

Aug, 2006

Director's Corner:

By Nancy Christie

My name is Nancy (Fyke) Christie and I feel honored to have been selected to complete Kim McQuarrie's term as director when he retired from the board. I have lived in or around Columbine Heights for almost my entire life and as you all know we live in a very special place! After being born at Porter Hospital, I started out in Happy Homes off Bowles and when I was a year old we moved into 4 Robincrest Lane. The only three streets in the neighborhood were Maclean, Meadowlark and Robincrest and those who lived here were all very good friends. We had many neighborhood parties and bonfires down by the creek and we kids played outside all day and all evening until our parents yelled for us to come home! When I was nine we moved across the street to 5050 Coal Mine Rd and though we weren't officially in Columbine Heights, we still felt as though we were a part of the neighborhood. During my freshman year at college, my parents sold the farm and built the house at 1 Larkdale Drive since there just wasn't a better place to live than back in Columbine Heights! After living in Hawaii for ten years, my husband, kids and I moved back to Colorado and watched and waited until a house came up for sale in the neighborhood. We lucked out and purchased Keith and Rosemary Ebner's house at 24 Dutch Creek Drive after one week on the market and have lived here for 12 years now. My mom, Betty, and sister, Debbie, still live at 1 Larkdale Drive, which makes things even nicer for me. What a privilege it has been to live in this beautiful neighborhood and how proud I am to now serve on its Board of Directors!

Coal Mine Road

On August 3, we held a neighborhood meeting regarding the imminent widening of Coal Mine Road. This is an issue affecting all of us so for those of you who missed the meeting, below are the minutes.

CHOA Homeowners' Meeting Minutes -08/03/06

Columbine United Church - Coal Mine Road Widening

Will Darken called the meeting to order at 7:12, 46 people were in attendance, representing more than 31 households.

- Will related what he has learned about the widening of Coal Mine Road:
 - Arapahoe County plans to present the Coal Mine Widening plan to the public in early September. The long-range plan is to have four lanes with turn lanes, which may be modified or striped differently for the short-term.
 - There are no immediate plans for the widening of Platte Canyon, which is a state road.
 - The county will need more land, probably to be obtained from the south side of Coal Mine, since it is their policy to use undeveloped land first.
- Many Columbine Heights Residents have expressed interest in a sound wall:

Pros:

 - Increased traffic may pose a danger to life and safety, including the increased intrusion of road-debris pollutants, without the buffer of a wall.
 - Traffic noise could be mitigated, mostly for those living along Coal Mine.
 - A wall would serve to beautify the Columbine Heights entrances, giving a unifying, exclusive and prestigious presentation, increasing property values.

Cons:

 - The cost would be in the \$200,000 - 300,000 range.
 - Funding from the county seems a long shot.
 - Sound mitigation would be negatively impacted by the numerous streets entering onto Coal Mine and the need for visibility sight lines.
 - Coal Mine Residents could potentially be living in the shadow of the wall.

A vote taken in a two-hour meeting with just the Coal Mine residents showed unanimously they would like to see

Columbine Heights fight the widening of Coal Mine and ask Arapahoe County for justification since there are presently no plans to widen Platte Canyon. Further, they all voted (with the exception of one abstention) in favor of a county-funded wall. Ideally, for the Coal Mine residents, Coal Mine would not be widened at this time and Arapahoe County would build the sound wall. Barring that, they were not against a mill levy type tax for Columbine Heights for 10 -15+ years. Additionally, there was discussion at the Coal Mine owners' meeting of a traffic light, probably on Larkdale since the entrance to Fox Haven aligns with Larkdale. The residents were of mixed opinions on a light, but mostly against it.

Will spoke with Susan Beckman, our county Deputy Commissioner, Bernie Ciazza, the County Treasurer, Brian Weimer and Jon Williams of the Arapahoe County Department of Public Works & Development, Bob Houston from Jeffco Highways & Transportation, South Suburban and a private group that supports projects for the public benefit. He also got a bid from the Brick Fence Company who quoted \$138-\$158/foot - \$228K - \$278K, depending on the height and length.

Susan informed Will that if sound levels exceed a certain level, Arapahoe County could potentially fund the wall. It remains dubious as to whether we will achieve the specified noise level to qualify. Will then contacted the county treasurer to investigate any funds or grants he might be aware of as an alternative wall-funding mechanism. There do not appear to be any of these funds available and the treasurer referred Will back to Susan Beckman. Susan informed Will that the county does not assess special property taxes without due process and referred him to a legal firm for further options.

A conversation with RS Wells, a legal firm, yielded two options: 1) Form our own parks and recreation district, governed by an elected board, thereby opting out of South Suburban (for which we would need their unlikely approval) and their mill levy. And: 2) Form a Local Improvement District (LID), also governed by an elected board, and a tax would be administered by Arapahoe County spreading the cost over 15-20 years, which would be approximately \$300/yr/homeowner. Both of these options would require a good deal of research and possibly some upfront funding.

