

Bolton Hill

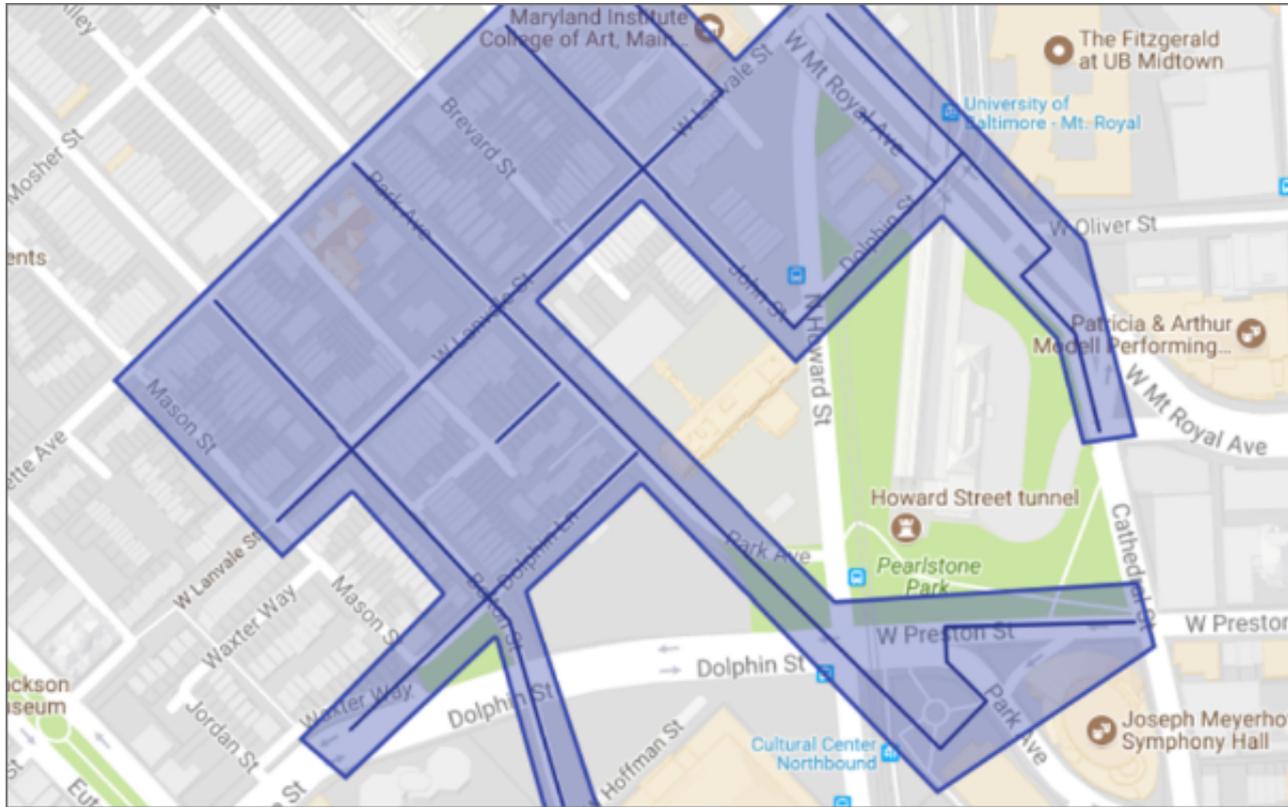
Community Association

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Major BGE project in Bolton Hill could begin in February

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/major-bge-project-in-bolton-hill-could-begin-in-february/>



BGE will begin major gas line work in Bolton Hill in the first quarter of next year, part of what BGE dubs "Operation Pipeline". This is effectively BGE's plan for replacing old gas lines with new ones. The rollout of this initiative was originally planned for the middle of 2020 but was delayed due to the pandemic.

