

# Bolton Hill

## Community Association

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## **Bolton Hill Notes**

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/bolton-hill-notes-nov22/>



### ***BHCA has a winterized schedule ahead***

BHCA will hold its last meeting of the calendar year on Tuesday, Dec. 6 at Farnham Hall of Memorial Episcopal Church. Any neighborhood resident is invited, starting with a 7:30 p.m. social mingle and an 8 p.m. business meeting. Meetings in January and February will begin at 8 p.m. and will take place on Zoom in expectation that cooler and darker times are ahead. The board expects to resume in-person meetings in March 2023.

### ***Christmas decorations already?***

Isn't it early to be thinking of holiday decorations? Yes, but...

The Bolton Hill Garden Club will be holding its annual holiday greens sale again this year, and it is not too early to place an order for a fresh wreath, a door swag or roping. [Click here](#) to order now. The greens will arrive in early December. If you have questions, contact Gwyn Armstrong at [garmstrong@mica.edu](mailto:garmstrong@mica.edu).

### ***But it's not too early to plant trees***

The fall Bolton Hill tree planting is set for Saturday, Nov. 19, beginning at 9 a.m., rescheduled from Oct. 29. Bring gloves, shoes for digging and autumn enthusiasm to Fitzgerald Park, Bolton and Wilson streets, for assignments. No experience is required.

### ***Good news about dog poop***

Bolton Hill dogs, and their owners, should be happy to hear that we have two brand new dog waste stations. Midtown Baltimore installed them on Nov. 4. One is at the south entrance to Sumpter Park on Laurens Street across from Linden Green. The second has been placed at Park Avenue Median Park – north end of 1600 block at the intersection with Wilson Street.

### ***Leaf removal extends into the new year; plus water line repairs on Eutaw median***

Midtown Baltimore is partnering with a professional landscape company, [Landcare](#), to aid in providing

leaf management services in Bolton Hill. These services started on Nov. 7. Additional leaf management services will be provided in the months of December and January.

Midtown and BHCA's Greening Committee are working with [Fountain Craft](#), a city-approved maintenance vendor, to address broken water lines and ground -level hydrants in Eutaw Place median park spaces. Midtown and BHCA are providing funding for these repairs.

### ***Learn about plans to update Baltimore's comprehensive plan***

Residents are invited to participate in a [Plan Our Baltimore](#) community conference scheduled for Dec. 3 from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Baltimore Polytechnic Institute (1400 W Cold Spring Lane). The new deputy mayor for community economic development, [Justin Williams](#), will speak and participants can take part in up to three sessions from a list of topics like transit-oriented development, food access, designing for public safety, greening and equitable development.

This event is the culmination of a yearlong effort that engaged over 1,300 Baltimore residents through open houses, surveys, online conversations, trainings and community-hosted vision sessions in support of an update to Baltimore's comprehensive plan. The next phase of the plan update will be a draft plan for community reaction and feedback. [Registration](#) closes on Nov. 28.

### ***About the Bulletin . . .***

*The Bulletin* is designed by Elizabeth Peters. We invite others to help write, edit, provide photos or work the business side. Send suggestions and comments to [bulletin@boltonhillmd.org](mailto:bulletin@boltonhillmd.org). Thanks to Sarah Barnes, Kimberly Canale, Paula Jackson, David Nyweide, Emily Reichert, Lee Tawney, Peter Van Buren, and Dick Williams, among others, for advice and contributions. Errors and omissions are the responsibility of the editor, Bill Hamilton.

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## **North Avenue development leader opposes more affordable housing**

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/north-avenue-affordable-housing/>



The director of the new development authority, which hopes to accelerate development and renewal along the West North Avenue corridor, says he does not support emphasizing additional affordable housing in the area.

Chad Williams, the first executive director of the West North Avenue Development Authority, told BHCA’s November meeting that every neighborhood abutting the east-west corridor on the northern border of Bolton Hill has a plan and a wish list for development, but they have little coordination among them.

WNADA was created by the Maryland General Assembly to “create a coordinated plan for housing, transportation and economic development” on the north and south sides of the avenue stretching west from I-83 to Coppin State University’s western boundary.

But he acknowledged that he had not seen BHCA’s strategic plan, developed last year. “That will make 11 (neighborhood) plans,” he said. Although Bolton Hill’s actual contact with the North Avenue corridor is narrow, changes along that thoroughfare could affect property values and quality of life issues.