- The floor was then opened for discussion and some of the comments included were:
 - The group expressed appreciation for Will's efforts.
 - Concern the sound wall could obstruct the traffic view.
 - The inevitability of the expansion of Coal Mine makes now the best time for us to act for our future best interest.
 - South Suburban offers many amenities that, although we contribute tax-wise to, we also enjoy a diversity of benefits from.
 - It would be desirable to have a wall and retain the bike path.
 - Maintaining our piece of bike path seems to be of low or no priority to South Suburban. We agreed to place forming a committee to serve as a liaison in order to ensure maintenance services on the agenda for the September board meeting.
 - Our position to the county should be that we want space for both the bike path and a wall.
 - We should suggest Coal Mine be striped for three lanes: two eastbound and one westbound.
 - Any improvement to Coal Mine could encourage more traffic.
 - We should consider closing off some of our streets, both for sound wall effectiveness and ease of entry onto Coal Mine.
- Voting - Coal Mine Road Widening
 - The motions were made and seconded to vote on:
 1. Keeping the bike trail and insist upon an easement for a sound wall on the north side of Coal Mine - unanimously in favor.
 2. The redesigning of the intersection of Coal Mine and Platte Canyon to include a turn lane, which may

Over, please

extend significantly to the west – all in favor, with 2 nays.

3. Any new work on Coal Mine being suspended until such time as the plans for Platte Canyon and Coal Mine and Sheridan (Jeffco) are synched up and understood – all in favor of some improvement before such time, with 8 against (nays) any improvement before such time.

Although not formally voted upon, by general acclamation the meeting participants were against the possibility of four lanes of traffic.

- Voting – Sound Wall

- The motions were made and seconded to vote on:

1. Building a sound wall with 30' visibility setbacks from the cross streets, if paid for by the county – all in favor, with 1 nay.
2. Exploring the building of a sound wall with 30' visibility setbacks from cross streets, funded by some means of assessment on the neighborhood, (e.g., a Local Improvement District, but also other means which might present themselves upon further investigation.) given that Coal Mine is widened and that the county will not fund a sound wall – all in favor, with 1 nay.
3. Exploring the building of a sound wall with 30' visibility setbacks from cross streets, funded by some means of assessment on the neighborhood, (e.g., a Local Improvement District, but also other means which might present themselves upon further investigation.) even given no improvement being made to Coal Mine and that the county will not fund a sound wall – all in favor, with 3 nays.

Will called for volunteers to form a sound wall committee: Jack Lintz, John Backes and Bob Shultz.

4. Seceding from the South Suburban Parks & Recreation District – unanimously against.

- Voting – Traffic Light. A traffic light will be installed at Coal Mine and Depew.

- The motion was made and seconded to vote on:

1. Installing an additional traffic light on Coal Mine between Platte Canyon and Sheridan – unanimously against.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00

The CHOA directors and newly formed sound wall committee will stay abreast of Arapahoe County plans, informing the neighborhood on sound wall discoveries and any movement with regard to the widening of Coal Mine Road. Information travels faster through email. Please email Will (willhdarken@aol.com) to be included on the list for the very latest in Columbine Heights' happenings and issues.

Reminders:

- ❖ This Saturday, August 26, is our Annual Picnic and Silent Auction. Come mingle and relax with your neighbors and don't forget your checkbook for this fun evening!

- ❖ Any residents needing assistance with minor issues due to poor weather, illness, etc, please contact Will Darken for help at (720) 981-9126 or willhdarken@aol.com

- ❖ In keeping with our covenants, please remember to contact an Architectural Control Committee (ACC) member regarding any external changes to your property, **including sheds, fences, additions and roofs**. The ACC is also a good resource for information on materials for these projects.

ACC Members:

Jeff Held - (303) 738-1812

John Backes – (303) 798-5906

Steve Loo – (303) 798-3944

Chris Abeyta - (303) 797-3100

- ❖ The increased traffic in our neighborhood is bringing with it unwanted attention. Vehicle and garage thefts have already

occurred. Please remember to keep your garage door down, lock your house and car doors. Will Darken emails these and other noteworthy events to those who have provided their email addresses. If you would like to be on the list, email Will at willhdarken@aol.com.

- ❖ The aforementioned increased foot and vehicle traffic we are and will continue to experience, makes it even more important to collect your mail expeditiously and not to use your mailbox for outgoing mail.

- ❖ Some dogs seem to be on a mission to discover how many barks they can fit into a lifetime – a goal rarely appreciated by those living around them. Arapahoe County says after 15 minutes of continuous barking, Animal Control can be called. Thank you to those who control and clean up after their animals.

The CHOA Board:

President: Will Darken – (720) 981-9126
willhdarken@aol.com

Vice President: Ray Ziehm – (303) 794-1413
rzandmm@msn.com

Secretary/Newsletter: Marta Skovrinski – (303) 798-9877
skovrinski@pcisys.net

Treasurer: Rick Simms – (303) 730-3730
rsimms303@aol.com

ACC Director: Jeff Held - (303) 738-1812
jeffheld@jeffheld.net.

Member at Large: Jacque Drinkwine – (303) 794-4070
bksplus@hotmail.com

Member at Large: Nancy Christie – (303) 798-7763
rockymountainrec@qwest.net

Home Repair & Remodeling

Miscellaneous Handyman Services and
Light Remodeling: Plumbing, Electrical,
Cabinets, Decks, Shelving, Painting, Tile
No job too small.

Jim Tobias 303-973-5221
(Normandy Estates Resident for 15 years)