

Feb 2003

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[Important CHEA Meeting Notice Inside](#)



CHEA

College Heights Estates Newsletter

Feb 2003

Letter from the President

Greetings,

There are a number of issues facing the College Heights Estates community, and the CHEA Board (which is composed of community residents who volunteer their time to work on behalf of the community) has been actively involved in most of them. One of these issues is the proposed merger of College Heights Estates with the Town of University Park. Historically, this issue has been raised at different points in time, with the majority of CHE residents not being in favor of any merger in the past.

The recent proposal to merge with UP has raised questions and concerns in the minds of some residents, and a number of these have been communicated to me. On behalf of CHEA and the CHE community, I met and communicated with Kathryn Izon and Barbara Wilson, the two leaders of the group proposing a merger. At a later point in time in January, they conducted a meeting for residents to discuss their merger proposal.

I think the key factors for each CHE resident to consider regarding any merger proposal are: costs vs. services. On the cost side of the merger proposal, there would be a significant increase in each resident's annual real estate tax (the annual increase is estimated to be **34%**). Additionally, each resident would inherit a proportional share of the current University Park financial debt (**\$1.1 million**). On the service side of the merger proposal, each resident would have to evaluate the various **services** that University Park could provide. Then, in deciding on the merger proposal, each resident could weigh the increased tax costs against any benefits to be derived from the town services that may be provided.

Attached to back of this newsletter is material that was distributed by the group proposing a merger and talking points for remarks I made at the meeting. I encourage everyone to review this material.

I strongly believe it is very important to respect individual views and preferences, whether for or against a merger. I also strongly believe it is equally important that the majority view be respected and followed. The issue of potential merger is unsettling and emotional to some residents, and this could result in unnecessary controversy should any minority point of view be forced upon the majority. This would not be appropriate, in my opinion, and I certainly hope that this would not occur.

To bring closure to the merger issue, there will be a special CHEA meeting on Thursday, Mar 6th dedicated to a final discussion and vote on this matter. I strongly urge all residents to attend this meeting so your perspective and interests are fully represented. If you cannot make this meeting, but you still want to formally express your position on the proposed merger, there is an absentee ballot at the end of this newsletter that you can use to vote on the proposal.

There are other important topics facing us, besides the merger proposal, that the CHEA Board has been addressing, and there is material in this newsletter covering them. These are relevant topics, and they also deserve attention. I encourage you to get involved with any of them if they are important to you.

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Blunck

CHEA Membership Meeting Notice

Date: Thurs, March 6, 2003
 Time: 7:30 PM
 Place: UPES (4315 Underwood St, UP)
 Purpose: Discussion and vote on Izon/Wilson proposal that CHE merge with UP

Your 2003 CHEA Membership Fees Are Due

The annual membership fee is only \$25, and this is the primary source of funds for all CHEA activities. This fee covers newsletters, postage, street sign maintenance, gate maintenance, annual block party, special projects and all other Association expenses. The annual fee is a small amount for each household to pay, and we ask that all residents send their payment each year to help support the only community organization that serves the entire CHE community.

Check the mailing label on your copy of the newsletter. Above your name, on the right, is a date (YYYY/MM format) for your last payment. If this date is highlighted in yellow, your 2003 fee (\$25) is due and should be sent to CHEA, 7100 Eversfield Dr, College Heights Estates, MD 20782-1049. Thank you!

Please Add/Update Your E-mail Address

CHEA is making an effort to maintain an email list for dissemination of current issues impacting the CHEA community. **PLEASE** check the mailing label on your copy of the newsletter. Below your name is your e-mail address, if you have provided one to CHEA. Please send us any update to your email address.

Is Your Home Free Of Carbon Monoxide?

Did you know that more than 2,000 people die each year from exposure to carbon monoxide? CO is an odorless and tasteless gas, but can be very deadly! Oil and gas furnaces emit carbon monoxide, as well as gas water heaters and dryers. Proper ventilation is essential.

Do you have a carbon monoxide detector in your home? If not, consider purchasing one. There are inexpensive basic detectors that only cost about \$20; detectors with more frills may cost \$50.

By the way, don't forget to change the batteries in any smoke detectors you have.

Safety begins in the home.

Crime Statistics

Below are the statistics (non-violent crimes) reported to Prince Georges County Police for College Heights Estates.