BGE breaks these projects into phases, and Bolton Hill is entering phase one. The pipes to be replaced in phase one, and thus the homes currently most affected, are shown in the map below. (See Figure 1) Representatives from the company are uncertain if there will be additional phases in other regions of the neighborhood, but a review of the [Operation Pipeline website](#) shows most neighborhoods do include multiple phases. BGE anticipates beginning the first phase of the project sometime around February, and they have indicated each phase takes at least six months to complete.

Concerned about noise, public/private property damage, or repairs?

To understand the impact the project will have on noise, damage to property and the repair process, it is important to understand the process BGE will use to replace the gas lines. Workers are expected to arrive at 7 am, begin working at 8 am, and depart by 4 pm.

They will be digging up roads, sidewalks and anything else blocking the path to the gas lines. In the case of brick sidewalks, they will stack the bricks to the side until repairs are completed - the duration that

bricks will be piled is not known by BGE. We have expressed concern over the potential for the bricks to be stolen or, in some cases, to be used as a projectile. Response is pending to this regard.

Digging will be noisy. They will be using jackhammers and a water-powered tool which minimizes root damage. They will be digging in residents' yards to access and replace pipe beneath the soil. They intend to replant anything they have dug up. They are comfortable allowing the homeowner to dig up and replant their own plants, if requested.

In cases where residents have finished basements, it is possible the gas access was "walled in" behind drywall, or another barrier. In these cases, residents must move items or walls out of the way. BGE will remove such obstacles, but it probably won't be pretty, and they will not perform or reimburse for any repairs.

The project should not include any extended period of time where a hole is open and exposed. On the same day a hole is dug they will either fill it with "hot mix" or cover it with a metal plate, whether it's the sidewalk or the road.

Parking

Construction vehicles and road work will constrain parking, and "No Parking" signs will be placed throughout the neighborhood during the project. BGE expects to take up a minimum of twenty spots in the active project area, and sometimes more when road work is being performed.

John Street Park

There was much concern over the original plan BGE had for John Street Park. In short, there would have been substantial digging and destruction, but neighbors and BGE have worked together to minimize any impact to the park. They will be digging up the brick sidewalk along both sides of the park, but will not be digging up anywhere inside of the park aside from a very small area in one of the beds on the opposite side of the road from the fountain. To achieve this, BGE is laying pipe on both sides of the park. All other areas of phase one are planned to have a pipe laid on only one side of the road. As a result, the work in this park will be slower than other regions, and is expected to take approximately one month.

BGE entry into homes (Renters and Landlords)

As mentioned above, BGE may require entry into homes to access the gas line. This is a very important part of their process which, if not completed in a timely manner, will delay their entire project and affect your neighbors. We consulted with neighborhood associations where Operation Pipeline has already come through, and those residents indicated that failure of residents to permit BGE entry was the single biggest problem with the project.

These neighbors advised us strongly to **make timely appointments with BGE and to keep those appointments**. If you do not get your appointment with them resolved, you and your neighbors will be inconvenienced. BGE will leave door hangers, make phone calls, and knock on doors to schedule in-

home appointments.

In the case of renters whose name is on the BGE account:

1. BGE will enter the house and work on the meters/lines if a renter permits entry
2. If the renter is not comfortable granting access, the renter will need to put BGE in contact with the landlord
3. If BGE cannot contact a renter, or if the renter fails to permit BGE entry and does not supply contact information for the landlord, BGE will proactively locate the landlord and request entry.

Questions are welcomed and encouraged, and will be best addressed at the BHCA Zoom meeting on Jan. 4 at 8 p.m. BGE will have representatives present to provide an update and address questions. It is expected their full project plan will be available shortly thereafter. For more information please see the [BGE website and videos](#) for Operation Pipeline.

–Eric Biagioli

Bird-spotting in and near Bolton Hill for Christmas?

