

# Bolton Hill

## Community Association

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## Mayor Scott to Bolton Hill: drop dead!

[https://boltonhillmd.org/?post\\_type=bulletin&p=31798](https://boltonhillmd.org/?post_type=bulletin&p=31798)



Mayor Scott and Council President Mosby at a recent meeting (Baltimore Banner)

Disregarding requests from BHCA and a city council majority to revise his proposed council redistricting plan to keep our neighborhood intact, Mayor Brandon Scott vetoed a modified city council plan which accomplished just that. The mayor, instead, opted for political gamesmanship over transparency and community opinion.

“The mayor did not take your position into consideration,” 11<sup>th</sup> District Council Member Eric Costello told BHCA’s November membership meeting. As of January, the northern half of Bolton Hill will be carved out of Costello’s district and added to District 7, represented by Council Member James Torrence.

Costello called the mayor’s actions “irresponsible and petty.” Not only did Scott refuse to discuss the changes the council majority made to his council map, but he also timed his veto of the council’s plan in a way to stop the council from taking further action or negotiating with him. Scott did so in spite of a request by Council President Nick Mosby to meet or otherwise find a way to work toward a compromise.

The council majority [sent the mayor a letter](#) after his veto. “So many communities from each of our districts stepped up and made their voices heard ... They wanted leadership, and to feel well represented in this building for the next decade,” the council members wrote. “They deserve that as an absolute bare minimum, but this result fails them ... The council’s process was transparent, included feedback from the community members and ensured that the citizens of our city had a seat at the table. Your process did not.” Costello signed the letter.

Torrence, although he attend BHCA’s October meeting where redistricting was discussed, voted against the revised plan, siding with the mayor and against BHCA’s wishes.

Redistricting occurs every 10 years under rules laid out in the city charter. It is an inherently political process. It’s no secret that Mosby, who leads the council, and Scott, who is running for re-election next year, are equally ambitious politicians, not drinking buddies. Costello has, at least publicly, usually stayed out of their lines of fire.

The charter requires the mayor to draw up a plan for equalizing council districts after each national census. Baltimore continues to lose population. That shrinkage left Costello's 11<sup>th</sup> district and vacating Council District 1 Zeke Cohen's district with surplus residents and most other districts with too few.

Without holding public hearings or reaching out to affected neighborhoods, Scott at the last minute dropped his plan on the city and left the council little time to respond. BHCA's Executive Committee, after polling the board, sent a hurried letter to the council and the mayor asking that Bolton Hill be left intact, either in Costello's district or in Torrence's. BHCA board member Jim Prost attended council hearings that resulted in the changes putting all of the neighborhood in Torrence's 7<sup>th</sup> district. Costello agreed to that change.

Costello said he saw no recourse in the charter rules and law to contest the mayor's actions. Mosby promised to try to amend the charter and change the process going forward, after the 2030 census. The Democratic primary which is paramount to city elections will be held May 14, 2024. BHCA does not endorse candidates or engage in elections. It does what it can to influence city policies and plans that affect the neighborhood, from bike lanes to crime to park maintenance.

So, is the headline at the top too harsh? Older residents may recognize it as something of a literary allusion. In 1975 then-President Gerald Ford received a request by New York City's near-bankrupt government to have the federal government help with a bailout. Ford refused, sparking an infamous New York *Daily News* headline "Ford to City: Drop Dead." We may feel ill-used, but the association will not be endorsing either Scott or an opponent.

--*Bill Hamilton*

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## **BPD Western District chief gives lengthy response to Bolton Hill crime reports**

[https://boltonhillmd.org/?post\\_type=bulletin&p=31796](https://boltonhillmd.org/?post_type=bulletin&p=31796)



The commander of the Baltimore Police Department's Western District, Maj. Matt Corell, gave a no-nonsense review of the continuing region-wide high incidence of car thefts and armed robberies at the November BHCA meeting. He detailed his officers' activities to reduce these crimes in and around Bolton Hill, which became part of the Western District in July.