“One of the biggest assets for developing is our ability to work with the city and on our own for land acquisition,” including properties on or near North Avenue that are already under city control, Williams said. “If we own or control the land, we can make it easy and affordable for developers.” WNADA can try to create what he called “carrots” for investment. He said he hoped by next summer to have created a matrix document to support improvements along the avenue.

WNADA was primarily sponsored by State Sen. Antonio Hayes, whose district includes our area, and encouraged by the president of Coppin State. A representative of Coppin and one from MICA serve on

the 15-member board governing the authority, which is a state agency that will need continued support from the legislature and the new governor.

The three pillars of its attention will be improving the flow of vehicles and public transportation along North Avenue, supporting existing businesses and encouraging new ones, and promoting new and redeveloped housing. “We prefer more market-rate housing,” such as that proposed for the Madison North development. It broke ground for its first phase in August and will eventually have about 300 single-family townhouses and apartment units, all unsubsidized. “There is too much subsidized housing already” in the area, Williams said, calling it “oversaturated.”

Asked about prospects for a supermarket along the corridor, Williams said he does not “see the land available necessary to support” large-scale retail stores at present. The developers of Madison North have included plans for a mid-sized grocery in its plans for later development. Williams said focusing on market-rate housing would lead to a more diverse population that perhaps could support bigger-box stores in the long run. While limited to a strip of land roughly 300 feet north and south of North Avenue for WNADA’s focus, Williams said he hoped they would be a catalyst for development outside their zone.

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## **MICA Art Market is back Dec. 3-4, after long pandemic shutdown**

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/mica-market-2022/>



It's a craft fair with MICA flair, back after a three-year absence.

The MICA Art Market Pop-Up is a three-floor holiday market that provides MICA's best students, alumni, faculty, and staff the opportunity to sell their artwork, crafts and artisan-made pieces in a two-day public event on MICA's campus. Works for sale include ceramics, prints, knitted scarves, jewelry, quilted bags, hand sewn baskets, original paintings, stickers, cards etc.

Art Market 2022 is scheduled for 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Dec. 3 and 4, admission is free and open to the public. Funds raised go to MICA Endowment Student Scholarship. Free parking is available. More information [here](#).

## Neighbors: Getting to know Beth Torres

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/neighbors-beth-torres/>



She plays French horn with two orchestras and sings in a choir. Goes to many Orioles home games as a season ticket holder (and rooted wildly for the losing Phillies at the World Series). Volunteers with Baltimore Community Foods. Works with a French bulldog rescue group and has several dogs and cats at home. Active in Bolton Hill stuff.

There's not much going on with Beth Ely Torres.

Oh, she also has a fulltime job at the Department of Veterans Affairs, working to help small businesses qualify as VA contractors. Some days she takes the 5:10 a.m. MARC train to her office in D.C. She is 61.

Although she has only lived in the neighborhood since 2018, it is, she says, where she has longed to be. "When I moved to this area in 2001, I fell in love with Bolton Hill and its architecture, but I couldn't handle the prices." She wound up in Carroll County, raising two sons after a divorce.

"But when the kids grew up, I came back, and moved into my house on West Lanvale St." She shares it with one of her two adult sons. It's where she plans to stay after a musical military and professional life that has moved her around and sometimes outside the country.

A native of southern New Jersey, Torres attended Butler University in Indianapolis, married a college sweetheart, got a degree and settled into teaching music and working retail. Unable to find a professional niche with her music, she auditioned for and joined the Army Band at Ft. Benjamin Harrison. She later moved to the Continental Army Band at Ft. Monroe, VA, and finally to the Armed Forces School of Music in Virginia Beach, VA.

Since then, she has played with military bands at West Point, NY, and with a National Guard band based in nearby Peekskill. After moving away from New York to Maryland, she traveled for a dozen years back

to New York for National Guard meetings and annual two-week active-duty sessions. Along the way she went back to college and earned an MBA at American University in DC. When still active in the Maryland National Guard, she was called up to guard the Capitol for two weeks after the Jan. 6 insurrection and retired 6 weeks later.

“When I went to the VA it offered a chance to advocate for small business contractors, especially Veteran-owned companies,” she said. After 17 years her official title is a mouthful, Deputy Director for Executive Actions in the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization. But music is still her passion.

“I play with two orchestras, the Baltimore Philharmonia Orchestra, which rehearses at Loch Raven High School in Towson, and the Greenspring Valley Orchestra at Stevenson University.” The Greenspring Valley Orchestra will play on Dec. 11 at 3 p.m. at Stevenson University, featuring Beethoven’s Egmont Overture and Mendelssohn’s Symphony 3 “Scottish”. On Dec. 18, the Philharmonia will offer an all-Mendelssohn concert at Loch Raven High School. Torres likes the “big romantic pieces where we get to soar.”

