

Bolton Hill

Community Association

Table Of Contents

City forum on State Center lacked focus, but here's what we know now	3
Pick up parking permits at Brown Memorial church March 22-23	5
Covering the Orioles in Sarasota; what's not to like?	6
Are you registered to vote in the coming city primary elections?	9
Getting to know Beth Cole: 'a downward dog every day'	11
There's an Emmy in the neighborhood....	13
Neighboring Madison Park has a new community leader	15
Bolton Hill Notes	17

City forum on State Center lacked focus, but here's what we know now

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/city-forum-state-center-updates/>



State Center in Better Days (Credit: Baltimore Banner)

The city planning department's late February open house for nearby residents to provide input on what to do with the soon-to-be-abandoned 18-acre State Center on Bolton Hill's south border was, some would say, a nothing-burger.

There was no program, no presentation by city officials and no organized conversation about what might occupy or replace the six decrepit office buildings once they are vacated next year. Instead, the roughly 100 adults who showed up were given colored stickers and directed to mill around a series of white boards to rate broad possible choices for development. Many from Bolton Hill who attended on that rainy night called it time and city resources wasted.

But in a subsequent call with a city official, who asked not to be quoted, here is what we learned:

- Although the state still controls the property, the city Department of Planning shelled out more than \$300,000 for a six-month market study of possible uses for the tract, one of the larger central city parcels available in any major city. None of the market study consultants attended the open house. Their report is due in July and will be made public. That study could become the basis for a subsequent outreach to developers and institutions to explore their interests.
- That study and the reaction to it could determine whether the existing office buildings, built in a mid-century brutalist architecture style, will stay, be modified, or go. Earlier plans to rebuild state offices and add commercial development, killed by former Republican Gov. Larry Hogan, envisioned the historic State Armory as part of the development, but the state is not conveying the armory building to the city.
- Although the last of the state offices is scheduled to close late in 2025 as employees move into leased space downtown, there is no date certain for transferring control of the property from the state to the city. Many details remain to be worked out. It's unclear, for example, who pays for site clearance or remediation and what the costs might be. Some of us worry that the city, if it assumes the cost, will have neither the imagination nor the resources to do the job efficiently.
- The site could be vacant for an undetermined amount of time – months, perhaps years – while the

city figures out what to do and to find a developer with the money to move forward. The city wants to minimize vacancy time that could invite graffiti, squatters, and other undesirable activities.

- Obvious possible uses include an educational or health care facility or new office buildings if, for example, a large enterprise wanted to move its headquarters there. Housing of some sort – apartment buildings, townhouses, and/or low-income residences is probable. Commercial development centered around a Home Depot or other big store and/or smaller businesses and green space also are likely considerations. A study commissioned by the former governor several years ago suggested a sports arena.
- The city wants to build on the site as a transportation hub and tie-in, if feasible, with the renovation and expansion taking place around Penn Station. State Center has a subway station, light rail service and several bus lines currently. The market study does not include a traffic analysis or projections.
- A plan that properly integrates new development into the existing neighborhoods could include new retail. Earlier plans, scrapped by Hogan, called for a supermarket and hospitality facilities blending with new state offices.

The original public-private state center redevelopment project was approved during the administration of Gov. Robert Erlich, also a Republican, nearly two decades ago. Contracts for a \$1.5 billion re-development were signed, although litigation led by downtown property owners Peter Angelos and others caused long delays. Once he took office in 2015, Hogan pronounced the development a boondoggle and tried to kill it, leading to new litigation.

The emptying out of downtown during the pandemic led to a deal between state senate leader Bill Ferguson, whose district includes downtown Baltimore, and the governor to move state employees into downtown and to vacate State Center. In August 2022, the Hogan Administration announced plans to hand off the site to the city once the state agencies moved out.

