

# Bolton Hill

## Community Association

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## **New Bolton Hill strategic plan emphasizes preservation, diversity and inter-neighborhood action**

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/new-bolton-hill-strategic-plan-emphasizes-preservation-diversity-and-inter-neighborhood-action/>



“We come for the architecture and stay for the people.”

That declaration acts as a preface to BHCA’s new strategic plan for Bolton Hill, the first such document in 15 years, intended to guide the association in establishing priorities and interacting with city government and private interests. The 21-page plan was unanimously adopted by the BHCA board at its April Zoom meeting.

These are its key recommendations:

1. Maintain Bolton Hill’s distinguished streetscapes, buildings, trees and gardens. Provide more information and support for property owners about historic preservation and renovating properties responsibly. The extensive greening efforts in the neighborhood’s parks, public tree wells, and public gardens should continue.
2. Continue BHCA’s policy of opposing increases in density in row homes while recognizing the importance of having an array of housing stock in the neighborhood.
3. Support and broaden community engagement, the pillar of the Bolton Hill community. Strive to live up to the diversity BHCA aims for in its membership, its leadership, and in its wider community engagement.
4. Expand BHCA support of educational and youth development activities in the neighborhood to attract and retain families with children.
5. Acknowledge Bolton Hill’s past involvement in systemic racism and make sure that racial and social justice are embedded in all our community’s efforts.

6. Strengthen Bolton Hill's relationships with adjacent neighborhoods, which must include not only Mt. Vernon-Belvedere and Reservoir Hill but also Madison Park, Historic Marble Hill, Druid Heights and Upton.

7. Strengthen BHCA's relationships with neighborhood institutions, including schools, houses of worship and businesses.

8. Bolton Hill alone has too few people to support as much retail as residents want, including a much-desired healthy food grocery store within walking distance. However, BHCA should be proactive in supporting existing Bolton Hill businesses and encouraging new ones. In addition, Bolton Hill should be proactive in supporting existing retail in adjacent neighborhoods and encouraging more retail opportunities in those neighborhoods.

9. Make the BHCA website the central repository for neighborhood information and use it for both existing residents and to attract new ones. If necessary, employ an individual to keep the website up to date.

10. Continue our present safety and security efforts and develop a Bolton Hill camera network among private cameras facing public spaces while being mindful of protecting civil rights and respecting civil liberties.

11. Continue to work on traffic calming initiatives throughout the neighborhood.

12. Develop a central repository of environmental sustainability options.

13. Advocate for improvements in Baltimore's public transportation system and examine the role of the automobile in our community in the coming decade.

The plan is intended to provide opportunities for both owners and renters to become involved in the Bolton Hill community, offering "manageable amounts of commitment."

The committee that drafted the plan was appointed by BHCA President David Nyweide and led by Neal Friedlander. Other committee members were Charlie Duff, Bill Hamilton, Bonnie LeGro, Jim Prost, Amy Sheridan, Lauren Snyder, Lee Tawney and Nyweide. They received 470 individual responses to the circulation of drafts and requests for comments from residents.

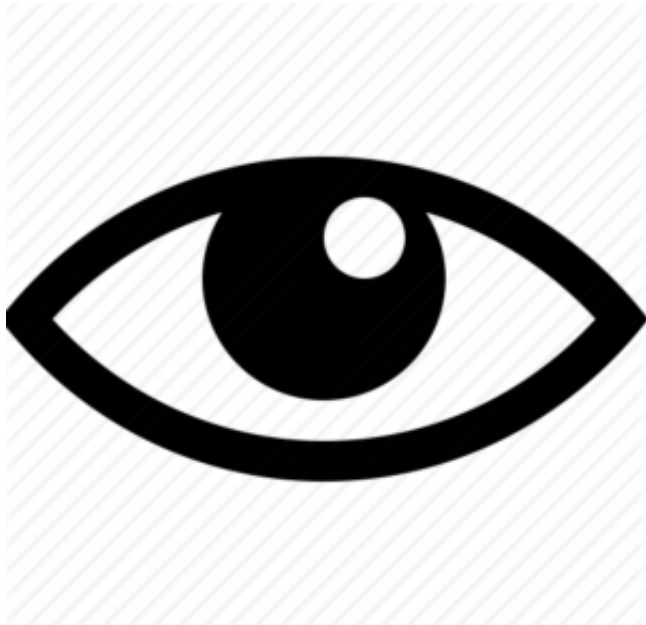
Nyweide thanked all who participated and said "I hope it won't gather dust but will prove to be a useful guide for the association." He suggested it be given an annual review.