These are the highlights:

- There were five reported armed-carjacking attempts in the neighborhood in the first three weeks of October. Six juveniles have been arrested and are believed to be responsible for four of them. Incidents took place in the 100 and 200 blocks of W. Lafayette Ave., the 1700 block of Park Ave., the 1800 block of Eutaw and 1800 Bolton St.
- Corell believes juveniles, some as young as 10 to 12, are responsible for most of the auto thefts, in part the result of Tik Tok how-to videos encouraging them, particularly on Kias and Hyundais. New state laws governing police handling of juveniles and requiring legal representation have made that process "challenging," he said.
- He has seen no evidence that the incidents are part of organized car theft rings rather than improvisational and opportunistic crimes. Usually, the cars are abandoned and recovered.
- Unmarked police cars and officers on foot and out of uniform have been assigned in disproportionate numbers to Bolton Hill in recent weeks to get a handle on patterns and try to reduce these incidents. He admitted that it is difficult to anticipate when or where an attempt at car theft might occur: "We have three times captured them in the act."
- He encouraged leaving porch lights and other lighting on at night: "This is the darkest neighborhood I have seen in 26 years." He encouraged residents who see suspicious behavior to shine a light or shout out, and call 911. "Don't fear embarrassment."
- Western District residents grew by a third in population and in area covered, but only four

additional officers have been allocated. The redrawn district covers 24 neighborhoods. The mayor's office has insisted on a permanent presence near the Mt. Royal exit from I-83 south as part of his squeegee control program. Full-time coverage also is required near North and Pennsylvania avenues, an area of persistent trouble.

- Corell invited residents to "ride along" with Western District officers. To arrange such a tour, contact the Western District HQ.

Jim Prost, who leads BHCA's Security Committee, reported that in Bolton Hill for the first three quarters of the year total reported police incidents were up from 166 to 196, or 18 percent. Within these figures, auto thefts advanced from 10 to 80 -- an increase of 700 percent. Total reported crime excluding auto thefts declined by 27 percent. Similar jumps in auto-related crime have occurred in Baltimore County and D.C.

"I have been watching these numbers for several years," he said. "It seems to me that Western has done a decent job since Bolton Hill fell under its jurisdiction."

More than 1,000 cars have been stolen in Baltimore every month since June, according to the [Baltimore Banner](#). While the problem is regional, Baltimore city has had more auto thefts than Baltimore, Prince Georges and Montgomery counties combined.

The mayor announced in a campaign email what he called "a multifaceted plan to address this problem head-on and build on the progress we have made in reducing overall crime in Baltimore City." The plan includes free steering wheel locks for Kia and Hyundai owners and collaboration with dealers. "We will distribute digital tracking tags to help residents recover their vehicle," and "installing additional license plate readers in areas with high numbers of reported vehicle thefts," he said.

He made no mention of additional police manpower.

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## Unity@Park Avenue progress continues

[https://boltonhillmd.org/?post\\_type=bulletin&p=31793](https://boltonhillmd.org/?post_type=bulletin&p=31793)



In 2019, Unity@Park Avenue was hatched as a vision to transform the south side of the intersection of Park and North Ave. into an appealing space for pedestrians and bus riders as well as an attractive gateway to Bolton Hill and Reservoir Hill.

The vision coalesced around a three-part project of painting murals, renovating the lot at 1743 Park Ave., and reimagining the design of the bus shelter. The lot itself is under the jurisdiction of the City Department of Housing and Community Development, which has been a supportive partner in the project, as has the Maryland Department of Transportation.

Mural artist Ernest Shaw was enlisted in 2020 to design and paint the murals with the themes of community and unity. BHCA hosted virtual community input sessions for the murals' design and served as the fiscal sponsor for funds raised from grants and private contributions. With logistical support from Baltimore-based Mural Masters, the murals were painted on row house walls on either side of Park Avenue and dedicated in the fall of 2021.

Meanwhile, BHCA engaged Baltimore-based landscape architecture firm EnviroCollab, to create a new design for the lot below the east mural as part of the second phase of the project. In 2020, EnviroCollab hosted two virtual visioning sessions to hear from community members about how they would like to see the space transformed. It then produced a design sketch and implementation budget to renovate the lot.

The design sketch was the basis for a grant recently awarded by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to create an engineered design plan, which would provide the technical specifications and permitting to implement the design, contingent on implementation funding. The engineered design plan will be produced by local landscape engineering firm CityScape, along with EnviroCollab, in 2024.

Because of the large expense and funder requirements of renovating the lot, the Midtown Community Fund, the 501c3 nonprofit connected to the Midtown Community Benefits District, is the fiscal sponsor for the engineered design and implementation. Midtown services the trash bin on the lot on a daily basis and has been instrumental in organizing trash pick-ups and volunteer planting opportunities in the existing brown brick and concrete planters.