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/bird-spotting-in-and-near-bolton-hill-for-christmas/>



For 120 years now bird-lovers have come together outdoors during the holiday period to participate in the [Audubon Society's Christmas bird count](#). With reasonable precautions, it is a safe outdoor activity for individuals and families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The count started on Monday and will run through Jan.5. [The variety of birds sighted in Maryland](#) and Delaware during a recent count was vast. A variety of birds have been spotted in Bolton Hill either living here or seasonally passing through. They include Hummingbirds, Woodpeckers, House Sparrows, Cardinals, Goldfinches, Wrens, Eagles, House Finches, Crows, Robins, Cat birds, Mockingbirds, and Woodcocks, among others

Toby Ditz and Mark Martin have photographed a few. If you see others, shoot a photo and we'll post a bird page on the BHCA website. Send them to birds@boltonhillmd.org .



Holiday religious services in a pandemic time

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/holiday-religious-services-in-a-pandemic-time/>



Holiday Religious Services

The COVID-19 pandemic is an everyday major inconvenience, but for area churches during the holiday season, trying to keep worshipers safe while maintaining holiday traditions can be especially challenging.

Here is what we know about some nearby holiday services, both online and in-person. Because of the weather and restrictions in response to the disease, please check out the appropriate website on the day of any scheduled event.

Beth Am Synagogue

<https://bethambaltimore.org/>

Mitzvah Day - It's normally a gathering at the synagogue on Dec. 25 to prepare and deliver holiday dinners to our neighbors in need. **Our building may be closed, but our community is open! This year** Beth Am members will team up to remotely prepare, and deliver holiday meals for 36 families, selected by the staff at our neighborhood school, Dorothy I. Height Elementary. If you want to help, check the website or email serpick@gmail.com .

Brown Memorial Presbyterian Church

browndowntown.org

Annual Christmas pageant - fully online. Come and celebrate the Christmas story with a cast of characters via Zoom - Sunday, Dec. 20, 11a.m.

Longest Night service - a contemplative worship service to honor the grief and sadness that many experience during this season of loss and to receive the hope that comes when we name our truth before God. Monday, Dec. 21, 7pm

Christmas Eve service of lessons and carols - Thursday, December 24 - 5:30pm Hybrid Worship service. A limited number of pre-registered participants can join the in-person part of this hybrid worship service in the sanctuary. All others are welcome to join via Zoom. Online participants bring your candles. Those who would like to come in person please check the website for important safety updates and notifications as we reserve the right to move this service entirely online should conditions warrant it.

Corpus Christi Catholic Parish

<http://corpuschristibaltimore.org>

Christmas Eve Mass—Mass will be held on the Parking Lot next to the church – weather permitting – if bad weather it will be held inside – limited capacity. Dec. 24: 2:00 pm. Also a 4 p.m. Mass will be held in-person and on Zoom.

Christmas Day Mass—In-person and possibly on Zoom. Dec. 25: 10:30 a.m. ease realize that because of the Baltimore city and the archdiocesan restrictions our space is limited.

For non-parishioners and visitors who wish to join via Zoom please send your email to either Kristen Bowden (kristen.bowden@archbalt.org) or Fr. Marty (mdemek@archbalt.org) and we will send the connection for the Masses.

Memorial Episcopal Church

<https://www.memorialboltonhill.org/>

Memorial Episcopal is promoting local holiday shopping with an online Christmas market.

E-faith@8 - informal, community led service with more questions than answers and an open spot for whoever appears. On Zoom Sunday,. Dec 20 at 8 a.m.

E-Church – More traditional service, available via Zoom and YouTube Sunday, Dec. 20 at 10:30 a.m. See the website for entry instructions.

Caroling - The church also is planning a Christmas Caroling event, at spots to be announced in the 1300 – 1500 blocks of Bolton Street. Details will be posted on Facebook and the church website.

–*Bill Hamilton*

Temporary "Miracle on John Street" coming soon

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/temporary-miracle-on-john-street-coming-soon/>



You may have seen the last enormous tractor-trailer grumble its way up John Street, hoping to cut through to I-83 from Howard Avenue. Or maybe not. With luck, the Santas at the city's DOT will deliver a solution before the year (or at least the winter) is over.