For a copy of the final plan email [pres@boltonhillmd.org](mailto:pres@boltonhillmd.org) .

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## **Inviting community engagement in a security camera network**

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/inviting-community-engagement-in-a-security-camera-network/>



The Bolton Hill Camera Network (BHCN) is an initiative being organized to be operated by Bolton Hill residents to enhance safety and security in the neighborhood. It would allow residents, as well as neighborhood apartment buildings, institutions and businesses, to share footage from Ring, Nest or other cameras of incidents that threaten neighborhood safety and security. The compiled footage, in turn, could be shared with police to help them with evidence for cases.

A small camera network has existed for a few years in the southeast part of Bolton Hill. Two residents monitor the existing network and post related content on a designated YouTube channel from shared camera footage of fellow residents.

BHCN would not be part of the CitiWatch Program, which has approximately 18 cameras located in Bolton Hill. CitiWatch is a one-way arrangement, where if Baltimore City Police believe your registered CitiWatch camera has captured a crime, they may visit your home to obtain footage of the incident. CitiWatch does not make its camera lists available, nor share information with the community, nor respond to community requests for camera locations or footage in the vicinity of a crime.

In contrast, BHCN would be neighborhood controlled. Camera locations are available to those participating and participants voluntarily choose whether to share footage with each other and the police. Anyone could register a camera with CitiWatch and still participate in the BHCN.

A summary of draft BHCN policies currently include but are not necessarily limited to:

- The BHCN is designed to help identify persons involved in crimes within Bolton Hill.
- The BHCN is also designed to help in identifying suspicious activity that could precede or prevent or follow a crime. Potentially suspicious activity is defined as individuals or groups who peer into

cars, vestibules, buildings, or over fences; who carry tools such as bolt cutters and other equipment that could be used to illegally break into private property; or may appear around the time when a crime occurred.

- The BHCN is NOT a tool for continuously surveilling neighborhood activity, nor for profiling individuals based on race, clothing, or other observable characteristics.
- Participants in the BHCN would fill out an online survey form containing pertinent information such as camera location, type of camera, contact information, etc. This information would only be shared with others participating on the BHCN, members of the BHCA Executive Committee, the BHCA Safety and Security Committee, and technical operators and advisors to the BHCN.
- Camera footage would be compiled and uploaded to a designated YouTube channel, which can be accessed by anyone with a link to it but not through searches on YouTube.
- Any individual captured on BHCN video can request that the camera footage be deleted.
- BHCA will work with the Baltimore Police to assist in preventing and solving crimes In Bolton Hill. The Department shall not have access to the personal information of any participant in the BHCN, nor directly ask any individual BHCN member for information.

Comments on the proposed policy and process for the BHCN were solicited from members of the Bolton Hill community in March. Five comments and a separate group letter from a few members of the community were received. Four comments were supportive of the idea of a camera network and one was opposed. The group letter requested additional oversight for the BHCN to ensure it is not misused and that collated footage be kept private to share with police when necessary.

This feedback is exactly what the BHCA safety and security committee needs to hear from the community to make sure that the BHCN is responsibly developed. The safety and security committee will continue working with members of the community and the police to create an effective policy and process to be eventually approved by the BHCA board of directors.

*This is the second of a series of articles on safety and security in Bolton Hill by Jim Prost, chairperson of the BHCA Safety and Security Committee, please contact him at [safety@BoltonhillMD.org](mailto:safety@BoltonhillMD.org).*

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## Neighbors

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/neighbors-4/>

### Meet the new occupants of the Hawley – Hutzler Mansion



When you move into a stately 8,000+ square foot house that has suffered its share of injuries and indignities over 134 years, the key question is: where do we begin?

“Our immediate goal is to make the downstairs more habitable in time for my 75<sup>th</sup> birthday party in mid-June,” said Ward Bucher, who with his wife Lisa Harley Johnson are the new and hopeful owners of a neighborhood jewel, the pink granite mansion at the northeast corner of Eutaw Place and Laurens Street, known as the Hawley-Hutzler Mansion.

