

Spring 2024

Vol. 3 No. 1



Montgomery Preservation, Inc.

NEWSLETTER

Our Mission

To preserve, protect, and promote Montgomery County's rich architectural heritage and historic landscapes.

Our Story

MPI is Montgomery County's county-wide nonprofit historic preservation organization. The group incorporated in 1984 to actively encourage and defend preservation efforts in local communities and throughout the county.

Today, MPI remains dedicated to saving our buildings, landscapes, and sites for future generations. MPI encourages preservation efforts in every corner of Montgomery County, working with all parties to ensure that our towns, owners of historic properties, businesses, and volunteer groups can step up to the modernization, revitalization, demographic, and development challenges of the 21st century.

Two Golden Anniversaries for Historic Preservation Nonprofits

May 1974 marked the creation of two nonprofits who significantly influenced the futures of special places and their surroundings. Half a century ago, in Poolesville and Rockville, concerned citizens saw the need for a non-government organization to be able to speak plainly, take bold actions, and conduct hands-on projects to preserve historic sites in their areas.

As **Historic Medley District** (HMD) celebrates the 50th anniversary of its founding in 1974 by Mary Ann Kephart and Winsome Brown, we look back on years of work in preserving and maintaining many historic properties. HMD bought the 1793 John Poole House, the oldest building in Poolesville, where we continue to offer tours of the House and local programs to the community. We also bought the Old Town Hall (the Bank) from the town of Poolesville, which offers year-round exhibits and events. We lease Seneca Schoolhouse from State Parks; it is open to children for a step-back-in-time experience of a school day in the 1880s. HMD looks forward to continuing these important services for many more generations.

Historic Medley District invites you to join its celebration and a fundraiser to observe 50 years on **Thursday, May 9th** from 6 to 9 pm at Bally Cliff Farm on Darnestown Road, Poolesville, for dinner, drinks, and music. HMD expects many current and former members to attend. The event will raise funds for ongoing and future projects in Western Montgomery County. See www.historicmedley.org to purchase tickets and learn about donation and/or sponsorship opportunities.

Peerless Rockville Historic Preservation, Ltd. also celebrates 50 years since a community responded to loss of its traditional main street, the arrival of Metro, and rapid growth. The group has been the driving force behind documentation, nominations for designation, preservation, and adaptive use of local historic places in the Montgomery County seat. Successful preservation stories include Rockville B&O Railroad Station, Montrose Schoolhouse, Baptist Cemetery, Dawson Farmhouse, Wire Hardware, and Frieda's Cottage. With each project, the community has learned, participated, and benefited.

Every year, Peerless organizes dozens of programs and events featuring local places, people, and culture. The nonprofit advocates for historic buildings of all ages and architectural significance and operates a research center, archive, and museum in the 1891 Red Brick Courthouse. It partners with public and private entities to promote Rockville as a place of great historic interest to residents and visitors. Peerless Rockville invites you to join long-time and current supporters for a Golden Anniversary gala on **Friday evening, May 17th**, at historic Glenview Mansion on Baltimore Road. Visit www.peerlessrockville.org for details, donations, sponsorship opportunities, and tickets.

Contact Us

Montgomery Preservation, Inc
PO Box 4661

Rockville, MD 20849-4661
301-495-4915

Email

mpi@montgomerypreservation.org

website

www.montgomerypreservation.org

OFFICERS

Eileen McGuckian, President
(Rockville)
Vice President
vacant
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Newsletter – Susan Soderberg
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Open Houses – Wendy Woodland
Administrative Coordinator –
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Bethesda Meeting House

You've probably driven by the small white church on a knoll overlooking Rockville Pike on your way to downtown Bethesda and may have wondered how it came to be and who occupies it now. This is the Bethesda Meeting House, built in 1850, where Abraham Lincoln is said to have spoken or worshiped, where Confederate soldiers briefly camped before a skirmish with Union soldiers, and which became the "church that named Bethesda" 153 years ago.

Over the years, the site was occupied by a Presbyterian congregation, a wealthy DC socialite who gained some renown as an artist, a Catholic missionary order, and finally a small Baptist group that died out a few years ago and left the church and its handsome adjacent parsonage in sad decay. The site is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and was an original site on the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

Last December, the Bethesda Historical Society purchased the three-acre site, thanks to a generous donation from a local couple who prefer to remain anonymous. Since then, the Society has worked, with extraordinary help from the community, to clean up the property, secure the premises, make urgent repairs, and arrange for surveys necessary before restoration can begin and the eventual use of the property decided. The Bethesda Meeting House site is a unique historical treasure that deserves to be preserved for future generations. Offers to help are welcome. Email bethesdahistory@gmail.com.



