



NEWSUNIT FEBRUARY 13, 2009

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Rupert says, "Shoot with a Camera--Fight with a Pen—Tow with Greenwood".

**TRANSFER OF PARK OWNERSHIP.** These pages will be hand delivered to Members, posted on the WEB, and distributed to our e-mail list..

We've been screwed. After a year of assurances from Councilman James Kraft's office that the dollar price was a "go" for 7 South Durham, the park the neighborhood has kept up for over 30 years, now Baltimore Housing, the City Council, the Mayor, and even Councilman Kraft's office have given us the old switcheroo: the carrot-and-stick deal turns out to be all stick. We've jumped through every hoop, including forming a 501(c)4 non profit, paying for property insurance in the City's favor *during the City's ownership*, paying for an appraisal we were told was merely crossing "t"s and dotting "i"s for a peppercorn value transfer, and the volunteers (city slaves) among us continue to keep the Park neat and trimmed. Our bylaws give the park back to the City if we fail to live up to our part of the bargain: maintaining use of the property for 8 parking spots and open green space accessible to the greater community (mostly dog walkers); similar penalties apply due to our state and federal not-for-profit status, and on top of this we signed transfer documents with the City adding (to loss of the park) a monetary penalty (corresponding to a \$50,000 property assessment reduced to \$0 gradually over a 10-year period). The fly in the ointment is that the City has structured the agreement to treat this \$50,000 amount as a purchase price and the famous dollar as a down-payment, and even after entering into a Land Disposition Agreement, a Purchase Money Mortgage and a Promissory Note, they now require a closing, including title search and proof of financing for the \$50,000 valuation/penalty amount.

We've worked a lot with the disposition folks at Baltimore Housing, who are very busy and deal mostly with commercial developers or nonprofits seeking to develop vacant City property, but if Baltimore Housing hasn't noticed that IT has agreed to finance the \$50,000, there's a serious problem. Also, if Homestead Houses is to reach into its shallow collective pocket to pay for a title search, there's some question what the title company could possibly find, as it took the City a year and a half to figure out that 7 South Durham was theirs. Baltimore has forgotten about this property for 33 years, and it should be the City's responsibility to take any necessary action to quiet title. **HELP!!**

**Comments?** <http://www.tai-chi-one.com/BLOGCHI1/>

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Looking out on the finally peaceful alley, having re-established equality in parking (one house, one space) after months of negotiations, all is not well.

On the minor side—and within our control as a neighborhood—there are signs that our investor Members are apparently not communicating the basic outdoor clean-up expectations, nor are they stepping in to take over. Resident homeowners are doing a good job of keeping the walk and gutter in front of their property free of trash, fallen leaves, promptly shoveling snow from walks, and keeping their parking spaces clear of debris. Let's get with the program, guys! Clean & green is the motto. If anybody (tenants too) needs help with these tasks—for example, someone's going out of town, or is ill or injured during snow season or autumn—please check around to see if some of us can cover. (Investors—ask us for a quote!)

On the serious side, we're all concerned (and so are neighbors on surrounding streets) about activities the house on the corner of E. Baltimore on the West side of S. Durham Street. It's the only house in its row that is not part of the Washington Hill Co-op (which has a maintenance staff for putting out trash & sweeping up, what joy!) This property, long vacant, is now inhabited by what appears to be at least a dozen people who fill their backyard with trash and 1 to 3 pitt bulls . In many areas of Baltimore trash and somewhat scary dogs are the norm; driving a taxi all over town leads me to conclude that Baltimore is a trashy city. Back at South Durham, many neighbors have expressed concern about the increased traffic at odd times, including out of state cars, that stop in the alley briefly while someone steps out and says hello; occasionally these individuals have been observed making exchanges involving a handshake or material contact. The children from the house spend a lot of time, unaccompanied by an adult, patrolling the alley on foot or bicycle and making loud and vaguely threatening remarks to no one in particular—pretty unsettling coming from 9 and 10 year-olds .

***Just a reminder that the SECOND and FOURTH FRIDAY of each MONTH is recycling day and mixed plastics, glass, aluminum, paper and cardboard are collected.*** Nancy's church takes aluminum cans—to recycle for good causes. make arrangements with her.

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