Type of Crime	2002	2003 YTD
Breaking & Entering	0	0
Theft	0	0
Stolen Auto	0	0
DWI	0	0
Vandalism	0	0
All Other	1	0

If you are a victim of a crime within College Heights Estates, we would be interested in hearing from you. The best deterrent to crime is a watchful public and the Association can send out e-mail alerts and publicize any criminal activity when we are aware of it. The telephone number of the Prince George's County Police substation in Hyattsville is **(301) 699-2630**. For emergencies, always call 911 immediately.

Traffic Calming Update

As reported in previous newsletters, the Town of University Park has proposed traffic calming devices on seven roads throughout the Town. The Town has held a number of meetings on this and several members of the College Heights Estates Association Board have attended. There has been much discussion during these meetings, with many divergent opinions being expressed. At this time, it does not appear that the University Park Town Council has reached a conclusion on exactly what traffic calming actions to take. If you have questions or concerns, please call Don Hein at (301) 927-4396 or e-mail him at donaldhein@erols.com.

Buddington Property Development Update

Much progress has been made by the special CHEA committee chartered to monitor and manage the development activities on the Buddington Property (located at the end of Commander and Lovell Drives). Many thanks to Edna and Michael Szymanski for chairing the special committee and hosting numerous meetings at their home on Commander Drive.

As a status update, there have been several neighborhood meetings and one community-wide meeting held. Development plans have been reviewed and many questions raised by residents have been communicated to the developer (The Michael Companies). A number of resident concerns were identified, and these have been resolved or are being addressed. The overall community conclusion (resulting from the many meetings held) is that development of the Buddington Property will likely take place sooner or later, so the community is better served by guiding the development process with a quality builder rather than fighting it.

A special Architecture committee, sponsored by CHEA, was recently formed to work closely with the developer in reviewing design and construction details as they evolve and ensuring that all agreements between the developer and the community are upheld. Bernie Guay, who lives on Commander Drive, has graciously agreed to chair the Architecture committee. A number of other residents have also agreed to be on the committee and work with Bernie. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Bernie at (301) 864-6193.

Second Leaf Collection

With all of the snow in January and February, leaf collection may not be on your mind. However, Prince George's County will still collect leaves a second time. CHEA has been in contact with the County on this, and the second collection will be scheduled sometime within the next month. Obviously, the snow has slowed the collection services, but the County has assured us they will collect leaves again. In the meantime, leaves placed in trash cans will be picked up with the regular trash collection on Tuesday and Friday.

University Park Merger Proposal Update

There was a meeting held on Jan 15th at UPES by the coalition created and headed by Barbara Wilson and Kathryn Izon for community discussion and review of their proposal to have CHE merge with the Town of University Park. Approximately 85 residents from CHE and University Park attended. The meeting was moderated by a resident of University Park.

Speaking in favor of the merger were CHE residents Jean Bourne-Pirovic, Morris Freedman and Ben Bederson. Also speaking on behalf of a merger were University Park officials John Brunner, Michael Wynnyk, Suellen Ferguson and Dan Baden.

Speaking in favor of maintaining the status quo was CHEA President Ron Blunck.

Attached to this newsletter is material handed out at this meeting by members of the coalition group and by CHEA. The presentation was followed by questions and comments from the audience. At the end of the meeting, there was a show-of-hands vote on the merger proposal. A large majority of residents attending expressed opposition to the proposal.

Need Someone To Clean Gutters?

Do you need help with gutter cleaning or any remaining leaf raking? Are the bricks, pavers or flagstone on your patio beginning to shift or break apart? Will you need mulch delivered and spread among your azaleas and shrubs when spring arrives? Call Ron Blunck (301-864-0186), and he can provide the name of a hard-working and reliable individual who has worked in College Heights Estates and is now in business for himself.

Tax-Time Tips and Tools

Your 2002 tax returns will be due soon. If you have a question about your taxes, check out the Kiplinger website:
[//www.kiplinger.com/managing/taxes](http://www.kiplinger.com/managing/taxes). It may be helpful.

Absentee Ballot

Issue: Proposed Merger of College Heights Estates with University Park.

1. Name & address of CHE resident:

2. I support the proposal that College Heights Estates merge with the Town of University Park.

Yes

No

If you cannot attend the CHEA meeting on March 6th, you may mail your ballot to CHEA, 7100 Eversfield Dr, Hyattsville, MD 20782-1049. Absentee ballots must be received before the meeting on March 6th. If you attend the meeting, you can vote on this issue at that time.