Built in 1887 by wealthy lumber wholesaler Martin Hawley as a showplace residence for himself and his wife Mary (and perhaps his wood products), the house has 12 fireplaces including one surrounded by cut quartz tiles and another of carved stone;. It also features stained glass windows; a wide range of panels, stairs, mantles and other accents made from different woods; original parquet floors, an elevator (non-working); a garden surrounded by 7-foot brick walls across from Sumpter Park, quarters for a flock of servants and a cupola from which the Hawleys could look out on the newly developing streetscape .

Hawley died shortly after moving in, however, and the house was auctioned off in 1897 after Mary Hawley’s death for less than the \$80,000 it cost to build (about \$2.3 million in today’s dollars). The winning bidder was David Hutzler, one of three Hutzler brothers whose Maryland department store chain flourished for more than a century before the final store closed in 1990. The Hutzler family moved in but also kept a “country” estate in Pikesville.

Last year before the Buchner-Johnson family could even get the place appraised they had to find someone

who could restore the plaster walls. They moved into the years-vacant main residence in July, well into the COVID pandemic, along with their son Jack, who is sitting out a year after high school and planning to attend St. John's College next fall. Two large apartments on the third and fourth floors have rental occupants.

Johnson and Bucher are not strangers to old and battered properties. Bucher is an architect whose 40-year practice has focused on restoring, repairing and repurposing old buildings. Among them are the Star-Spangled Banner Flag House and museum on East Pratt Street, now a national monument, and the old Belnord Theater near Patterson Park, now home to Casa Maryland in Baltimore, as well as a variety of mansions and museums in the Mid-Atlantic region and beyond. Lisa has worked with non-profit organizations and in philanthropy in the Washington-Baltimore region and has historic preservation in her DNA.

"I grew up in a large house in Madison, WI. My mother was a preservationist and a gardener, and I'm getting ready to bring our 46 x 48-foot garden back to life," she said

She and her husband [write a blog](#) in which they track the history and restoration of the mansion they now call home. Delving into the house's history, she worked with the Jewish Museum of Maryland's archivist who put her in contact with the grandchildren and a cousin of David Hutzler. David Hutzler died in 1914 but his widow, Ella, lived in the Bolton Hill home until 1942.

For intervals between 1950 and 1970 the mansion served as offices and from 1971-76 as an orphanage and home for troubled boys. Mostly, however, it has been a private residence. The apartments were carved out of the 13-bedroom 7 ½-bath structure in the late 1970s. The garden was paved over during the orphanage era.

Designed by architect Thomas C. Kennedy, the pink stone house is built in a "Richardson Romanesque" style attributed to a Boston architect who often wore monk's robes and built churches and public buildings, Henry Hobson Richardson. Bucher calls the look "Bavarian Beer Hall Revival." It's centered around a roomy and naturally lighted living area with a grand entrance, staircase and large fireplace.

Lisa Johnson worked in and around D.C. from 1990 after attending the University of Wisconsin. Buchner is from northern New Jersey, attended college in New York and worked in the Washington area from 1971. They married in 1999 and in 2001 bought and restored an old African American schoolhouse in Talbot County on the Eastern Shore, first as a second residence and then for a while as a primary home. Together they operate Encore Sustainable Architecture from a downtown Baltimore studio. They moved here from Silver Spring. Buchner's son, Will, 31, is a lawyer in Florida.

"We love the Bolton Hill neighborhood, although we haven't met many people because of the pandemic," Johnson said. "We've settled in, though, and look forward to getting out more."

As for the house restoration, "it's a 20-year project for us both," Buchner said.

--*Bill Hamilton*

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## Revisiting Maryland's history of slavery from two contrasting perspectives

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/revisiting-marylands-history-of-slavery-from-two-contrasting-perspectives/>



*Artist's rendering of slave families that resided and worked at Hampton Plantation*

We often hear stories of injustice and think, “Why don’t they do something about it?”

The next question, of course, is, “Who is THEY?” Congress? The President? Injustice is rarely remedied from the top down. It takes small groups of people, growing by one or two at a time. Change begins to happen when understanding injustice moves from the abstract to the personal.

I had known for a long time that I have a connection to the Ridgely family. I knew that they were slaveholders, but only in the abstract. When the Rev. Natalie Conway learned that she too had a connection to the Ridgely family, her life changed, and my life changed. She is descended from Hattie Cromwell, a slave on the Hampton Plantation, and I am descended from Prudence Ridgely, a member of the slaveholding family.