Kevin Cross and his John Street neighbors have put in years of effort, documenting trucks, discussing possible solutions, and polling each other for opinions. Their effort has paid off, as they had all the info needed when BHCA finally achieved a DOT phone call in June.

Graham Young, a DOT planner who is tasked with traffic calming, had recently caused flex posts to be installed on Mt Royal, blocking left (north) turns from Lanvale Street. When the neighbors asked to close John Street, Graham was willing to try flex posts again. This is officially a *temporary* closure.

BHCA learned that a permanent closure requires a longer process (the mind boggles), as approval must go through the right-of-way division for a legal determination. We suspect that other neighborhood-proposed traffic calming solutions may have similar approval and legal challenges.

We leapt at the chance to implement a solution that DOT had, itself, proposed. The neighbors were able to demonstrate that they already had documented that over 70% residents approved of the measure--a key point for DOT. The neighbors and BHCA had also spoken with management of Sutton Place and obtained their agreement. That was in August.

Will flex posts be in this year's gift delivery? Don't hold your breath but do hope for the best!

–Amy Sheridan

Searching for a worthy cause to support this month?

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/searching-for-a-worthy-cause-to-support-this-month/>



When it reorganized and adopted its new name in 2019, Bolton Hill Community Association also obtained a 501©(3) tax-exempt certificate. That means that holiday donations to BHCA or to a host of worthy projects embraced by BHCA can be conveniently supported with a credit card and a few computer clicks, although mailed contributions are welcome, as well.

BHCA serves as a fiduciary agent for several neighborhood efforts involving parks and gardens, greening and cleanups, festivals and social causes. Visit the [BHCA website](#) to support any of them or make an undesignated gift to the association. Any of them qualify as tax-deductible charitable contributions for this tax year as long as they are made before the year ends.

The website also lists a wide range of other organizations and worthy causes in and near Bolton Hill, most of them also tax-exempt, compiled by BHCA's Social Action Task Force (SATF). And updated a few weeks ago by task force members *Chris Kingsley and Peter Van Buren*. More information [here](#).

Memorial Planned for Dr. Joe Costa

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/memorial-planned-for-dr-joe-costa/>



Credit: The Baltimore Sun

In his free moments, Mercy Hospital critical care [physician Joe Costa](#) liked to walk his dog Daisy in Lanvale Triangle Park, which he considered a special place near where he and husband David Hart lived. Now friends and family want to build a memorial to him there, honoring him for his life and career treating patients at Mercy, where he died on July 25 from Covid-19. He was 56.

“Right now we are planning a short three-course brick wall topped with bluestone” with Victorian fencing, plantings, a bronze plaque and possibly a park bench in the park”, said Deborah Healy, who with Hart is chairing the effort. Contributions for the memorial can be made [here](#) (designate Lanvale Memorial Fund) , or checks payable to BHCA/Lanvale Memorial Fund, can be sent to Healy at 125 W Lanvale St., 21217.

A separate fund exists on the BHCA website to support maintenance of the park. "From here on, the Lanvale Triangle Park will be used as a memorial garden for those loved ones who have passed in Bolton Hill. There are already 2 plaques in the garden honoring loved ones. Joe Costa's memorial will be the third," said Healy.

More town houses in latest iteration of Madison Park North development. Construction in 2021?

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/more-town-houses-in-latest-iteration-of-madison-park-north-development-construction-in-2021/>



Developers of Madison Park North, the mixed office-residential retail development at 700 North Avenue in the works for four years now, say they are giving up on the office building component of the project.

Instead, said cheerleader and lead developer David Bramble, there will be additional market-rate housing – about 100 more townhouses than originally planned, for a total of 155 in addition to, eventually, two 13-story apartment towers with street-level retail and a grocery store. He spoke at a Zoom board meeting of BHCA on Dec. 1, calling the development “a new gateway to West Baltimore.”