University Park/College Heights Merger Information Meeting

January 15, 2003

Please note that tonight's meeting will be primarily informational in nature. Open discussion and debate will be encouraged in future gatherings that include residents of both UP and CHE. Although invited, the anti-merger residents of CHE have chosen not to participate on the panel this evening, as originally hoped. The additional time provided by this will allow us to hold a question-and -answer session at the end of the discussion. We ask that you hold your questions until all the speakers have made their presentations. If time runs out and your question has not been answered, notecards and pencils can be found on the front table along with a box to drop them into. Please include your name and phone number on the card, so someone can get back to you with an answer. Speakers will discuss the impacts of a UP-CUE merger as it relates to the following subject areas:

- . Real Estate (*Jean Bourne-Pirovic*)
- . Traffic and Related Concerns (*Morris Freedman*)
- . *Social and Community Life* (*Ben Bederson*)
- . Taxation and Economic Effects (*Dan Baden*)
- . *Legalities* (*Suellen Ferguson*)
- . *Policing* (*Michael Wynnyk*)
- . Political Aspects (*John Brunner*)

We wish to thank Constance Belfiore for agreeing to moderate the discussion tonight, as well as all the speakers and supporters who gave generously of their time and expertise.

Town of University Park

SERVICES

- Police Protection (24/7)
- Refuse Collection (twice weekly)
- Snow Removal
- Street/Curb Repair/Repaving
- Leaf Collection
- Recyclables (Mixed) Collection (weekly)
- Recyclables (Paper) Collection (weekly)
- Bulky Trash Collection (on call)
- Street Lighting
- Monthly Newsletter/CATV/Web Site
- Park Facilities: (Soccer/T -Ball Field, Tennis Courts (4), Horseshoe Pit, Tot Lot, Picnic Areas)
- Zoning Review/Standing/Development Control
- Tree Trimming/Planting
- Community Activities: (Arts-in-the-Park, Holiday Party/Tree Lighting, Art Fair, Fourth of July Parade, Town-Wide Yard Sale, Halloween Party)
- Pest Control (inch bug, gypsy moth, etc.)
- Rental Housing Code Enforcement

UP Annexation Question
Remarks by Ron Blunck
(301) 864-0186
1/15/2003

1. What are the community problem/issues that would require annexation?

a. I've not been able to get a clear definition from the coalition group.

1. Who's on the merger committee and why has UP been participating?

a. I've not been able to determine who's in the coalition group.

1. CHEA open meeting on March 6th to address annexation.

a. CHEA annexation survey results:

i. 22 responded as 'not in favor'

ii. 8 responded as 'in favor'

iii. 11 responded as 'undecided'

a. No time limitation on resident comments.

b. Majority (51%) resident view should rule.

1. Remarks:

a. Purpose:

i. To provide information and data for residents to use in deciding.

a. Historical background/perspective:

i. UP

1. UP developed in 1920s, largely as a commuting suburb for people working in the District.

2. UP is incorporated, which creates another level of government.

3. UP provides its own town services.

4. UP levies additional taxes.

i. CHE

1. CHE developed in late 1940s, associated with the period of University of Maryland expansion.

2. CHE remains unincorporated, which limits the amount of local government.

3. CHE services are provided by the County.

4. CHE does not have additional taxes.

a. Taxes:

i. UP tax rate is \$1.83/\$100 assessed value, which is \$.46 (34%) higher than CHE rate.

ii. CHE tax rate is \$1.37/\$100 assessed value.

1. Annexation would result in additional annual taxes of:

a. \$300K house: \$1380 (Total tax = \$5490)

b. \$400K house: \$1840 (Total tax = \$7320)

c. \$500K house: \$2300 (Total tax = \$9150)

d. \$600K house: \$2760 (Total tax = \$10,980)

1. CHE trash collection costs \$299/year

i. Critical question – what benefits are derived from the additional taxes?

a. Debt:

i. UP debt is estimated to be \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 (Note: UP confirmed debt to be \$1.1 Million)

ii. CHE has no debt

iii. Merger would result in inheritance of this debt

a. UP budget items (2003):

i. Tax revenues

1. UP (915 homes)

a. Real Estate: \$1,097K

b. Business Personal Property: \$43K

1. CHE (Estimate for 190 homes, assume \$2000 incremental tax per house)

a. Real Estate: \$380K

b. Business Personal Property: ???

