

B-CC Rotary Club Weekly Lunch Meeting 10/30/07

RM Steering Committee in attendance: Chuck Sullivan and Mimi Brodsky Kress

The meeting was attended by approximately 80 people from the business community, representing a variety of professions. Mimi and Chuck were introduced by Andy Pennington, current president of the B-CC Rotary. Chuck gave the RM power point presentation and spoke about who we are, and our goals for opening up the dialogue about building in established neighborhoods. He also discussed potential legislation as an outcome of the Infill Development Task Force and possible tree legislation. There was an open question and answer period following the presentation. Some of the questions were:

- **Why should it be acceptable for a new home to tower over an older existing home?**

Rules and regulations are established by the County Council and the County Executive through legislation and executive orders. They are enforced by DPS (Department of Permitting Services) and MNCPPC (Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission). If a new home or addition meets the requirements of those regulations, then it can be built without a neighbor's approval, subject to any neighborhood guidelines or covenants.

- **Who determines the aesthetics of a new home project?**

Aesthetics are a personal preference and design is typically a collaboration between property owner, architect, and builder. Some neighborhoods have established guidelines or covenants that dictate certain elements of design criteria.

- **Is this something that can be regulated?**

It could be, if the Council decided to establish mandatory design guidelines, but this would have a serious effect on property values and property rights.

- **Why should the County be able to tell me if I can take down a tree on my property?**

Currently the trees on your property are within your control. But there may be proposed legislation that will require a private homeowner to apply for a tree removal permit. And there could be conditions tied to that permit being issued relating to the trees "economic value" and also it's viability.

- **Who will oversee this new tree legislation?**

Currently it is being proposed that BOTH DPS and M-NCPPC would be involved with every tree removal request.

- **How will I be protected from the whims of a neighbor that wants me to either remove or NOT remove a tree near his property?**

There is no way to know how far-reaching the tree legislation could go. It is important that people let the County Council know if they support having tree removal on private property be regulated. This kind of legislation could reduce the value of some properties if the existing trees would impede future construction. It could also add a significant amount of time to the process of designing and receiving building permits for additions/renovations or new home construction.