Six students in a MICA art studio class in the fall of 2020 produced designs for a reimagined bus shelter. The students presented their sketches to community members at a virtual meeting and may be re-engaged when the third phase of the project is ready to move forward after the lot renovation.

Updates on the Unity@Park Avenue project will be shared through *The Bulletin* and other community communication channels. If you'd like to make a donation toward implementing the lot or the bus shelter redesign, you can donate [here](#).

*--Alex Aaron, Chris Kingsley and David Nyweide*

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## **The Middle East war comes to the neighborhood**

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/war-comes-to-neighborhood/>



Passions set afire by Hamas' bloody invasion of Israel and Israel's retaliatory attacks on Gaza have resulted in graffiti in Bolton Hill.

Over three Saturdays out of four, someone has sprayed "Free Gaza" in an apparent demonstration of support for the Palestinians, on the plinth of a former Confederate statue on Mt. Royal Ave. near MICA. Similar slogans have appeared in Station North and elsewhere.

City officials responded quickly to 311 complaints and removed the spray paint twice, only for it to appear again – each time on the Jewish Sabbath.

## **Bolton Hill's John McLucas: Three novels available and still more to come**

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/john-mclucas-novels/>



McLucas and his dog. (Lee Bowers)

In the seven years since he took possession of the Bolton Hill house he calls Palatino, John C. McLucas has published three books, has at least two more in the works and has visited Italy six times.

What have you done, gentle reader?

Is he like James Patterson, churning out books in factory fashion for fans anxious to buy, read and discard them, itching the next one? Can you find them in airport newsstands like the lucrative works of Stephen King or Danielle Steele? Actually, no.

“My books sell in the hundreds, not the millions or even thousands,” he admits. Friends and family buy them but also stranger, who read them and send him positive letters or post comments on literary websites. Perhaps that is its own reward. He finds joy, he says, in the act of writing.

To know McLucas is to understand that writing mosaic novels is something he would do, as with naming his house after the hill where Romulus founded what became Rome; or showing off Cesare, his dog; or singing a passage in a light and clear baritone voice from a Mozart opera at almost any invitation. He is a lifelong student of Italian verse and history, a scholar who took a one-year job at Towson University after failing to break into opera and retired from there 36 years later as a full professor of Italian and Latin. (He also taught Italian diction and repertoire for Peabody Conservatory voice students.)

Now 71, he is a proud but not flashy gay man, a raconteur. He also is the maître d’ for more-or-less monthly neighborhood potluck dinners which draw from a dozen to half-a-hundred celebrants.

McLucas grew up in Pennsylvania and D.C. but moved to Paris when his father's career took him there.

Latin was in the curriculum at his French middle school, so he picked up the ancient language while learning the modern one. After high school in Concord, MA, he majored in Latin at Wesleyan University, spending a semester in Rome. There was a short period in New York trying to break into theater, and then he went back to school – this time at Yale, studying Italian language and literature. He took voice lessons and appeared in student opera productions, receiving a Ph.D. at the age of 32. A short time later, four decades ago now, he arrived in Baltimore.

“I have loved Baltimore since moving here in 1984. I was very touched several years ago when a Baltimore native friend said I had earned the title “*honorary* Baltimorean,” about the best a Yankee like me can hope for. One lasting connection I have made is with a progressive, historic downtown Presbyterian church (First & Franklin), where I have deepened and broadened my spiritual life and had my eyes opened, year by year, to social justice challenges in our society,” he said.

“Until I retired, I almost never wrote for fun, maybe a poem for friends. Lots of scholarly papers. My students at Towson, for them everything was a fresh experience. Teaching Dante, I told them to think about what fiction is, what the author might be trying to communicate. Finally, I decided to practice what I was preaching.

“In the eighties a friend died in his mid-thirties. It shocked me. It was the time of AIDS, although that wasn't what killed my friend. I wrote my first attempt at a novel based on it,” in the style of The Decameron, he said. The theme of Boccaccio's 14<sup>th</sup> century stories is the power of romantic passion and human intelligence to survive changes in fortune. That first book, *A Human Thing*, is still unpublished.