1. Combined (1105 homes with taxes of \$1,477K)

a. CHE would have 190/1105 (17%) of the homes and would shoulder \$380K/\$1,477K (26%) of the tax burden

i. Expenses (total=\$1,848K)

1. Government: \$386K

- 2. Public Works \$939K
 - a. Street repair \$10K
 - b. Snow removal \$4K
 - c. Street lights \$51K
 - d. Traffic calming \$20K
 - e. Leaf collection Not separately split out
 - i. Sanitation \$168K
 - ii. Personnel \$510K
 - iii. Cost per house:
 - 1. $(\$168K + \$510K) / 915 = \$740$
 - 2. $\$740 - \$299 = \$441$
- 3. Police \$523K (equates to \$571/house)

a. UP capacity to expand services:

- i. Should be assessed.

a. Government restrictions:

- i. UP
 - 1. Building & construction review and approval
 - 2. Business registration & taxes
 - 3. Rental registration & taxes

i. CHE

- 1. Covenants
- 2. County code for building & construction

a. Leaf collection:

- i. UP picks up its own leaves.
- ii. The County picks up CHE leaves
 - 1. Service level is 2 pickups per year
 - 2. Private contractors could be hired to supplement the County services if CHE residents would be willing to pay for the service

a. Snow removal:

- i. UP plows its own streets.
- ii. The County plows CHE streets.
 - 1. Service level is:
 - a. Within 24 hours (0-4 inches)
 - b. 24-36 hours (4-8 inches)
 - 1. Private contractors could be hired to supplement the County services if CHE residents would be willing to pay for the service

a. Crime and police:

- i. UP has its own police chief and patrolmen
 - 1. Not accredited department
 - 2. No 24 hour coverage
 - 3. Does not have a crime investigation unit
 - 4. Experience level, turnover and controversies within the dept
 - 5. Willingness to backup other police may be a question
 - 6. Courtesy factor may be a question
 - 7. Crime stats:
 - a. **40** significant crimes reported in 2002 (Source: UP Town newsletter)
 - i. Significant crimes included assaults, breaking/entering, thefts and hit/run.
- ii. CHE receives police coverage from the County.
 - 1. Accredited department
 - 2. 24 hour coverage
 - 3. Has crime investigation unit
 - 4. Crime stats:
 - a. **1** significant crime reported in 2002 (Source: County Police)
 - i. Significant crimes included assaults, breaking/entering, thefts and hit/run.

a. Streets:

- i. UP
 - 1. Maintains its own streets/curbs/sidewalks/bridges
 - 2. Current condition?
 - 3. Standards?

- a. Milling vs. slurry cover?
 - b. Concrete vs. asphalt curbs
 - c. High profile curb vs. low profile gutter
 - 1. Closed bridge in UP (cost issue?)
 - 2. Service level on repairs
 - a. Uneven pavement on Pineway at US #1
 - b. Street sign at Clagett & College Heights Drive
 - c. Walk bridge between UPES & soccer field
 - i. CHE
 - 1. County maintains streets/curbs
 - 2. Current condition?
 - a. New street surfaces
 - b. New curbs
 - 1. Standards?
 - 2. Service level
 - a. Reconstructed storm sewer at Wells/Calverton
 - b. Storm sewer cleaning
 - c. Re-do new surface on Eversfield
- d. Community character and real estate values:**
 - i. UP vs. CHE
 - 1. Demographics
 - 2. Housing style/size, lot size, appraised value
 - 3. Realtor and developer comments regarding annexation question:
 - a. Doesn't make sense for CHE to be annexed
 - b. Will lose CHE character
 - c. Will reduce real estate values
- d. Inter-community cooperation:**
 - i. UP
 - 1. No parking signs installed on Wells
 - 2. Closing of Queens Chapel
 - 3. UP takeover of Clagett and Wells
 - 4. UP Traffic calming
- a. Efficiencies and effectiveness:**
 - i. UP
 - 1. Mayor, Town Council and staff
 - 2. Current County tax plus additional \$2000+ per year
 - 3. Queens Chapel closing
 - 4. Traffic calming
 - 5. Building restrictions
 - i. CHE
 - 1. CHEA & individual residents
 - 2. Current County tax plus additional \$25 CHEA fee per year
 - 3. Development of Buddington property
 - 4. Route 1 redevelopment