

# Brandywine Hills Gazette

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## Nature is Calling

In these uncertain times when many individuals and families are not able to go to school, go to work, or go to their usual places of entertainment, some have spent more time out of doors enjoying nature and noticing nature in ways they may not have before. People remark about the air being clear and the sounds of the birds more noticeable. Maybe this is a time when we can take stock of what we can do in our own yards to preserve the balance of nature and encourage our native plants, birds, insects and animals to flourish. See *Tidbits* for more...

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John Rago, Vice Pres., 571-1152  
Jonathan Neumark, Treasurer  
Melrose Robinson, Secretary  
Linda George, Assist Secretary

### BHCA Board Members

Steve Anzulewicz  
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Marth Narvaez  
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## General Meeting Canceled due to COVID-19 Crisis

Mayor Purzycki, who was to be one of our speakers, shares a message from the City Administration.



To the residents of Brandywine Hills:

We have made much progress in Wilmington over the past three years and there are many reasons to be proud of our growth as a City. City finances are strong and we've wisely managed revenue and expenditures. However, the unprecedented COVID 19 crisis is now causing us to change the way we act, think and plan. It is a new era which will require enhanced leadership and mutual respect and trust to pull through this together. We will do everything possible to ensure that the detrimental effects of the COVID-19 crisis are not long-lasting for us as residents or for our City as a whole.

The pandemic is causing deep stresses in budget forecasts, requiring difficult decisions. Our City depends on a 1.5% wage tax to fund almost 40% of our \$171 million operating budget. Because of COVID-19, we foresee a wage tax revenue loss of about \$7 million, and when you add in revenue loss from reduced parking violations, traffic fines, state revenue-sharing, and hotel tax, the total revenue loss for FY 2021 could exceed \$15 million. To put that in perspective, this amount is equal to an approximate 30% increase in the property tax. Unless the federal government assists Wilmington in overcoming COVID-19 economic losses, we will almost certainly be forced to make painful choices in staffing and services.

We can be thankful, however, that over the past few years in Wilmington we have laid a strong foundation to help us weather the financial storm coming our way. Our fund balance has increased in three

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<http://www.neighborhoodlink.com/wilmington-de/brandywinehills/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/brandywinehills/>  
Ellen Casson, Secretary & Newsletter Editor (ellenc4000@cs.com)

### Message from BHCA President Linda Gray

To everyone, happy Spring. I hope all are well and safe. In this very trying time of uncertainty, please reach out if you need assistance with essential errands. I may be reached at 302-764-8634. If possible, enjoy safely our beautiful neighborhood. Fresh air, sun, and exercise may be beneficial, all while maintaining the social distance, with gloves and mask. At this time of need, I must ask for contributions for the maintenance of the Washington Blvd. medians. The annual costs paid by Brandywine Hills to maintain the islands ranges from \$4,000-\$4,500.

Due to a lack of regular maintenance by any governmental agency, Brandywine Hills needs to secure funds for annual mulching, weeding and trash cleanup of the medians. We need and contract for a Spring cleanup and monthly maintenance. We are fortunate to receive a few very gracious donations from neighbors Steve Anzulewicz of Keller Williams Realty and Martin Jodko of Martin's Home Improvement. We receive a grant from County Councilman Penrose Hollins and free maintenance of a median by Davey Tree Expert Company. The Bucchini/Pollen Group also provides a small annual contribution. These donations reduced the financial burden on Brandywine Hills, but are insufficient to cover the full annual maintenance costs.

The Washington Blvd medians, north of Lea Blvd, go through our community and are one of the main arteries coming into the City. I think it is a very picturesque Boulevard. If we do not continue our maintenance of the medians, especially at these times, they will have trash, weeds and high grass. Such an eye sore in our community would be embarrassing. Brandywine Hills promotes and encourages maintenance of property and open spaces. Our only income is voluntary dues from the neighbors who choose to pay. We have 260 homes and 119 dues paying households. Most of the Brandywine Hills Community treasury is allocated for insurance, community picnic, printing of our quarterly newsletter and other flyers.

PLEASE HELP with the cost of maintenance of Washington Blvd medians. Donate what you can. We are proud of this lovely place where we live. So, please send a contribution so that we can continue our work. Please send a check to Jonathan Neumark, BHCA Treasurer, by May 31, at 601 E. Matson Run. You can also use Zelle and the email address [brandywinehillsde@gmail.com](mailto:brandywinehillsde@gmail.com) or use PayPal at [DONATE HERE](#).

Thanks in advance for your prompt attention and support.  
Linda Gray, President BH

Two speakers scheduled for the BHCA general meeting share their messages:

**My name is Rysheema Dixon**, and for the past three and a half years, I've been a Wilmington City Council Member At-Large. I'm now running for President of Wilmington City Council to create a stronger culture of collaboration between Council members and the Administration, to improve economic support for small and large business enterprises, and to increase the well-being of residents and families.