Former Bolton Hill resident John Kyle, who years ago helped create and lead a multi-neighborhood coalition to collaborate with the original State Center redevelopment, said he is reaching out to those coalition participants to revitalize the State Center Neighborhood Alliance. A state law passed at SCNA's urging required the state to seek consensus with surrounding neighborhoods around any development.

--Bill Hamilton

Pick up parking permits at Brown Memorial church March 22-23

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/parking-permit-pickup-2024/>



If you renew your Area 3 parking permit online and opt to pick it up at the community parking permit pick-up, you can do so Friday (March 22) from 5 to 8 p.m. or Saturday (23) from 9 a.m. to noon at Brown Memorial church. And you can also pay your 2024 dues in cash or by check or credit card, if you have not yet done so, for BHCA membership.

Bring your vehicle registration and drivers license with you.

Residential parking permits are required to park on weekdays on most Bolton Hill streets. To register your car for the first time you must take your title and vehicle registration downtown to the city parking authority, 211 N. Paca St., M-F between 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Renewals, however, can be done on the authority's [clunky website](#). To insure that you can pick it up in the neighborhood and avoid a trip downtown, re-register your vehicle no later than Tuesday, March 19. It costs \$20 per vehicle. BHCA board member Bobbi Schilling has organized this year's neighborhood pickup.

Covering the Orioles in Sarasota; what's not to like?

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/orioles-in-sarasota/>



Dubroff at Ed Smith Stadium in Sarasota.

Rich Dubroff has been in Sarasota, FL, since mid-February, covering the Baltimore Orioles spring training games and posting Orioles news stories every day on BaltimoreBaseball.com as the team gears up for regular season play. I spoke with him in Sarasota on March 4 (prior to the Orioles loss to the Minnesota Twins).

Dubroff, who lives in the 100 block of West Lafayette Avenue, began writing for the website, where he is the lead Orioles writer, in July 2018, when he covered the 2018 All Star Game in Washington, D.C. That July, the Orioles launched their rebuild by trading star player Manny Machado. “I came at a really interesting time and had a lot of years of losing to watch. Now the rebuild is paying off and I hope to have many more years of watching the team win!”

The excitement about the Orioles is contagious. The baseball website had over 4 million page views in 2023. It covers the team and its games, minor league affiliates, and the Baltimore-area high school and college baseball scene. “I love what I do,” said Dubroff.

What he is seeing in spring training is a “really, really deep team, with really good players in their young prime, and a group of really good players that are coming along”. What he finds interesting and fun about spring training is being able to see the young players in the late innings of the games. “These are the players who will be playing in the regular season in the next year or two, so it is a great opportunity to watch them develop.” He added, “The Orioles have a great farm system. I think this is the deepest team I’ve seen since I came to Baltimore in 1980, including the team that won the World Series in 1983.”

In his view, two of the most interesting young players are Jackson Holliday and Colton Cowser. “Holliday is such a great prospect, and while he might not be on the roster on opening day, he will join

soon after. Cowser, who debuted last year, has been playing very, very well so far in spring training, and may make the team for opening day. The Orioles are such a young team and have so much talent. So many great players – most notably Gunner Henderson and Adley Rutschman; they made their debuts just in the last couple of years.

“The team is so talented. Jorge Mateo is playing in Center Field to heighten his versatility. Holliday is learning to play second base. Henderson can play shortstop or third base. Jordon Westburg is playing second base and third base. It really helps to have these guys be able to play several positions. This is a great time to be an Orioles fan!”

Dubroff said that the starting pitching staff looks strong. “Clearly Kyle Bradish and John Means won’t make the beginning of the season, but it’s likely that Means will return first. We still have strong starters with Dean Kremer, Tyler Wells, Corbin Burnes (announced as the starting pitcher for the March 28 season opener), Cole Irvin, and Jason Rodriguez. And we have so many relievers with big league experience that it is hard to know who will make the roster. We should be in good shape.”



Not Angelos: fearless reporter Sallye Perrin with O's new owner Rubenstein.