A plaque in the back of Memorial Episcopal Church was dedicated to the Rev. Charles Ridgely Howard, who was rector of the church until his death in 1862. Memorial Episcopal and the Diocese of Maryland brought us together. The Ridgelys had farms and an ironworks. They got rich. The Cromwells had nothing; even their humanity was denied.

What does this have to do with us, 200+ years later? Well, because THEY didn’t do anything about the injustice, THEY left it to us. We do have a choice. We could leave it to the next generations. But that would compound the injustice even further. There is no “fix,” no “solution” -- only small steps towards a better future.



*The Rev. Natalie Conway and the author pour holy water at the Hampton Estate slave quarters*

So when you have a moment, stop by the corner of W. Lafayette Ave. and Bolton Street. Take a look at Dez Thaniel's artwork. Ask yourself why Memorial Episcopal chose to commission this work at this time. Don't they have better things to do during a pandemic? But also think about how our society would be better today if the church had started on this work 150 years ago.

Change happens because of us. House Resolution 40, seeking reparations, was first introduced in Congress by Rep. John Conyers (D-MI) in 1989. He died in 2019 still trying to get it enacted. One reason that it failed to get traction is that too many white people think about slavery in the abstract, or not at all.

In August 2019, Memorial and another West Baltimore Episcopal congregation, St. Katherine's, took a field trip to the [Hampton Plantation](#). We visited the family house, the slave quarters, and the cemetery. We poured holy water on the grounds. Symbolic? Yes, but an important step, nonetheless.

Are we rewriting history? I certainly hope so. Too much of American history has been ignored. I thought I was well educated, but this process has laid bare some enormous gaps in my education. I want future generations to have a better understanding of history than our generation.

Re-thinking history can be hard, but well worthwhile. A small amount of research can snowball. And a bit of critical thinking can lead to new understandings for the benefit of all. Whatever you can do, do it, and add others to the conversation.

--Steve Howard

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## The parks of Bolton Hill: Rutter's Mill Park

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/the-parks-of-bolton-hill-rutters-mill-park/>



Bolton Hill was open land in the late 1700s, drained by streams that fed into the Jones Falls. One, Spicer's Run, ran down from Reservoir Hill, emptying into the Falls just south of where the North Avenue bridge stands today.

Just downstream was a water-powered grist mill that, by 1800, was owned by John Rutter, whose family owned property in the neighborhood along the banks of a tributary of Spicer's Run. That body of water became known as Rutter's Mill Run.

By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when the rowhouses on John Street, Lafayette Street and Mt. Royal Avenue were in place, those waters were channeled and covered over. Some say that they may still be heard on quiet nights, running beneath them.

For the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a row of two-story alley-houses like those on the 1300 block of Rutter Street today stood on the site of the park, occupied by working-class African Americans. These houses were demolished as part of the urban renewal efforts of the mid-1960s.

One consequence was the further racial segregation of Bolton Hill. Another was the creation of the Rutter's Mill Park. A committee of neighbors was given three choices by the Urban Renewal Agency: the land could be used for parking, could be developed as student housing for MICA or could be turned into a park. They voted for a park and chose local architect Constantine "Gus" Courpas, to design it. His plan considered the look of the buildings at the Mosher Street end of the plat and the studio of sculpture artists Reuben Kramer and his wife Penne, who were for many years the patrons and caretakers of the Park.

Today Rutter's Mill Park is maintained by its neighbors and the household that backs on it, collectively forming the Rutter's Mill Park Association. Although the city has been called on for major repairs, the day-to-day upkeep and beautification is the responsibility of RMPA. This "backyard" for 40+ residences and two elementary schools is also a source of quiet pleasure in a bustling urban environment.

*--Lee Tawney*

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## Howard Tunnel project could start late summer near our neighborhood

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/howard-tunnel-project-could-start-late-summer-near-our-neighborhood/>



*In theory, underground track lowering will not disrupt Mt. Royal Avenue.*

The long-awaited rebuilding and expansion of the Howard Street freight railway tunnel could begin as soon as late summer. Stretches of Mt. Royal Avenue on the edge of Bolton Hill and the North Avenue Bridge that heads east to Station North will be affected by the massive, \$466 million project.

“Our target date for execution of these documents is July 1,” said an official of the Maryland Port Administration, referring to a final financing agreement between federal, state and CSX railroad officials and the finalization of an environmental review. The plan is to increase the height of the 126-year-old tunnel to allow for cargo containers offloaded at Baltimore’s port to be double-stacked on rail cars and hauled north.