She also sings with the Memorial Episcopal Church choir. “I have rehearsals three nights a week,” she said.

Early in the pandemic she signed on as a volunteer for [Baltimore Community Foods](#), initially distributing free meals and now helping as a warehouse worker “as we shifted from handing out meals to handing out boxes of groceries.” She is a big fan of J.C. Faulk, a documentary film maker who started the project “to feed Baltimore’s most vulnerable residents.” BCF now works toward ending food insecurity in the city.

Torres has served on BHCA’s board and led its nominating committee. “I love this neighborhood,” she said.

- *Bill Hamilton*

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## **Baltimore's old-growth forest land needs your support**

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/old-growth-forest-support/>



Photo courtesy of The Cultural Landscape Foundation.

At long last, a vital physical asset to our health and well-being in this city is proposed for protection and conservation.

City council member Kristerfer Burnett is readying legislation that would save from destruction or bulldozing for public or private development 842 acres of old-growth forest in Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park, the largest urban woodland area in the Eastern U.S. That's most of the 1,000+ acreage that comprises Baltimore's largest park.

Because of its environmental importance as a forest, Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park has been referred to as "the lungs of the city." Old-growth trees capture and store significantly more carbon than even mature trees do. They must be protected from logging and errant utility infrastructure planning. The park needs to be maintained for a thriving level of biodiversity.

This park has suffered significant damage from gray infrastructure planning (human-engineered facilities such as detention basins and underground concrete pipelines cutting through forested land to convey captured stormwater to a local water body), designed and installed at the least financial cost but with hefty cost to the forest's health. Enlightened agencies are employing [green infrastructure](#) strategies in place of gray infrastructure.

I hope you'll agree with me that [a city ordinance like this draft](#), which quantifiably protects this important ecosystem of forested acreage, is imperative. I respectfully call for letters of support for this ordinance from you, your business or organization and friends who understand and accept responsibility for what's at stake globally by acting locally.

Please send letters, titled something like "Old-Growth Forest Protection at Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park Old-Growth Forest Protection at Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park," to [Councilman Burnett](#). Please send a copy to the principal advocating organization, [Parks and People](#). Also copy our [Councilman Eric Costello](#).

Once passed into law, Gwynns Falls/Leakin Park will qualify for and be added to the national [Old-Growth Forest Network](#), becoming its single largest network forest.

Thank you for your time and effort. Then, breathe easier.

- *Dick Williams is a Chesapeake Bay Landscape Professional and a Bolton Hill resident.*



## **Bolton Hill's Samaritan Community helps vulnerable households**

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/samaritan-community-support/>



Program Director Sharon Krieger peeks out of Samaritan Community's door at Memorial Church.

Samaritan Community is a proud member of the Bolton Hill community. Located in the basement of Memorial Episcopal Church, we are an independent 501c(3) human services non-profit. Our mission is to aid individuals and families who are in crisis and want to improve their lives. We combine practical services – food pantry, clothing distribution, case management, emergency financial assistance, individual empowerment counseling, and group activities with strong emotional support and sense of community.

There are no requirements to receive services at Samaritan Community. Some people come for quick help during a temporary setback, while others need help to rebuild their lives. When this happens, we know the road to greater stability isn't a sprint. It's a marathon. We stay with our members, like David, through successes and stumbles, for however long it takes.

David (a real person) first found Samaritan Community 12 years ago on the day that he, his wife, and two small children became homeless. Our program director, Sharon Krieger, found David and his family a safe and affordable home that very same day, and we immediately helped with rental assistance.

That first year, David struggled to earn enough to pay the bills. In addition to helping with rent, we also paid for David's 12-month HVAC course and other training. Since earning his certifications, David is doing well. He and his family are still in the same home they moved into that day a dozen years ago. He is an assistant supervisor for a major residential apartment company. As a result, his entire family is thriving. David and Sharon are still in touch, and he sometimes volunteers at Samaritan.

"I am eternally grateful to Sharon and Samaritan Community. If it were not for them, I would not be here today. That is a fact," David said.

“David is such a wonderful man who has overcome many challenges since I’ve known him. He has met each one of these challenges with the determination to make life better for his family,” says Sharon. “He is a loving husband and father, and we are thrilled to have played a part in his success. It is a joy to hear from David on a regular basis. He will always be a member of our community and we are all very proud of everything he has accomplished.”