He said he has not met new owner David Rubinstein, but Rubinstein has been attending spring training games. “Usually, new owners come in when the team is not doing well. Here ownership is changing hands and the team is doing great. I am hopeful that maybe Rubinstein will spend a little more money to extend the contracts of young talent like Holliday, Rutschman and Henderson. That would be very popular with the fans.”

Rich Dubroff moved to Baltimore in 1980 to take a job on “Wall Street Week” on Maryland Public Television, where he later became producer. He lived for 7 years on Bolton Street and, after his marriage, he and wife Susan bought the house on Lafayette. He began to cover sports on the side for news outlets in the 1990’s. He began covering the Orioles full time for the Comcast Sports web page on the last day of the Orioles’ 2011 season and moved to Baltimore Baseball.com in 1918. While primarily covering the Orioles, he has also helped with coverage of the NFL Ravens and the NBA Wizards. He loves to talk

sports; if you see him in the neighborhood, stop for a chat!

--*Sallye Perrin*

Are you registered to vote in the coming city primary elections?

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/upcoming-primary-elections-2024/>



Waiting to vote in the 2020 election (Credit: Baltimore Sun)

With hotly contested elections this year for Baltimore mayor, city council president and for Bolton Hill's two city council members (and the U.S. Senate), it's important to be registered to vote on or before primary election day on May 14.

To vote for or against these local officials on May 14, because all of them are Democrats, *you must register as a Democrat and vote in the Democratic primary.*

Maryland is a closed primary state without runoff elections. Although there are Republican and Independent candidates on the Nov. 5 general election ballot, Baltimore city elections are almost always decided in the Democratic vote. Four years ago, the current mayor won by getting only about 30 percent of the primary vote in a field of five competitive candidates. He swept the November ballot with more than 80 percent. In the primary, your vote matters a lot.

Running against Mayor **Brandon Scott** are ex-mayor **Sheila Dixon**, attorney **Thiru Vignarajah** and businessman **Bob Wallace**, along with several less visible candidates. Council President **Nick Mosby** is opposed by council member **Zeke Cohen** and former council member **Shannon Snead**. Eleventh District council member **Eric Costello**, who now represents the southern end of Bolton Hill, is being challenged by **Zac Blanchard**, a staff member at Midtown Community Benefits District. Seventh District council member **James Torrence** is opposed by **Tori Rose**, a motivational speaker and west Baltimore activist. The 7th district now includes the north end of Bolton Hill.

Here's what do you need to know:

Registration

Make sure you are properly registered to vote at your current address. You can do that at the [State Board of elections website](#). You may register if you are at least 16 years old but cannot vote unless you will be at least 18 years old by the general election on Tuesday, Nov. 5. *The deadline for registration in order to vote without complications in the primary election is April 23.*

If you fail to register on time, you can take proper ID to your neighborhood polling place on election day and register onsite. You will receive a provisional ballot.

Voting

Decide whether you wish to vote early in person, by mail, or on election day in the neighborhood.

- **Early in-person voting** sites are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. from *Thursday, May 2 through Thursday, May 9*. [There are eight locations](#). One of the closer ones is at the recreation center at 911 Hollins St, near the Hollins Market.
 - **Mail voting** requires that you request a ballot online or in person, complete the ballot and drop it off or mail it in. [You may request a ballot \(for yourself only\) online](#) now. To do so you must have a current Maryland driver's license or state ID card. To receive your ballot by mail, your request must be *received* (not just mailed) by 5 p.m. May 7. To receive your ballot via the internet, your request must be received by 5 p.m. May 10.
 - **To vote on election day**, find your voting place and show up between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m. You normally do not have to show ID, but it is a good idea to have it with you.
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Getting to know Beth Cole: ‘a downward dog every day’

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/getting-to-know-beth-cole/>



Beth Cole recently returned to her hometown of Baltimore after living in Arizona near one of her children. She lives at Linden Park Apartments on McMechen Street. At 86, Beth maintains a dedicated yoga practice, even teaching classes online.

