

Fells Point Citizens on Patrol INC

A newsletter by and for the people who live, work, and own businesses within the Fells Point area.

April 2003

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Whither Rec Pier? Fells Pointers Can Put In Their Word on April 26

Residents of Fells Point will have a chance on Saturday, April 26, to express their preference among respondents' proposals for redevelopment of city-owned Recreation Pier, the brooding brick colossus of Thames Street. The outcome, like the process, seems bound to prove contentious.

The Department of Housing and Community Development is weighing five developers' visions, variously incorporating a new hotel, apartment tower, amusement park, offices or condos. A committee of the Fells Point Task Force, chaired by Lori Guess, has maintained dialogue with the city dating prior to the call for bids and has arranged the public session—for the 26th at 9:00 AM, with booths in the Pier ballroom on each proposal. Developers' 10-minute briefings start at 10:00. The citizenry then can vote for their choice, or for rejection of them all. Housing Commissioner Paul Graziano has the say on if and how the process then will proceed.

Fells Pointers feel proprietary toward the Pier because it was built in 1914 to serve not only maritime needs but as a recreation site for this community short of parks. While the city leased dockage to tugboat companies, other uses dwindled until the Homicide television show took over the Pier for nominal rent in the late '90s. Residents were barred and maintenance abandoned. The bidders for reuse face an estimated \$4 million investment to shore up its sea legs on the east side.

This expense inspired the city's effort to lease or sell the Pier, with stipulations that the arched head building with its grand ballroom be unsullied and that community use be addressed. The Preservation Society offered a proposal that stressed public uses, including green space on the upper deck and a home dock for the Point-inspired *Pride of Baltimore II*. This proposal lacked a source of reconstruction funds and was disqualified. But at this month's Homeowners' Association meeting, Bob Keith, author of a book on the harbor, pointed out that the charter of the city's Baltimore Development Corp. charges it with undertaking precisely this sort of civic project and he called on it to do so with city resources.

Keith and other prominent Fells Pointers writing in this Newsletter have proposed public uses of the Rec Pier that would include not only the *Pride* and the ballroom but police and fire boats, tie-ups for visiting tour boats and historic ships, a setting for immigration tourism and revival of the harbor masters' office to monitor harbor traffic. Whether such interests can be served in conjunction with some money-making development is one of the likely points of coming contention.



Fells Point's Rec Pier on Thames Street

Other Development Developments

- Two developers combined to offer their concept of how to develop the Bohager's site and an adjacent parking lot along waterside Lancaster Street just east of Caroline and hence not far outside Fells Point. One 10-floor building would house 48 condos and another 13-story structure would hold 275 to 375 rental units, both with parking and first-floor retail. A representative of three Fells Point groups told the city's Design Advisory Panel (DAP) that the proposal was too tall and dense and DAP, entertaining those and other concerns, sent the designers back to their software.
- The city's onetime Primary School #25 at 511 South Bond Street drew six proposals for purchase and redevelopment as condos or apartments. From the sometimes troubled interlude as federal subsidized housing, the building already is divided into 24 units, and most of the redevelopers would maintain the configuration. Parking was a problem for all, with one respondent deciding to gut the first floor for a garage.
- Owners of the Osiris Building between Aliceanna and Wolfe Streets sought preliminary approval of a plan to expand and convert it to apartments and parking, and to construct new housing on the current waterfront parking lot. Concerned community groups of the Fells Point Task Force objected, on the basis of density beyond the scope of the Urban Renewal Plan. The DAP, "in view of the many policy issues raised," withheld approval.

Downtowners Turned Down

Senator George Della and Delegate Peter Hammen said they would abandon proposed legislation to enable the Downtown Partnership to extend its special tax district to selected large commercial sites in Fells Point. Their decision came after Point community groups complained that they had not been consulted on what they saw as a divisive issue. Developer Bill Struever, who sought the expansion, apologized for the failure of communication but held out hope that some means can be found to buttress security and maintenance of the waterfront running east from downtown.



Trash and Recycling Schedule



Trash should be placed outside in metal trash cans. After 6:00 AM on collection day, it is okay to use plastic bags. Trash collection days are usually Monday and Thursday.

Recycling material should go out by 7:00 AM on collection day. Recycle paper tied, in paper bags, or in a box; glass, metal and plastic should be in blue recycling bags.

Monday, April 14 -	glass, metal, and plastic
Friday, April 18 -	HOLIDAY
Friday, April 25 -	paper
Monday, April 28 -	glass, metal, and plastic
Friday, May 9 -	paper

The Fells Point Citizens on Patrol Newsletter is published monthly by FPCOP Inc. Your questions, input, and participation regarding patrols and this newsletter, are welcome.

Please contact us by:

phone - 410.327.7446
410.342.7354 leave message
e-mail - FPCPatrol@aol.com
or write to - P O Box 6137
Baltimore, MD 21231

Drawing a Line to Preserve Historic Pier

Opinion

By Geoffrey Footner

It bothers me and probably other Fells Pointers who have lived here for decades that the recent physical development of the community, now surrounding the Historic District and forever nibbling into it, lifts the quality of life for newcomers at our expense. I suggest that development proposals for the Recreation Pier become our "line in the sand."