In the new configuration for the overall project, Building A will house 114 apartments and 10,050 feet’ of retail, with 80 parking spaces. In place of what was Building B there are to be 155 two-story plus garage townhouses that measure 16 x 40 feet. Eventually a Building C would house 264 apartments with a parking garage and 15,000 feet’ of retail.

Bramble, who is a native of Madison Park and lives nearby, said the latest rendering will reconnect Brookfield and Bolton streets to and through the complex to North Avenue. Town houses will face both streets as well as Lenox Street and Park Avenue. It’s all located on the north side of North Avenue in Reservoir Hill, across from Bolton Hill’s northern border.

Bramble said construction permit applications are underway with the city. Approval will lead to townhouse construction beginning in the last quarter of 2021, “machines on the site,” with the first houses to be completed and on the market in 2022. He projects that work on the first mixed-use retail and apartment building, a 13-story tower, would get underway in 2023. That building at the corner of North and Park is projected to have a mid-sized grocery, a coffee shop and other retail with dedicated parking, with market rate apartment rentals above. They also will ask the city for parallel parking on North Avenue to help slow traffic and ease access to the retail shops.

The grocery store, as he sees it, should reflect the divergent tastes of the neighborhoods around it: “a place where you can buy a bag of potato chips and also organic apples. Not Sav-a-Lot.” Realistically, the area does not have the density and income levels needed to attract a Whole Foods-like supermarket, he acknowledged. Currently the nearest groceries besides the Sav-a-Lot on McMechen Street are a Shoppers at Mondawmin Mall and Safeway in Charles Village. Each is a short drive but a long walk. The stalled and likely-dead State Center redevelopment project on Bolton Hill’s south border also projected a grocery. However, neither project has signed a contract with a food store.

Bramble cited as an example of how the project will take shape the underway mixed-use development on Eastern Avenue near Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, [Yard 56](#). He acknowledged that “These deals are hard to do. We’ve knocked down a ton of barriers. We’re going to get to the finish line.” But he acknowledged they have not yet lined up all the financing they need to get started. He did say negotiations with Amtrak, which has underground easements on the building site, are moving toward a satisfactory outcome.

–*Bill Hamilton*

Neighborhood Bible school approaches 90th anniversary

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/neighborhood-bible-school-approaches-90th-anniversary/>



There are lots of schools in and near Bolton Hill: MICA; the University of Baltimore; Midtown Academy; Mt. Royal Elementary and Middle School; Eutaw-Washburn Elementary. And there's Baltimore School of the Bible.

BSTB isn't much talked about, but next year will be its 90th year as a learning center "fundamental in its teaching, evangelical in its beliefs, non-denominational in its scope, evangelistic in its purpose, missionary in its outlook-a school which would maintain a consistent relationship between the purity of doctrine taught and the purity of life admonished," quoting its website. It's housed in a three-story building at 1712 Park Avenue that the school has owned since 1942.

Each August in recent years until this one, the school's executive director Vince Mercer has fired up a barbecue grill in the Park Avenue median strip and introduced new and returning students and staff to nearby neighbors at the school's annual open house. The pandemic wiped that out and reduced enrollment slightly, said Mercer. He hopes to resume the open house this summer.

The Bible school is not a degree-offering college but rather aims to help religious people do a better job in their roles as paid or unpaid stewards of Christian churches and institutions, according to Thomas J. Schetelich, a lawyer who serves as president and dean of education. "The great majority are adults active in their church, looking to be helpful in their ministries" he said. About 90 percent of the student body is African American, he said. "Some see this as a step toward a seminary." Some BSTB graduates now are

pastors.

Tuition is free and books and fees often are subsidized by 50 to 100 churches in the city and Baltimore County, along with contributions from supportive individuals. Enrollment hovers around 250, down slightly during the pandemic when all classes are conducted online. Classes run for three hours and are conducted two nights a week, supplemented by occasional Saturday workshops or seminars.