For more information about Samaritan Community and how we work with people like David, [visit our website](#) or our [Facebook page](#).

- *Peter Dunn, director of community relations at Samaritan Community*

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## It's autumn here. Meanwhile, in Ukraine...

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/autumn-ukraine/>



Celebrating a wedding in a war zone (via CNN)

My friends in Ukraine are getting ready for the winter and keeping their fighting spirits. Folks are buying portable stoves, power banks and generators. It promises to be a difficult season.

My friend Ihor is on the front lines. Whenever I check in, he says that all is well and sends a smiling picture of himself in uniform. I am in awe since I know that he was not a military type before the war, and he has a little daughter at home. He is in his 40s.

His sister, Lesia, is working hard to sew uniforms for pilots. Before the war, she owned a boutique for traditional Ukrainian clothes. Then she found out that pilots don't have the flame-retardant clothing needed to keep them safe after they catapult.

Now she spends her time sourcing flame-retardant materials from across the world. Her work is vital since pilots are some of Ukraine's most critical fighters. She has worked with companies operating in Ukraine to donate their surplus sewing capacity but, of course, costs add up with each button and zipper.

Lesia, like her brother, remains undaunted in facing these challenges. Her positive spirit is infectious. Sometimes I get down when I see America's support for Ukraine wavering or see reasonable people call for negotiations with a terrorist state and for Ukraine to concede its territories. But then I remember Ihor and Lesia, who remain strong in their faith in Ukraine's victory and willingness to sacrifice to make it happen.

If they are persevering in their fight so can we in our support. If you are interested in supporting Lesia's work, [please let me know](#). You can also support two great organizations — [United Help Ukraine](#) and [Come Back Alive](#).

*-Katia Pokhodnya is a Bolton Hill resident and a native of Ukraine*

## Sav-a-Lot has a spiffy new look, and new ambitions

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/sav-a-lot-new-looks/>



Bolton Hill's Sav-a-Lot grocery has a new owner, a new paint job and signage and, if you believe its new manager, a determination to better serve the neighborhood with fresher produce and meats and an expanded range of national and local brands.

“We’re all about FFFC,” said Harold Black, 44, who began as general manager of the store a few weeks ago. “That’s full service, fresh, friendly and clean, which is how we are describing our store and our products going forward.” The neighborhood store has been spruced up inside and out, with more improvements to come, he said. It seems noticeably cleaner and better lighted.

Along with 10 other Sav-a-Lot locations in the Baltimore and D.C. area, the store in the strip mall at 250 McMechen St. is now wholly owned and operated by a family-owned company in the D.C. area with a history of operating gas stations and convenience stores. The Sav-a-Lot acquisitions are their first grocery venture. Without abandoning the low-income clientele that has been a primary market, the owners hope to reach more affluent customers, Black said.

Based in suburban St. Louis, the Sav-a-Lot chain has since 2020 spun off about 300 corporate-run stores to independent franchisees, according to *Supermarket News*. The company remains the primary supplier to nearly 1,000 SaL stores in 32 states through 13 distribution centers. It has a warehouse, in Williamsburg, MD, that supplies area stores. Save-a-Lot retained ownership of 18 stores in Missouri as a test market for new innovations and programs.

Sav-a-Lots offer mostly proprietary brands, although local stores now can and do deviate in what they offer. The McMechen Street store, for example, cuts and wraps its own beef and pork in store and some other outlets offer in-store bakeries. Bolton Hill Sav-a-Lot carries a decent range of national brands, from Cheerios and Post and Kellogg cereals to Utz and Lays chips, Scott and Angel Soft paper products, Dannon yoghurts and Pepsi products (but not Coke).

On a recent October afternoon, the produce section had fresh, well-priced mushrooms, shucked and wrapped fresh corn, peppers, asparagus, onions bagged and loose, Del Monte-branded Mexican avocados for 79-cents apiece and good-looking bananas for less than they cost at other supermarkets.

Black, the manager, is a West Baltimore native who lives with his wife and two boys in Frederick. He attended Baltimore City Community College for a bit but has been in retail since the age of 16, the last 20 years in the grocery business. He previously managed a corporate-owned Save-a Lot on Howard Street. “I discovered during a recession that retail shrinks in bad times. But the grocery business is pretty recession-proof,” he said. “People keep eating.”