“I’ve taught a weekly class on Zoom since I moved to Baltimore from Tucson. Yoga and me, for 66 years! I’ve been doing a variety of positions –‘asanas’ – since I had my first yoga practice in college (at what now is the University of Mary Washington in Virginia) in 1958, well before many people in the United States ever heard of yoga. I continued to practice what I often called ‘stretching,’ back then.”

A meeting in the 1970s (“I was a nimble 30-year-old”) with a Pakistani yogi at a Jewish Community Center deepened her understanding of the practice. This encounter introduced her to yoga's philosophical and spiritual aspects, which have since guided her personal practice and teaching philosophy throughout her life. Beth has embraced the principles of “love your life” and “explore the possibilities.” She believes in the importance of daily yoga practice, stating, “not a day goes by without a downward dog.” Her efforts to share yoga with other seniors in her building highlight her commitment to spreading the benefits of the practice.

“In the 80’s, I met an American doctor who was treating individuals with Ayurveda methods (a system of medicine native to India) and approaches including yoga. She became my physician, and with her I learned more about mindfulness, healthy eating practices, and distinct daily ayurvedic procedures, which extended to not only how I moved but how I took care of myself. This led to a more healthful lifestyle. As I aged, I saw a greater need for the extended yogic living approach though I still focused on a full blown, time-consuming career.

“Someone wrote that we understand life by looking backward, but life moves forward. What I learned about yoga in 1958 and over the next 50 years, I didn’t fully utilize until I retired in 2004. Then I began

an earnest study. In 2015 I became certified as an instructor.”

Beth's return to Baltimore brings her story together, connecting her family's history. Her dad was a Baltimore doctor, and her mom a Russian immigrant.

A lifetime of professional employment included roles as a special assistant to the president at National Public Radio headquarters in D.C. and later as president of the National Women's Business Center, showcasing her leadership in marketing and business management. Beth is known for her strength and ability to tackle challenges head-on, evidenced by a solo move across the country, living for weeks without her furniture and other essentials. Her other passion is gardening. She has a daughter and grandchildren in Prince Georges County.

To learn more about yoga, contact her at beth@beth-cole.com

--*Lisa Savage*

There's an Emmy in the neighborhood....

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/emmy-in-the-neighborhood/>



In early January, Derek Sullivan, 53, a costume designer, costume supervisor and costume illustrator who has lived in the 1400 block of Bolton Street for nearly 20 years, returned home from Los Angeles with a prime-time Creative Arts Emmy Award.

It was awarded in the category of “Outstanding Period Costumes for a Limited or Anthology Series or Movie.” His was earned as costume supervisor, working with Denise Wingate, the costume designer for Amazon Prime Video’s *Daisy Jones and the Six*, Track 8: “Looks Like We Made It.” The series is based on a book of the same name by Taylor Jenkins. It follows the rise to stardom of a 1970s rock band to their split at the height of their fame. Track 8 finds Daisy reunited with the *Six* for their *Aurora* tour, where drugs and alcohol take their toll on Daisy.

The Emmy Awards are an extensive range of awards for artistic and technical merit for the American and international television industry. A number of Emmy ceremonies are held throughout the calendar year, each with its own rules and award categories.

As a costume supervisor, Sullivan helps the costume designers realize their design on screen. In his words, “It is the costume designer’s ocean; I steer the ship.” He helps source the costumes and sets up and runs the on-location costume shop. He is responsible for the costume department’s schedule, crew and budget, with each critical to the success of the production schedule. “Every costume must be ready to match the production schedule, which is largely shot out of sequence,” he said. “Our department must be forward thinking and adaptable to an ever-changing schedule, to keep things on pace.”

Daisy Jones is set in the 1970s and includes crowd scenes with up to 300 people each. Sullivan came in as the costume supervisor on location in New Orleans for episodes 6 through 10. He also arranged the logistics to get the costume department to Greece, often working 16-to-18-hour days, seven days a week. “This work is not for the faint of heart and my life is not glamorous. But each show’s challenges are

different, which keeps things fresh and exciting,” he said.