The current tunnel was built by the old B&O Railroad between 1890-99 with a vertical clearance of 19.5 feet. Double Stacked Trains (DST) require at least a 21-foot clearance, available on tracks up and down the Eastern Seaboard except for the Baltimore-to-Philadelphia stretch. Once completed in 2024, double stacking will enable the fast-growing Port of Baltimore to further increase container capacity and become more competitive. It is already further inland than other ports.

To reach the desired clearance height, engineers will dig down beneath existing tracks in some locations while working above ground in others. The 1.7-mile single-track tunnel runs mostly under Howard Street from Camden Station near the Orioles stadium to Mt. Royal Station, now part of the MICA campus at Mt. Royal Avenue and Cathedral Street at the southeast border of Bolton Hill. [Click here](#) for a video that explains the entire project in detail.

According to the video, most of the track-lowering work will take place inside the existing tunnel with little impact above ground. There may be some above-ground consequences to one or more buildings on the MICA campus. The North Avenue Bridge will be partially replaced by a single-span shallow girder bridge, with traffic disruptions during construction. Existing rail infrastructure under that bridge makes track lowering not feasible, the builders say. The MTA Bridge on the western edge of Station North also will be affected.

According to the environmental report released last month, the project will not negatively impact air quality, water quality, wetlands, flood plains or other environmental resources and will not require the digging up of Howard Avenue.

**Meanwhile, there's possible good news for Amtrak riders and MARC train commuters.** *The Baltimore Business Journal* reported that the American Jobs Act, the massive infrastructure improvement proposal by President Biden, envisions funding for replacing the 148-year-old Baltimore and Potomac Tunnel located between Penn Station and the West Baltimore MARC Station. That 1.4-mile tunnel creates a "chokepoint" on the busy Northeast Corridor by forcing trains to drop their speeds to just 30 miles per hour.

That new tunnel would include four tracks and consist of 3.67 miles of new rail between Gwynns Falls Bridge and Penn Station. This cuts through Reservoir Hill and other residential areas south of Druid Hill Park, although not Bolton Hill. The estimated cost for the replacement is \$4.5 billion.

And the would-be builders behind the long-simmering plan to revamp and expand Penn Station into an elegant transit hub surrounded by new residential and office buildings, not unlike DC's Union Station, released yet another set of drawings in March. The lead developer said a first stage with upgrades to the interior and infrastructure of the bedraggled station will begin this summer. That will include new windows, a new roof and new retail space on the first floor.

--*Bill Hamilton*

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## Make the most of spring asparagus in this pasta dish

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/make-the-most-of-spring-asparagus-in-this-pasta-dish/>



Of all my favorite spring vegetables, asparagus is one of my favorites. From soups to salads, entrees to appetizers, the possibilities are nearly endless. A simple and quick blanch with salt, pepper, and butter is just as delicious as a more complex pureed soup.

Although asparagus can be purchased nearly year-round, spring is the absolute best time to enjoy it and April is the prime month to take advantage of this bright, crisp vegetable.

In this recipe, bright and crunchy asparagus is paired with pasta and red Fresno chili peppers for a hint of heat. This creamy pasta dish is finished with lemon juice and parsley to add a touch of brightness to the dish right before serving.

Get the recipe here: [Creamy Shells with Asparagus](#)

*-Kylie Perrotti*

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## **Bolton Hill Notes**

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/bolton-hill-notes-10/>



### ***BHCA membership meeting, election is May 5 on ZOOM***

The community association's annual all-member meeting and election of officers for 2021-22 will take place on Zoom because of the ongoing pandemic on Tuesday, May 5 at 8 p.m. Notices will go out with sign-in information to all paid-up members around May 1.

The board nominating committee chaired by Beth Torres put forward a slate at the April meeting but other members may nominate someone, or themselves, at the member meeting. These are the nominees:

*Officers/Executive Committee:* President: Neal Friedlander; First VP: Andrew Dupuy; Second VP: Amy Sheridan; Treasurer: Chris Kingsley; Secretary: Bill Hamilton; Counsel: Lisa Robinson; Past president: David Nyweide.

*Board class of 2023* (4 vacancies) Maurice Corbett; Maria Agudelo; Eean Logan; Marci Yankelov.

*Class of 2024* (all seats) Robert Bunch; Kevin Cross; Barbara Francis [new]; Florencia Gutierrez [new]; Avendui Lacovara; Thecla Meyer; Stephen Ruckman; Bobbi Schilling; David Scott; Yulia Suslova.