His first published novel, *Dialogues on the Beach*, came out six years ago. It has the framework of Italian novelist Cesare Pavese's *La spiaggia (The Beach)*. In it, a solid friendship between Jim, a gay young Yale graduate and a married couple is complicated by the arrival of Joe. It's set in Rehoboth Beach in the early nineties.

*Spirit's Tether*, the second published novel, follows the son of the married couple of the first book as he arrives in Baltimore to attend Peabody Conservatory. He stays with his godfather, Jim, and wrestles with his own sexuality and identity. It came out in 2020.

*The Boxer's Mask*, published last year, follows a handsome Roman actor during the pandemic and his interactions with a group of English-speaking expats in Rome. Its theme was borrowed somewhat, according to McLucas, from Henry James' 19<sup>th</sup> century theater novel *The Tragic Muse*. It is, says the author, a love letter to the Italian capital.

In the works now are several other stories, some of them echoing a gay/heterosexual contrast theme seen in the published works. Furthest along is *Domino*, written in part from the perspective of a charismatic black-and-white dog. It is set in Bolton Hill. Another tells of a man from Baltimore who spends a month in ancient Siena, one of McLucas' favorite Italian sites

He writes mostly at night. “It is fun for me,” he says. “I write for myself. Time passes quickly. I become submerged in it. My fiction focuses mostly on conversations and relationships. The books are not plot-driven, and most of the characters are more or less likeable. Some readers have told me they start to think

of them as friends.” His audience is a literary fiction reader who is interested in gay or gay-adjacent themes. [Brickhouse Books](#), which calls itself “Maryland’s oldest continuously operating small press,” has published all three of his novels.

--*Bill Hamilton*

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## City Temple Church loses its longtime pastor

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/city-temple-church-pastor/>



Changes in public religiosity, the politicization of some evangelical denominations, the prolonged scandal in the Catholic Archdiocese and the COVID pandemic—they've taken a toll on attendance and the dynamism of many churches, nationally and [in the neighborhood](#).

City Temple of Baltimore, located where Dolphin Street intersects with Eutaw Place on Bolton Hill's southwestern border, has seen all of that, but last month it suffered a more pronounced setback. The Rev. Dr. Grady Yeargin Jr, pastor of that distinguished black Baptist church for 37 years, [died on Oct. 16](#). A native of South Carolina, he was 73 and had health issues.

Dr. Yeargin was active in Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development (B.U.I.L.D.) and served as a leader in the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance. He was active in the Institute for Christian and Jewish Studies and the United Missionary Baptist Convention of Maryland. He was a co-chairperson of the local National Black Leadership Commission on AIDS.

In recent weeks services at City Temple have been conducted by a team of assistant pastors, two of them ordained and the others active members of the congregation. At a recent, sparsely attended Sunday morning service in the beautifully appointed main chapel, the Rev. Debra Hickman-Arnett spoke warmly of Dr. Yeargin and the church's loss. "We are here now as a family," she said. A memorial service for Dr. Yeargin was scheduled for Nov. 11.

City Temple occupies one of the older and more elegant church buildings in the city, constructed from 1868 to 1871. It was formerly called Eutaw Place Baptist Church, a white church which was linked to the leadership of the segregationist Southern Baptist Convention. Eutaw Place helped create a number of other white Baptist congregations before leaving the neighborhood in 1970. It became Woodbrook Baptist Church which, after 139 years in operation, still exists in Towson.

The City Temple building was designed by Thomas U. Walter of Philadelphia. He was a founder of the American Institute of Architects and the architect of the US Capitol, appointed by President Millard Fillmore in 1851. Walter was best known as the designer of the Capitol Dome and the Capitol building

expansion that added the House and Senate wings.

He was a Baptist and a slaveholder. He purchased three enslaved men who were craftsmen, engaged them in his work and enabled them to earn their freedom in a relatively short time. A supporter of the Union, he saw his family divide over the Civil War, with two sons joining the union army and a third fighting for the confederacy.

City Temple morning services begin at 9 a.m. each Sunday. They are live-streamed on Facebook. A weekly prayer session is conducted on Zoom.

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## Downsizing, MICA plans to sell Bolton Hill properties

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/mica-selling-properties/>



Facing reduced student enrollment and revenues, Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) has decided to sell several Bolton Hill properties, beginning with two residences located on Mt. Royal Ave.

Martin Lemelle, CFO at the college, told BHCA's President Amy Sheridan that it soon will put on the market buildings at 1500 and 1502 W. Mt. Royal Ave., near Mosher St. Both were built in 1880.