Inside the Bethesda Meeting House
when we gained entry.

Photo credit: Donovan Marks

**Historic Silver Spring
B&O Station
Free Open Houses**

**Join us the First Saturday of
the month, 10am-2pm**

**This is a drop-in program for
families Admission is free!**

8100 Georgia Avenue, Silver
Spring, MD 20910

**TRAIL CONSTRUCTION AND
PARKING FOR SILVER
SPRING B&O STATION**

Construction of a new Metro Branch Trail bridge over Georgia Avenue has begun. As part of this construction a temporary security fence has been installed across the station parking lot. A drive-through gate will be open for MPI/ and station events.

Please note that because of contractor equipment using the lot, the number of available spaces will be limited. There is a special needs space and ramp at the station. Additional parking is available at County garage and lot #4 (8100 Fenton St., accessible from Sligo Ave.) and at the lot at 938 Philadelphia Ave; both are one block from the station.

For specific happenings at each Open House or rentals go to
www.montgomerypreservation.org
www.facebook.com/MontgomeryPI

**MPI Gathering and Annual Meeting on
Saturday, June 8**

You are cordially invited to MPI's 2024 Annual Meeting on Saturday, June 8, from noon to 2:30 pm. It will be held at the Silver Spring B&O Railroad Station, 8100 Georgia Avenue.



On this afternoon, get a close-up look at construction of the Metropolitan Branch Hiker-Biker Trail. Enjoy and find your family in Montgomery Municipal Cable's film of the 150th anniversary B&O train excursion, and see our recently-donated set of 1920s B&O Railroad Company china. MPI members will elect officers and recognize special volunteers.

Now is the time to nominate new MPI officers and sign up for MPI committees. Help with programs and issues that enable MPI to carry out its mission. With an active membership MPI can make the difference that we all desire!

Montgomery County Awards for Historic Preservation

This popular program is taking a rest after 35 years of recognizing local projects, people, and programs. It's a good time to reorganize and make any necessary changes to MPI's signature event -- in personnel, participation, selection process, public program, and other aspects. So while nominations are accepted at any time (see form on the website), the deadline will be later this calendar year and the ceremonials will be scheduled for the fall of 2025. To volunteer or offer advice, contact Awards@montgomerypreservation.org

MPI Survey of County History and Preservation Nonprofits

For 39 years, MPI has partnered with groups and individuals who share preservation goals and are willing to speak and act for the betterment of our community. In fact, MPI By-Laws specify that a majority of our Board of Directors shall be representatives from preservation groups operating within Montgomery County.

Directors affiliated with groups are selected by their organizations and may designate an alternate, for meeting attendance, if desired. Other qualified individuals fill At-Large Director and Officer positions to bring expertise, experience, and interest in County-wide issues.

Recently, MPI distributed a survey to all known History and Preservation nonprofits, asking about their experiences with MPI and how they'd like

MPI to help them with their concerns, mission, and activities. In turn, MPI asked if more groups would be willing to serve on committees, in Director positions, or as advisors. The survey form should be completed this spring.

Spring Preservation Calendar

1st Saturdays April - Nov. Open houses at the Silver Spring B&O Railroad Station 10 am-2 pm

4th Saturdays March -Nov. Tours of the National Park Seminary. Reservations at <https://saveourseminary.org/tours/>

April 27 – Carousel Day at Glen Echo Park Carousel opens for the summer

May 4 –Maryland Cemetery Conference, Havre de Grace, Maryland <https://cpmbs.org>

May 9 – Historic Medley District 50th Anniversary Celebration, Poolesville, Maryland

May 11 – Woodlawn Manor Cultural Park Preservation Day www.montgomeryparks.org/events

May 17 – Peerless Rockville’ 50th Anniversary Celebration, Rockville

May 18 – Maryland House and Garden Tour in Montgomery County

May 30 Annual Update of MoCo Burial Site Inventory www.montgomeryplanningboard.org

June 8 – MPI Annual Meeting and reception noon - 2:30 pm

June 9 – Hungerford Resolves 250th anniversary, Courthouse Square, Rockville www.peerlessrockville.org

June 9 – Takoma Park House and Garden Tour www.historictakoma.org

June 16-22 Juneteenth celebrations in Montgomery County

June 29 & 30 – Annual Montgomery County Heritage Days
throughout Montgomery County www.heritagemontgomery.org

MPI encourages citizen participation in preservation activities. If you have a concern or would like to volunteer please contact us at:

mpi@montgomerypreservation.org

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P.O. Box 4661

Rockville, MD 20849-4661