Costuming is “story-telling through clothing, and it is important to take into account the backstories of the characters.” He said costumes need to look authentic and believable for the era, and not exaggerated or cartoonish, (unless, of course, it’s in the script). “Good costume design will disappear, and viewers will look at the characters as an entity,” he said.

Derek Sullivan studied graphic design at Grossmont College in El Cajon, CA; fashion design at Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles; and holds an MFA in Illustration from Academy of Art University in San Francisco. He landed his first job after college as a costumer for a low-budget horror movie. That began his 32-year career in design, illustration, and fabrication of costumes for nearly 100 film, theater, and television productions. In addition to *Daisy Jones and the Six*, Derek’s credits include *House of Cards*, *The Founder*, *The Highwaymen*, *Unhinged*, *Fist Fight*, *Game Change* and *Low Winter Sun*. In these and many other films and television series, he served as everything from costume designer, assistant costume designer, supervisor, and costume illustrator.

He and his husband Chris Mirkovich attended the Primetime Creative Arts Emmy Award ceremony in Los Angeles Jan. 6-7. Derek and Denise Wingate stepped onto the stage at the Peacock Theater in downtown L.A. to receive their honors. “The experience was one of the most thrilling nights of my life. The Emmy itself is big and heavy! It now lives in our parlor in Bolton Hill,” he said. For more information about Derek Sullivan and his work, see www.dbsstudiollc.com.

—Sallye Perrin

Neighboring Madison Park has a new community leader

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/mpia-new-leader/>



Our neighbors in Madison Park have chosen a new, young leader: Omar Hamza is the new president of the Madison Park Improvement Association.

MPIA represents the neighborhood abutting Bolton Hill to the West of Eutaw Place. MPIA and BHCA collaborate on programs like *Arts in the Parks* and in coalition against common concerns, such as derelict building owners and park maintenance.

Hamza, 31, is a relatively new resident of the area, moving to Baltimore from New Jersey at the height of the COVID pandemic. He took office early this year, replacing longtime MPIA leader Antoinette Peele. She remains deeply involved with the neighborhood.

Hamza said his priority is growing the organization and “I’m really focused on greening, particularly on the Lena K. Lee Park.” That park in the 1900 block of Madison Ave. is a memorial to Lena King Lee, an educator and attorney who was one of the first African American women elected to the Maryland General Assembly. She lived a block away from the park. But its status is complicated.

“Folks don’t use that park, and I want to fix that. The park land is actually not public; it is owned by an individual,” Hamza said. “It needs better lighting, we need to stop dumping from taking place, and we need to make it a greener, better place to be.” He said the association is working toward an agreement with the owners that will facilitate the neighborhood association working to obtain grant money to enhance the park. Lena Lee Park has been a site for summer *Arts in the Parks* concerts for the last two years.

MPIA also hopes to modify the dividers at the intersections of Roberts and Madison, adding planters.

With BHCA, Madison Park is looking to promote property ownership behavior around the Pedestal

Gardens rehabilitation project and in vacant properties near the now-empty Eutaw-Washburn school.

Hamza is employed by an international banking company in Manhattan but works from home most of the time, focusing on regulatory compliance. During the pandemic, like many northeasterners, he searched around for new residence possibilities “and I stumbled upon Madison Park,” buying a 19th century three-unit brick corner building on Madison Ave. “It was in great condition, and I liked the quiet neighborhood.” A son of Egyptian immigrants, Hamza considers himself a city-person, although he grew up in suburbs near New York City.

MPIA and BHCA both are involved in the rehabilitation of Mounds Park on Eutaw Place, bordering both neighborhoods. MPIA has an eight-member board that meets virtually every month, except for summer. Their big issues are, not surprisingly, similar to those of Bolton Hill: safety, historic preservation, responsible development and trash in alleys.