1500 W Mount Royal Ave. is a 4,200 square foot townhouse on an 1,860 square foot lot with 3 bathrooms, according to the online real estate firm Redfin. It estimates the home's value is \$629,897.

1502 W. Mt. Royal Ave. is a 3,978 square foot similar townhouse with 4 bathrooms. Redfin says it is worth \$682,925.

Lemelle says additional property sales will follow. These two, he said, were purchased to be used for faculty housing are no longer needed and are unoccupied. The other properties to be unloaded over the next 12-18 months are three residences that were used to house graduate students but are no longer needed. He said MICA has excess capacity in its traditional dormitories.

The sales come on the heels of faculty and staff cutbacks as the school's enrollment during and post-COVID dipped from about 2100 to 1900. Many students who were enrolled from mainland China who returned home at the onset of the pandemic have neither returned nor been replaced by others from China. In an interview with *The Bulletin* last year MICA President Sammy Hoi said that geopolitical issues and China's lengthy clampdown because of COVID were factors in the student losses. Historically, international students were about one-third of MICA enrollment.

Hoi has announced that he will leave the school at the end of the school year.

According to the [Baltimore Banner](#), MICA owns property and equipment worth close to \$170 million and has some \$117 million in endowment funds.

Total enrollment at most higher education institutions in the U.S. has been declining since at least spring 2018 and worsened during the pandemic, according to data from the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. *The Banner* said MICA revenues dropped by 25 percent from \$68.9 million in fiscal

year 2020 to \$50.3 million in 2021. Meanwhile, expenses dropped from \$92.6 million in 2020 to under \$75 million in 2021.

Neighborhood realtor Jessica Dailey said she would list the properties.

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## Thinking about cannabis? Start slowly and get a medical card, doctor advises

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/thinking-about-cannabis/>



About 30 neighborhood residents were appropriately “Curious about Cannabis” and attended an Oct. 25 evening salon with that theme hosted by BHCA’s Gray Panther caucus of older residents. Dr. Dan Morhaim, a member of the faculty at JHU School of Medicine and a longtime delegate to the Maryland General Assembly, spoke as a fierce advocate for legalization and a cautious supporter of cannabis use..

Morhaim is an ER physician. He saw for many years the damaging unfairness and violence caused by the national war on drugs initiated, he said, solely for political reasons during the presidency of Richard Nixon. A lasting result of that failed effort to criminalize marijuana sales and use has led to severe restraints on medical research on the efficacy of cannabis as a useful medical product, as well as on its limitations and dangers.

[Two years ago](#) President Biden directed his HHS secretary to review the legal classification of cannabis as a dangerous drug. Federal law currently classifies it in Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act. That is higher than the classification of fentanyl and methamphetamine – the drugs that are driving our overdose epidemic. Biden also pardoned everyone ever convicted of federal charges for simple possession and urged governors to do the same. Cannabis is now legally available in 24 states, including Maryland. Recreational use of cannabis, legal since July in Maryland, does not require a medical card or purpose.

Speaking as a physician, Morhaim said that while there is widespread evidence that for some adults the recreational use of cannabis in proper dosages is relaxing, harmless and pleasurable, there are plenty of warning signs that incautious use can produce adverse effects best addressed by temporary abstinence or reduced intake. He likened it to excessive use of alcohol. “For those who may have experimented with marijuana in earlier times, it is important to note that today’s cannabis products are very different and

stronger than what you likely remember,” he said.

He also said there are few similarities between the smoked “joints” that have been popular and the various methods available today through state-licensed shops for more systematic and controlled smokeless intake with hookah-like devices as well as in gummies, chewables, mints, baked products and tablets.

Most in the audience, however, asked about the medical potential of cannabis in dealing with post-surgical or chronic pain, anxiety and sleeplessness -- ailments common in older adults. Morhaim said that there is lots of positive anecdotal evidence, but little meaningful blind-test data to support those reports.

