's teaching of Chinese phrases, and lively Irish dancing.

Francie Krawcke from Leslie Science & Nature Center

was the annual big draw at the Festival. Her show and tell of "Hunters in the Sky" was educational and entertaining for all.

There were tables for participants to peruse and learn and tables for action. The former included the Crafts Table featuring Trish Mooney's mosaic "shoes," live critters from the pond, and Huron River Watershed Council's non-profit table, and the Neighborhood Watch table. The latter were the food table, the face painting table by Huron High School students, Membership table and the prize table. The festival ended with the Tree Tour led by Mike Conboy.

Many contributed to the successful event. For the first time OHMHA connected with local businesses by soliciting donations for raffle drawings (See box). Teresa Hatcher of Lexington was instrumental in getting many donations and organized the donor list. Jim Gibbons Audio Services of Prairie provided the sound system at a discount to help keep the cost under budget.

Orchard Hills Athletic Club (OHAC) donated the

The OHMHA Board would like to thank the generous donors:

- Baskin-Robbins
- Carpenter Brothers Hardware
- Carson's American Bistro
- Café Japon
- Corner Nail
- Crown House of Gifts
- Evergreen Restaurant
- Espresso Royale
- Headlines for Hair
- Ita Yoga
- Knit a Round Yarn Shop
- Kroger
- Olga's
- Pet Supplies "Plus"
- Tortoise and Hare Running & Fitness Center
- Tree Town Toys
- UMI Sushi
- Wild Bird Centers
- The Wine Seller
- Zoup



Mayor Hieftje led the bike/trike parade in an electric car to start the festival

The 4th Fall Festival (continued)

festival site and electricity. Phil Delekta helped at the Neighborhood Watch Table. Board members and spouses participated in planning, soliciting donations, and volunteering at the Festival.

The annual festival is a good way to connect OHMHA with neighbors, local businesses, and resources in the City. We look forward to your participation in the 5th OHMHA Fall Festival coming in 2011.



Francie Krawcke from Leslie Science & Nature Center shows off the Barn Owl at the 2010 Fall Festival. (Photo: Neal Foster)

***** Thank you for paying your dues, which support OHMHA activities such as the Annual Fall Festival, and these newsletters *****

ORCHARD HILLS ~ MAPLEWOOD HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR JUNE 1, 2010 ~ MAY 31, 2011

(Make check for \$20.00 payable to OHMHA ~ additional contributions gratefully accepted.)

NAME _____ TELEPHONE _____

ADDRESS _____ AMOUNT PAID _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____ ☐ Please remove my name from your email list.

COMMENTS (we welcome suggestions and/or offers to volunteer on OHMHA projects):

Mail or deliver your dues to: Wendy Carman, OHMHA Treasurer, 2340 Georgetown , Ann Arbor 48105

OHMHA BOARD MEMBERS

Jack Cederquist	2145 Ardenne	665-2282	President
Henry Brysk	3032 Cedarbrook	369-2986	
Wendy Carman	2340 Georgetown	761-8693	Treasurer
Emily Eisbruch	2561 Bunker Hill	665-0533	Newsletter (eisbruchs@aol.com)
Neal Foster	2115 Georgetown	663-0756	
Greg Jagst	2080 Yorktown	846-6332	Secretary
Phil Savage	3304 Bluett	994-6560	
Anne Karabakal	2405 Bunker Hill	669-2084	Webmaster
Peter Mooney	3352 Yellowstone	213-0440	Vice President
Monica Hanna	2163 Ardenne	622-8113	
Chad Bailey	Georgetown	929-2204	
Amy Seetoo	3111 Cedarbrook	332-0390	

ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

John Hieftje (Mayor)	794-6161	jhieftje@a2gov.org
Tony Derezhinski (Council Member, Ward 2) 1345 Glendaloch Cir.	995-2686	TDerezhinski@a2gov.org
Stephen Rapundalo (Council Member, Ward 2) 3106 Bluett	476-0648	SRapundalo@a2gov.org

Question: How do I get on the neighborhood email list? **Answer:** email wjcarman@umich.edu

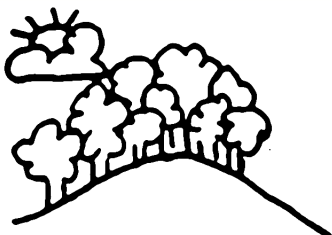
OHMHA

3352 Yellowstone

Ann Arbor, MI 48105

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