Sav-a-Lot stores try to profit from operating smaller stores – about 15,000 square feet -- than the big box supermarkets. That enables easy, quick shopping, the company says. Private brands, displayed in shipping boxes, offer a greater profit margin, and by limiting choices the stores can offer a wide range of products that move quickly with little waste or surplus. Sav-a-Lot was founded in 1977. Since 2016 the company has been wholly owned by a Canada-based hedge fund, Onex Corporation, that trades on the Toronto stock exchange and claims \$48 billion in assets.

At the Bolton Hill store, Black has a meat and produce manager and a total staff of about 20 clerks and stockers, mostly part-time employees drawn, he says, from nearby. They begin at minimum wage. SaL stores historically have attuned themselves to the needs and restrictions of SNAP (food stamp) customers, but he is hoping to appeal to “cash-paying customers” who are less price-sensitive and respond to quality. He said the strip mall that houses Sav-a-Lot, owned by the St. Louis parent company, is for sale, confirming a rumor that *the Bulletin* published in June. He said he was unaware of any prospective tenants for the empty spaces between the grocery and Walgreens.

Being a grocery store manager is no executive picnic. Touring the store over 40 minutes, I saw Black sitting on the floor assembling and stocking a cabinet, sweeping up broken glass and backing up an unarmed female security guard who stopped an angry shoplifter from leaving the store. Shoplifting, he says, is a continuing problem.

There are two other Sav-a-Lot stores in nearby West Baltimore. When Gov. Larry Hogan blocked the long-planned State Center re-development seven years ago, he crushed the dream held by many that a major supermarket might locate in that renovated office and retail center. The developers of Madison Park North, the residential and retail development that broke ground in August on North Avenue, at the northern border of Bolton Hill, say they hope to include a mid-sized grocery, but probably not before the end of the decade.

- *Bill Hamilton*

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## Comments sought on public monuments with racist underpinnings

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/comments-public-monuments/>



A special BHCA committee appointed to review the individuals or causes represented by public historic markers in the neighborhood has made three proposals and is seeking public comment on them from neighbors before finalizing its recommendations.

The recommendations speak to the plinth that once held a statue to Confederate soldiers and sailors, the extravagant statue and fountain honoring Francis Scott Key and a marker pertaining to former resident and lawyer William L. Marbury.

**Confederate plinth:** Located on Mt. Royal Avenue, the plinth once served as a pedestal holding an elaborate bronze and marble statue installed by the Maryland Daughters of the Confederacy in 1903. It honored Confederate soldiers and sailors who died in the Civil War. The statue was taken down in 2017 by then-Mayor Catherine Pugh, leaving behind the base, which is etched with the mottos of the Confederacy and of Maryland. *The review committee recommended that the plinth be removed.*

**Key statue and fountain:** Installed around 1912 on Eutaw Place and shown above, the monument celebrates Key as the author a century earlier of what became the national anthem, The Star-Spangled Banner. He was known less during his lifetime for penning the lyrics and more for channeling his public influence to imprint his racial views on national politics and slow the antislavery movement. The committee found that Key regularly bought and sold Black people in his personal capacity and as a lawyer between 1801 and the 1830s. As a U.S. Attorney, Key aggressively prosecuted advocates of emancipation not only when they abetted runaways, but also for organizing and distributing anti-slavery literature, viewing these actions as libel and sedition. *The review committee recommended the installation of an interpretive plaque near the Key monument that provides more context for the man and his times.*

**Marbury plaque:** Installed in the median on the 1700 block of Park Avenue, the plaque placed by the

(no longer active) Mount Royal Garden Club honors the memory of Marbury, a distinguished lawyer and political leader who created in 1910 the Mount Royal Protective Association, a predecessor organization to BHCA. Marbury helped draft several state bills designed to disenfranchise Black Marylanders' voting rights from the late 1890s to 1911. As he told the *Baltimore Sun* in January 1910, "It is an anomalous condition that an inferior race should share the government with the superior one." No one knows exactly when or why the plaque was installed after his death in 1935. *The review committee recommended removal of the plaque.*

Members of the BHCA public historic markers review committee, created in 2020, are Jeff Anderson, Iris Barnes, Toby Ditz, Harry Lord, and Don Palmer. BHCA Past President David Nyweide summarized the report at the November BHCA meeting. *More information on the committee's research and a solicitation for public comments can be found [here](#).*

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## **Neighborhood in November: Photos by KT Pozzi & Zhee Chatmon**

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/photos-of-the-month-nov22/>



Deep autumnal reds, underscored by late afternoon light - KT Pozzi



Bolton Hill Stoop - Zhee Chatmon

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