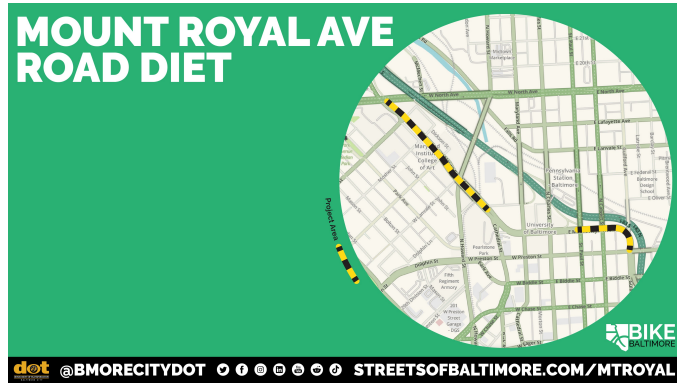
Dr. Morhaim suggested that those who think they may want to try cannabis for a medical purpose at some future date move now to obtain the required [state eligibility card](#). He said the state process can be slow. Apart from having the card in hand when deciding to purchase a cannabis product, he said, medical purchases are not subject to the 9 percent state tax imposed on cannabis products for non-medical use.

He also suggested that anyone with health issues should contact their physician before making regular use of cannabis, since it could interact negatively with other medications.

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## What! No left turn onto North Avenue?

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/mount-royal-traffic/>



The city moved forward in October on its long-term Complete Street program that tries to emphasize safety and alternatives to cars as transportation in the city. This time it included stretching an existing bike lane that headed north up Mt. Royal Avenue from W. Lafayette Ave. to North Ave., eliminating an existing northbound auto traffic lane while increasing available parking near MICA.

The unveiling wasn't pretty. After-work traffic was especially snarled as northbound commuters were squeezed from two lanes to one, and many were shocked to discover that they could no longer turn left and head west on North Avenue.

“Aspects of the project took us by surprise,” said Kevin Cross, who leads BHCA’s Transportation Committee. “DOT did present, a while back at a BHCA meeting, that they would be installing a bike lane, basically from Guilford to Lafayette along Mt. Royal, but then recently taking away a lane down by the light rail, and the latest changes at North Ave — those came as a surprise. Those details weren’t presented.”

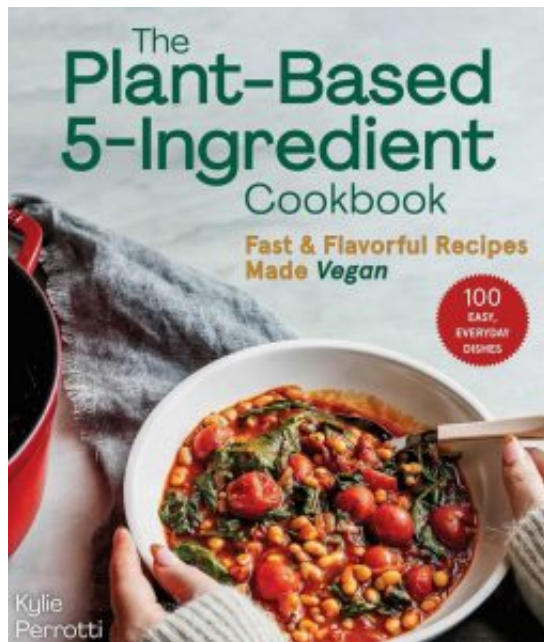
Some residents reported they were seeing commuters detouring west on West Lafayette Avenue, a street already plagued by high-speed drivers. Others saw traffic-pattern changes northbound on Park Ave.

“DOT may still have some finishing touches to implement, and drivers and their GPS navigation apps will need time to adjust,” Cross said. “I sure don’t think any part of Bolton Hill needs more automobile traffic.” DOT has a page set up for this project and it includes a form to provide feedback:

<https://streetsofbaltimore.com/mtroyal>. Within that page there also are links to their technical design layouts.

## Kylie Perrotti has a new cookbook

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/perrotti-cookbook/>



Struggling for ideas about holiday gifts? You need not leave the neighborhood.

Kylie Perrotti's newest cookbook, *The Plant-Based 5-Ingredient Cookbook*, shows any cook how to take just five readily-available ingredients and transform them into delicious plant-based dishes for any occasion.

All recipes use just five core ingredients such as pasta, beans, legumes, squash, and mushrooms, making it easy to find dishes based on your favorite food, what you have on hand, or what you're craving."

A resident of Bolton Hill (and former designer for this prestigious newsletter), [Perrotti has carved out a career in food, writing, design and photography](#). This is her third publication. The others are

- [The Weekly Meal Plan Cookbook: A 3-Month Kickstart Guide to Healthy Home Cooking](#) (2020), and
- [The Weekly Vegan Meal Plan Cookbook: A 3-Month Kickstart Guide to Plant-Based Cooking](#) (2022).