Located at the very heart of the Historic District, the 1700 block of Thames Street is caught lovingly by hordes of photographers and is our irreplaceable trademark. Moreover, the Recreation Pier has been the beacon that has brought hundreds of thousands of visitors to our small businesses since Tony and Laura, George, Tom, Turkey Joe and a few others opened the first ones here in the early 1970s.

Those who live in or near the few blocks that border the waterfront and streets of the Historic District, please pause and take a stand: no housing on the pier, no tower or blocks of offices, no parking garages inside for tenants. And above all, no architectural changes that would overwhelm the historic ambiance of Thames Street.

The city and its real estate department take a textbook approach to disposition of assets, giving little weight to the intangibles to which I refer. We should bring our concerns to the attention of more powerful, more thoughtful, branches of the city government. This has always been the case in American life: while some seek to save our environment, others would destroy it in the name of progress and profit. Fells Point's emphasis must be on restoration of the Pier and uses of it that conform to our maritime heritage, immigration, and to community life and the joy of living it.

Easter Sunrise on Broadway Pier

Pastor Jack Trautwein will conduct Easter service on Sunday, April 20 at 6:15 AM on the Broadway Pier. If the weather is inclement, attendees will move into the Vagabond Theater, at 806 South Broadway.

Boat Lake Refills, With a Kinetic Twist

Friends of Patterson Park will reopen the 139-year-old Boat Lake at noon on Saturday, April 26, with Dan Rodricks and turtles that have waited offsite for two years while it was dredged and refitted. The American Visionary Art Museum's Kinetic Sculpture Race is to splash down shortly thereafter and chase up Hampstead Hill to the spring reopening of the Pagoda—last year's landmark in the Park's revival. The Friends encourage attendance, and membership. For more information, go to www.pattersonpark.com.

Printer's Ad

Presidential Notes

Thanks for the Support, And Results Are on Way

Fells Point Citizens on Patrol (FPCOP) thanks Corporate Security for Johns Hopkins Medicine for a \$500 grant to help our organization with membership recruitment, phone expenses and its Newsletter production. It also thanks Frank Eagrowski for a generous donation.

FPCOP is planning a community-wide gathering in June. Watch this space next month for more details. With the weather turning nicer, finally, if you would like to join a patrol or receive training on what to look for in your neighborhood, please contact FPCOP at the numbers or addresses herein.

Rats' Rites of Spring

Alas, with the melting of the snow and the advent of spring, the rats no longer seem interested in the peanut butter and trap sandwiches I serve them. Better meals are available a la carte elsewhere in the neighborhood. Please remember to put your trash out as late as possible on pick-up days, in appropriate containers.



*Michael Arida and his son gear up
for their daily commute*

Tales of Two Commuters

With both me and my wife working, and our young son now in day care, the morning commute has become a floating bicycle race. I start out on foot, with bike and boy in tow, to the commuter Seaport Taxi and boat from Fells Point to the day-care center across the harbor in Tide Point. Then I get on the bicycle and race either to a co-workers' house in Federal Hill for a carpool or to Camden Yards to catch the MARC train to a stop near Washington. I have a second bike waiting at the station for a final sprint to my office.

By then I'm exhausted. I leave it to my six-month-old son to recount what happens on the return trip: "In the afternoon, my day-care keeper paroles me to my Dad, I spend a few quality minutes with him on the water taxi heading back to our side of the harbor, and we trudge home to Mom, where dinner is waiting. Since I'm up at crack of dawn, I try to get to bed by around 9:30 PM, but you know how that is. . . ."

—*Michael Arida*
FPCOP President

House Tour May 11

The Preservation Society House Tour is Mothers' Day. Tickets are available at the Visitor Center on South Ann Street.

Neighborhood Association Meeting Schedules

Fells Point Antique Dealers Association: (meetings as needed) Call 410.675.4776 for more information.

Fells Point Business Association: (Third Tuesday of every month) 9:00 AM at EBLO, 606 South Ann Street.

Fells Point Community Organization: (Second Monday of every month) 7:00 PM at the Fells Point Visitor Center, 410.276.5471.

Fells Point Homeowners Association: (First Wednesday of every month) 7:30 PM at Bertha's 2nd Floor Studio.

Fells Point Marketing Group: (Third Monday of every month) 6:30 PM at Kooper's, 410.276.1410.

Mid-Point Community Association: (First Tuesday of every month) 7:30 PM at Conrad-Miller Gallery, 2007 Fleet Street.

Society for the Preservation of Fells Point and Federal Hill: Call 410.675.6750 for more information.

Eastern, Dallas, Bond Streets Association: (Every other month, the second Monday of the month) 7:30 - 8:30 PM at 1637 Eastern Avenue.