Prior to the pandemic classes were held at the Park Avenue center and also at a church in South Baltimore. The Bolton Hill campus houses a library, a book store, classrooms, an alumni Center and offices.

–Bill Hamilton

Mosby elevation leaves us one state delegate short

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/mosby-elevation-leaves-us-one-state-delegate-short/>



With his ascendency to the city council presidency, Nick Mosby leaves our neighborhood – part of the 40th General Assembly district – short-handed as the assembly prepares to convene in Annapolis on Jan. 13, 2021.

Mosby in 2017 moved from his city council seat representing Reservoir Hill, where he and his wife, State's Attorney Marilyn Mosby, reside to the assembly after unsuccessfully running for mayor. When he dropped out of the mayor's race and endorsed her, then-Mayor Catherine Pugh arranged for Mosby's appointment to the General Assembly. He served just one full term before jumping back to the council. He was inaugurated as council president on Dec. 10.

The 40th district includes most of Bolton Hill, but a segment of the neighborhood falls into Assembly District 46, which is unaffected by the 40th district shuffle.

Remaining members of the 40th legislative District are Sen. Anthony Hayes and Assembly Delegates Melissa Wells and Frank Conaway Jr., all Democrats. According to the political blog [Maryland Matters](#), at least six people are vying to fill the vacancy, which is nominally named by the governor acting on a recommendation from the 40th legislative district's delegation to the Baltimore City Democratic committee. It's not clear when the committee will meet and act.

Said to be in the running are:

- **Crystal Jackson Parker, who happens to be a member of the 40th district Democratic committee. In 2016 she** was diagnosed with Stage III colon cancer. She was elected to the committee in 2018.
 - **Joshua Harris**, who ran for the seat in 2018 as a Green Party candidate. He also was a Green candidate for mayor of Baltimore in 2016. Harris works for the Prince George’s County Educators’ Association and is vice president of Baltimore City’s NAACP.
 - **China Terrell**, the president of the Baltimore Pumphouse project, which seeks to transform a blighted brownfield site in the Broadway East neighborhood into a commercial hub.
 - **Marlon Amprey**, a former educator and currently an attorney at the downtown law firm Cole Schotz P.C.
 - **Kathy Shulman of Wyman Park, who** is a “social change activist” and is Healthy Food Access Director at Vincent de Paul of Baltimore.
 - **Marshall Bell**, executive director of The Community Support Program, which provides analytical services of camera imagery to help reduce crime, limit dumping and reduce auto thefts. He is a former member of the Democratic Central Committee for the 40th District and ran for city council in 2016.
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Five years in the planning, St. Francis Neighborhood Center starts construction

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/five-years-in-the-planning-st-francis-neighborhood-center-starts-construction/>



With nearly \$5 million pledged or in the bank and lots of politicians and funders lined up to wish them well, leaders of St. Francis Neighborhood Center held [a virtual groundbreaking ceremony](#) to kick off construction of a new facility at the site of their present headquarters at 2405 Linden Ave.