All three are available at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

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## **Bolton Hill Notes**

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/bolton-hill-notes-nov23/>



*BHCA's next meeting will be held on Tuesday, Dec. 5 at Memorial Episcopal Church's Farnham Hall. Socializing starts at 7 p.m. and the business meeting is at 7:30 p.m. All neighborhood residents are welcome.*

### ***Holiday greens sale is underway***

The Bolton Hill Garden Club Holiday Greens Sale is underway, with online orders for wreaths, decorative swags, evergreen roping and poinsettias available. New this year are beeswax candles in a variety of colors, shapes and sizes. They also have Chanukah candles and aromatherapy candles.

Prepaid orders are accepted at the [BHCA website](#). Ordered items will be available for pick-up from 9a.m. to 3p.m. at Brown Memorial Presbyterian Church (enter through Lafayette entrance). These items will also be available there for purchase without pre-ordering, as supplies last.

### ***Midtown wants volunteers for alley cleanup on Nov. 18.***

The Midtown benefits district is kicking off the first phase of its *Alleys to Assets* program which aims to not just clean alleys in the Midtown District but transform them into invested community spaces.

“Alleys can be community-building places, where neighbors BBQ and kids run and play because vehicles and strangers are less common than on busy city streets,” according to the district’s promotional material. Midtown’s president, Eric Sousa, said the program aims to clean up weedy and trashy alleys and then hold property owners around them accountable going forward. The city’s Dept. of Housing and Community Development is partnering with Midtown.

Volunteers are needed on Saturday, Nov. 18, from 10 a.m. to noon to tackle alleys in Bolton Hill. Meet between Founder’s Green and Park Ave., next to Unity Park. Gloves, bags, tools and refreshments will be provided.

Midtown also will begin its fall leaf cleanup around Thanksgiving. For more information, [consult their website](#).

***City staff turnover may slow plans to moderate neighborhood traffic.***

Efforts to get the city to take steps to reduce or slow traffic separately on West Lafayette Avenue and Laurens Street may have hit a setback. [As discussed in last month's Bulletin](#), City Council Member Eric Costello persuaded city DOT officials to do a site visit to both locations, requested by BHCA's Transportation Committee.

According to committee chair Kevin Cross, after more than a month passed without an update from DOT, the committee has been continuing to reach out to DOT through the council member's office. At the Nov. 7 BHCA meeting, we were informed that one of the key DOT traffic engineers who met with us in September is leaving the agency.

Costello's staff said they would continue to push the agency to follow up.

***BHCA finances are sound at midpoint in fiscal year.***

Midway through its fiscal year Chris Kingsley, BHCA's treasurer, told members at their October meeting that the association's finances are healthy, with cash and restricted accounts both increased in the six months from May to Nov. 4.

Festival on the Hill, the October day that is BHCA's biggest annual event each year, was "phenomenally successful", Kingsley said, in spite of morning rains. It has a surplus to be shared with designated nearby charities. The several summer Arts in the Parks concerts cost \$12,483 to produce, with extraordinary volunteer participation against a budget of \$14,000.

Altogether the association brought in a total of \$109,512 in revenue against budget projections of \$97,800. It spent \$47,958 or about half of its budgeted expenditure amount, with some spending deferred to the third or fourth quarters. BHCA also is managing two state grants -- \$63,000 in hand and \$38,000 committed but not yet received -- to improve Mounds Park on the west side of Eutaw Place.

As of Aug. 20, BHCA had cash on hand of \$240,783 in six separate accounts. That includes \$132,165 in restricted grants and donations for specific projects and events.

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

*The Bulletin is published 10 times a year. It is designed by Elizabeth Peters. We invite others to help write, edit, provide photos or work on the business side. Send suggestions and comments to [bulletin@boltonhillmd.org](mailto:bulletin@boltonhillmd.org). Thanks to Alex Aaron, Kevin Cross, Rich Dubroff, Chris Kingsley, Paula Jackson, David Nyweide, Jim Prost, Amy Sheridan, Lisa Savage and Linda Stirling, among others, for helping with this issue. Errors and omissions are the responsibility of the editor, **Bill Hamilton**.*

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**Bolton Hill**

**Community Association**