### ***BGE work continues in south end of the neighborhood***

"Operation Pipeline," BGE's major overhaul of decrepit gas pipelines and individual residence connections, continues to block streets on weekdays south of Lafayette Avenue on Bolton, Park, John and Lanvale streets as the utility company installs new pipes down the centers of the streets and lateral lines to connect houses. This is the first phase of the operation, with a second phase to the north not likely before the fall.

The scope of the overall project as it affects Bolton Hill can be found [here](#). Residents are urged to respond in a timely manner when BGE reaches out to connect each property, to avoid stalling the project and the inconvenience associated with it. Neighbors on John Street are communicating forcefully to BGE that they do not want the John Street park and fountain dug up or disrupted by the project.



***Love Boltonstock and Festival on the Hill? Then sign up!***

Plans are underway to produce a pandemic-scale version of Boltonstock, the annual food and music party that kicks off summer in Bolton Hill. BHCA board member Yulia Suslova has agreed to help organize the June event but needs help. Contact her at [souslovayulia@hotmail.com](mailto:souslovayulia@hotmail.com)

Likewise there is a hope that advances in immunizing against COVID may allow a version of the annual Festival on the Hill street fair in the fall, but volunteers are needed to take the lead and run it. If interested contact [pres@boltonhillmd.org](mailto:pres@boltonhillmd.org).

***MICA Film Showcase set for April 23-24***

MICA is partnering with the Parkway Theater to host a festival of MICA graduate student thesis films; the MICA Grad Show 2021 April 23 -24. It's a virtual broadcast, free and open to the public.

Theme for the two-day event is *In Place, Insight and In Time*, featuring three documentaries, an episodic pilot show and three narratives.

Pre-order for NIGHT #1 - Friday 4/23 - 7:00 to 9:30 PM

<https://watch.eventive.org/parkway/play/605a06bf842cbd0037b31233>

Pre-order for NIGHT #2 - Saturday 4/24 7:00 to 8:30 PM

<https://watch.eventive.org/parkway/play/605a071c4e6bc8008bd50ca3>

***Citywide Cleanup set for next Saturday; mayor's walk in Druid Hill Park is May 8***

Although because of the pandemic there are no organized neighborhood-level cleanups, the mayor's office is encouraging residents to be part of Mayor Scott's Spring Cleanup: Clean Where You Live, on Saturday, April 24. Residents are urged to put on a mask and pick up a broom to clean up litter around their properties, alleyways and curbsides.

Participants who register their cleaning activities can receive free bags to support their efforts. DPW will provide up to five bags per individual and/or service request to support local cleaning activities. To register and receive bags, call 311, visit [balt311.baltimorecity.gov](http://balt311.baltimorecity.gov), or sign up using the BAL311 mobile app.

The bags will be available at the DPW Sanitation Yards located at 111 Kane Street (open 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.) and 2840 Sisson Street (open 9. – 5 p.m.). Bags will be available for pick-up until April 23. Filled bags should be put out for regular garbage pickups.

The mayor's office is also planning a series of "walks with the mayor, including one scheduled for Druid Hill Park Saturday, May 8, at 10 a.m.

***State's Attorney says she still will prosecute "victim crimes"***

State's Attorney Marilyn Mosby spoke at the April BHCA members meeting, assuring residents that despite her recent "no prosecute" announcements, her office will continue to charge and try those whose criminal acts have victims.

The answer came in a response to inquiries about low-level criminal activities such as stealing packages, theft or other property crimes. Those, she said, are "victim crimes" and fall outside her promise not to spend public resources prosecuting persons arrested for "behavior" such as prostitution, drug or drug paraphernalia possession, drunkenness, public urination or other non-violent, "victimless" acts.

Mosby announced that her office will work with police and social service organizations to steer "behavioral issue" perpetrators of those activities into treatment or other support programs.

**About The Bulletin:** *The Bolton Hill Bulletin is published 10 times a year and distributed to paid members of the Bolton Hill Community Association and made available for free on the BHCA website. We welcome the submission of ideas, articles, events, photos and feedback.. It is produced by Bill Hamilton, Kylie Perrotti and Marci Yankelov, all volunteers. Contributors this month included, among others, Paula Jackson, David Nyweide, Jim Prost, Lee Tawney and Maceo Lester. Give us your critiques and love.*

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**Bolton Hill**

**Community Association**