—*Bill Hamilton*

Bolton Hill Notes

<https://boltonhillmd.org/bulletin/bolton-hill-notes-mar24/>



Green Streets Arts Festival is coming, bringing neighborhoods together

As a new, early part of the Arts in the Parks program, the *Green Streets Arts Festival 2024; Bringing Neighborhoods Together* will be held on May 11 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 1400-1500 Eutaw Place Median and Mounds Park (1420 Eutaw Place) and Unity Hall. The festival is organized by BHCA, Madison Park Improvement Association, Historic Marble Hill Community Association and Midtown Community Benefits District.

The Bolton Hill, Madison Park and Marble Hill neighborhoods have been divided historically and socially by the Eutaw Place Median -- the so-called “Red Line” -- which historically ran from North Avenue to Dolphin Street, resulting in racial segregation and mortgage redlining. Arts in the Parks has been an opportunity to break down the divide.

Visual artists from Bolton Hill, Madison Park, Marble Hill, Jubilee Arts, the Pennsylvania Avenue Black Arts & Entertainment District and MICA will be featured. Bolton Hill artists including Jimmy Rouse, John Ruppert, Dena Jones, Lat Naylor and Zhee Chapmon will show their work. Attendees will have the opportunity to view and purchase the art works.

In addition, there will be a beer garden, live music with Brett Naylor and DJ John Canal, food trucks and a film screening at Unity Hall. A Kids Zone will be part of the programming. Organizations from the greater neighborhood also will have displays.

Able to volunteer? Contact Lee Tawney, lee.tawney@gmail.com.

Keystone Korner hosts Bolton Hill's Gray Panthers

Jazz impresario Todd Barkan hosted a dozen older Bolton Hill residents for a free (no-cover) Sunday matinee at Keystone Korner, the inner harbor jazz club that is among the best on the East Coast.

Arranged by Eutaw Place resident Sarah Holley, it was the first out-of-neighborhood outing for BHCA's Gray Panthers, created two years ago to promote aging in place among residents over 60 (and those who

live with them). More such outings are contemplated, included a discount-ticket visit to a BSO performance at the Meyerhoff Symphony Hall.

Barkan, 77, and his wife Eileen joined the group at their tables before the performance by [Terri Lyne Carrington](#) and her New Standards entourage, which include a vocalist and a dancer. Keystone Korner is celebrating its 51st year of hosting well-known and rising jazz musicians, first in San Francisco and since 2016 in Baltimore. Barkan is an NEA Jazz Master award winner.

To join or learn more about BHCA Gray Panthers email graypanthers@boltonhillmd.org .

Maj. Natalie Preston named to oversee BPD activities in West Baltimore

Maj. Natalie Preston, 44, has been appointed as commander of the Baltimore Police Department Western District, which since last summer includes Bolton Hill.

Maj. Preston, a Baltimore native, has served the Baltimore Police Department since 2000. She was promoted to major last month. She served as an officer in the Central District, which covered Bolton Hill before BPD redistricting last year. She replaces Maj. Matt Correll, who was promoted to head BPD education and training programs citywide.

Maj. Preston holds a B.S. degree in criminal justice and a Masters in criminal justice administration, both from Coppin State University. She is currently pursuing a degree in Addictions Counseling. She spoke briefly on a Zoom call with BHCA board members, noting that she grew up in west Baltimore, “not too far from Bolton Hill.” She is married and has a son.

Capt. Michael A. Mercado, 36, has been appointed as the Executive Officer of the Western District. Mercado has been a BPD officer for 12 years. Before joining the department, he served in the U.S. Army. He has a degree from the University of Maryland.

About The Bulletin....

The Bolton Hill 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. Thanks to John Kyle, Paula Jackson, Sallye Perrin, [Jim Proust](#), Lisa Savage, Amy Sheridan, Lee Tawney and others for helping with this issue. Errors and omissions are the responsibility of the editor, Bill Hamilton.

Bolton Hill

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