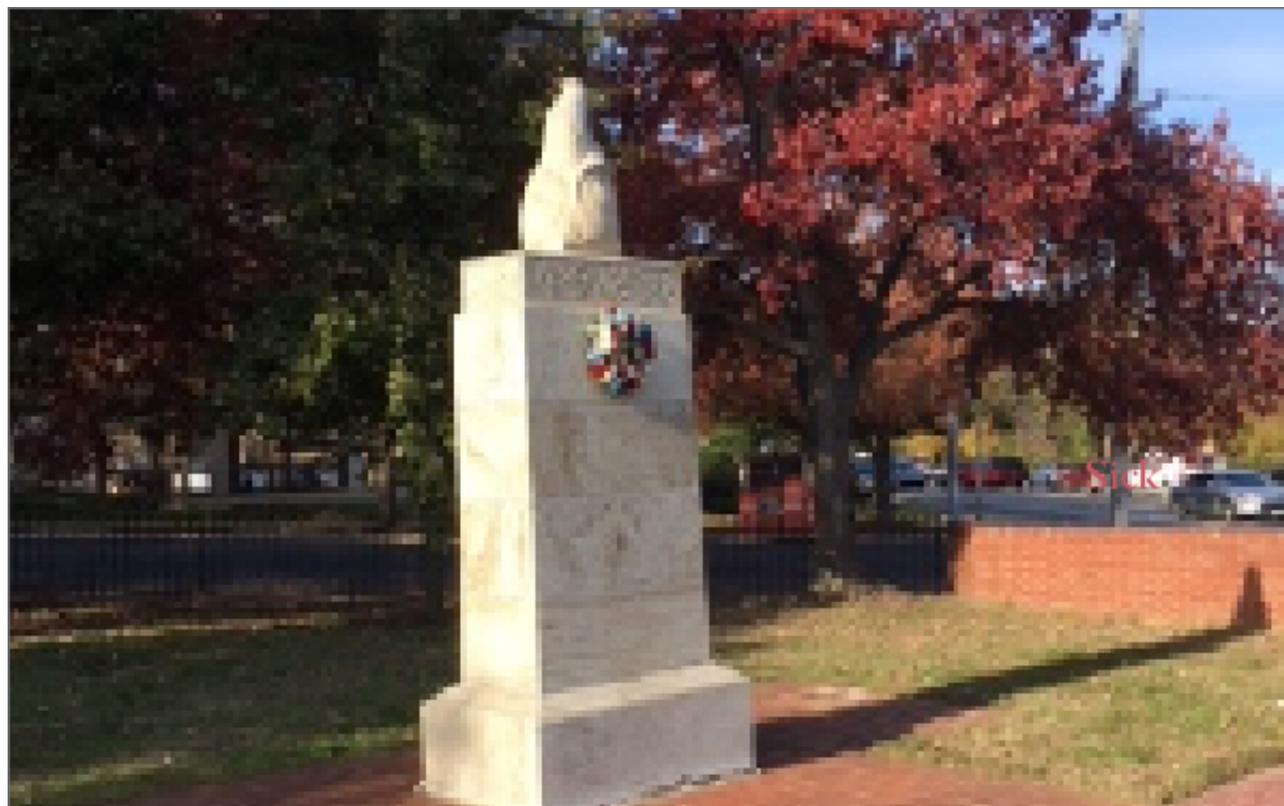
Executives from Whiting Turner, the general contractors, and board and staff leadership wearing SFNC hard hats walked around the fenced-off property on Dec. 1. Board President Kevin Apperson called it “a really exciting day” after five years of planning and fundraising. The event was dedicated to “Father Tom”, the Rev. Thomas Composto, the Jesuit founder and longtime leader of the Center who died in 2011.

(Then) Mayor-elect Brandon Scott, now-Council President Nick Mosby and State Sen. Antonio Hayes each spoke. The ceremony was bookended by prayers from Father Marty Demek of Corpus Christi Church and Rabbi Daniel Berg of Beth Am Synagogue.

St. Francis Neighborhood Center is the oldest neighborhood center in the city, serving young people and their families in Reservoir Hill and Penn Northon Bolton Hill’s north and western borders. Phase I of the construction, budgeted at \$5.4 million, calls for a significant expansion and renovation of the current headquarters, an old mansion that once was home to Joseph A. Bank, the men’s clothing magnate.

Home Depot Spruces Up Congressional Medal of Honor Park

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/home-depot-spruces-up-congressional-medal-of-honor-park/>



A volunteer team from Home Depot worked on and provided materials for a spruce up at Congressional Medal of Honor Park, on Nov. 20. They created two new beds with cherry laurel and lirioppe shrubs, planted a crepe myrtle and mulched all the trees.

The park and monument were created in 1939 and are dedicated to two Baltimore World War I Congressional Medal of Honor designees: one who attended Poly high school and one who attended City. The Park is a reminder of the sacrifice of our service men and women through the ages. It is located at the corner of Park Avenue and Howard Street, near Dolphin Street and the Armory. As an entrance to Bolton Hill, people who are constantly heading to and from the light rail and downtown meander through the park. It is also a popular green oasis for neighbors and their dogs.

Home Depot sponsors community projects with a particular interest in veterans. This was the first community project that Home Depot has been able to undertake in Maryland since the beginning of the pandemic. Elliot Weidow from Midtown Community Benefits District also was there to help.

In addition, Home Depot donated a lawnmower for maintenance of Bolton Hill parks and gardens. It has already been used in Douglas R. Morrison Park and F. Scott Fitzgerald Park as well as Congressional Medal of Honor Park. Left over debris bags were distributed to other neighborhood parks, gardens and tree stewards.

-Lee Tawney

A Small but Comforting Holiday Dinner

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/a-small-but-comforting-holiday-dinner/>



As we continue through a holiday season of scaling back, many people are wondering how they can take the traditionally large meals and pare them back to a dinner for two, or three, or four at most. This **Seared Duck with Lingonberry Sauce** is a perfect solution, combining some of my favorite holiday flavors. Sweet and tart lingonberries, mashed potatoes with warming nutmeg, and succulent duck breast is a festive feast that can be scaled from a simple dinner for two to a dinner for four with ease. [Get the recipe here.](#)

–Kylie Perrotti

Bolton Hill Notes

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/bolton-hill-notes-6/>



Better late than not at all on McMechen Street: new pavement

The wait is over. McMechen Street between Bolton Street and Mt. Royal Avenue has a new coat of asphalt – not exactly freeway-quality, but a big improvement for what has been, arguably, the bumpiest road in Bolton Hill. City contractors showed up around Thanksgiving and completed the work by Dec. 1, although one small patch seems incomplete. City Councilman Eric Costello pushed persistently for the roadwork.

So, who was McMechen, anyway?

According to Wikipedia, George W. F. McMechen was a prominent African American lawyer and civil rights advocate in Baltimore. In 1891 he enrolled in the first class at what is now Morgan State University, then attended Yale law school. He and his family in 1910 bought a house at 1834 McCullough Street, on the White side of what had been a dividing line in segregated west Baltimore. It led the city council to pass laws forbidding Black homeownership in blocks that were less than 50 percent occupied by people of color, a law that was copied by other cities until federal courts eventually struck them down.

McMechen ran for the city council, all-white in 1915, but lost. He persisted as a critic of segregation laws. From 1921 to 1939, he was on the governing board of Morgan State. He was also the first African American on the city school board, from 1944 to 1950. McMechen served as a board member of the

Morgan Corporation upon the state takeover of the college in 1939. McMechen, 90, died in 1961. It's not clear when the street was named. The business and economics building at Morgan State University is named for him, as is McMechen High School in northwest Baltimore.

Sen. Sarbanes slept here

US [Sen. Paul Sarbanes](#), a Democrat who died Dec. 6 in a Roland Park assisted living center at the age of 84, got his start in politics while a resident of Bolton Hill, we're reminded by neighbor Drew Nilsen.

Sarbanes entered politics in 1966 with a successful bid for the Maryland House of Delegates, and four years later won election to Congress. At the time he and his British-born wife, Christine, lived at 1712 Bolton Street. Neighborhood uber-historian Frank Shivers Jr. recalled a meeting of the Mount Royal Improvement Association (now BHCA) in the 1970s in which Sarbanes urged the organization's board to recruit black members. Sarbanes served 30 years in the Senate, a record for Maryland.

Historic redevelopment just west of us . . .

The city's Department of Housing and Community Development has asked for developers to submit proposals for restoring a four-level historic property in Marble Hill at 1313 Druid Hill Avenue, adjacent to the newly renovated Marble Hill Park. The property has 13,300 square feet of developable space, according to DHCD.

Bolton Hill

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