I began my career in public service in 2009 as an AmeriCorps Public Ally, and later I furthered my commitment to inclusion working with women entrepreneurs at Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India. There, I witnessed community members working together to create significant and lasting change, an experience that

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**My name is Ajawavi Ajavon**, I am commonly known as Aja. I am a professor and an entrepreneur with a focus on criminal justice reform, strengthening families, and building communities. I am a single mother of 3 adult children 2 of whom have graduated from college and my youngest serving in the US Navy. I sit on several boards which includes but not limited to, Bear/Glasgow YMCA, Delaware Africa Caribbean Coalition, Every Man Counts, Canaan Baptist International Ministry, and International Gender Base Violence Group.

I am running for County Council President because as an expert mediator, I am a consensus builder, I want to unify council members, especially in today's interconnected society, which will better serve the constituents

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## Transformed Egg Hunt a Big Hit



On Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup>, Brandywine Hills neighborhood children and families came together, at an appropriate distance, to celebrate spring in a fun way. This year, the usual Egg Hunt was transformed into an exciting socially distanced stuffed animal bingo hunt. By 11:45 a.m., neighbors had placed all sorts of animals (manatees, insects, super heroes, trolls, sloths, etc.) in windows/doors, hanging from trees and many other entertaining and visible locations. Each participant then used one of four bingo cards created for the game and walked/ran/biked the neighborhood to be the first to get bingo! One board member rode

around the neighborhood and found about 40 homes with animals displayed for children and families to

see. Thank you to all the participants for making it such a fun day!

The big winners were:

Issie B  
Henry N  
Mason B  
Michael B  
Chase M  
Maria M



Above and beyond - children who filled out the entire bingo board:

Chase W  
Lincoln N

Special Mentions:

Carly C  
Will N  
Reagan G  
Brooke and Max  
Nick H  
Jack H  
Parker  
Ryan W  
Max S



Thank you to Amy Silvestri for her creativity in creating the bingo cards and organizing the event. More neighborhood physical distancing games and activities will be coming soon. If you have any ideas, please post them on the neighborhood facebook page or reach out to Martha Narvaez ([mbcnarvaez@gmail.com](mailto:mbcnarvaez@gmail.com)) or Amy Silvestri ([amyllynnsilvestri@gmail.com](mailto:amyllynnsilvestri@gmail.com)).





### *Brandywine Hills Tidbits*

In the April 2019 Gazette, we wrote about neighbor **Scotti Lee** and his beekeeping. At that time, Scotti was looking for interested helpers. Since then Scotti reported that all his bees died. He also said, "I am getting 2 "nukes" (not the kind you blow up) within 2 weeks. Please tell the neighbors to be careful about what they spray on their plants.



The bees should be getting around to their flowers soon."

So for the love of nature, let's keep Scotti's bees in mind when we are working in our yards and thinking of applying any sprays. By the way a "nuc," which is pronounced "nuke" is a nucleus colony of bees. Did you

know that approximately one-third of all the food Americans eat is directly or indirectly derived from

honey bee pollination? Our honey bees are suffering from a loss of habitat so they can use our human help and we all benefit from having them around.

We just celebrated the 50th anniversary of Earth Day and it comes at a time unlike any we've seen before. COVID-19 has made clear to the world that we are all interconnected. Our actions have far-reaching consequences, whether within our own communities or across the globe. Just as our actions affect each other, they also affect the wellbeing of the earth we call our home.

Let's do what we can in our own yards for the wellbeing of the earth. If you are interested in exploring what it takes to be certified as a wildlife habitat, go to [www.delawarenaturesociety.org](http://www.delawarenaturesociety.org) and click on the tab for "how to create a wildlife habitat." We can create wildlife habitats in our own yards and in our park. If you are interested in learning more send an email to [ellenc4000@cs.com](mailto:ellenc4000@cs.com).

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spurred me to return to Wilmington with an even stronger desire to serve others.

As Member of the City Council, I co-founded the Healthy Communities Subcommittee through the CDUP Committee, which is working tirelessly to combat issues surrounding housing access and affordability. And because I remain deeply concerned for one of our most vulnerable populations, the elderly, I also serve on the Health, Aging and Disabilities Committee.

I also serve as chair of our City Council's Community Development and Urban Planning Committee (CDUP), and I believe my experience in community development work in Wilmington and beyond provides a solid framework for tackling difficult issues related to community and economic/career development.

As the head of a woman-owned business enterprise, I understand the needs of an entrepreneur, and the importance of public-private partnerships to spur economic development. In my day job, I am the founder and owner of RD Innovative Planning, serving clients in the public and private sectors such as Henrietta Johnson Medical Center, Nemours Health and Prevention Services, Christiana Care, State of Delaware, AARP and numerous other agencies throughout the state. I am also an adjunct professor at the University of Delaware, where I teach Social Entrepreneurship.

As Council President, the issues I plan to focus on include:

Community Health - because our communities face challenges including lack of safe spaces, vacant housing, healthy food options, low quality education and drug/alcohol addiction.

Public Health - because too many people in Wilmington live in unhealthy environments and face challenges around crime and violence.

Job creation - because we need to recruit and retain more businesses to Wilmington and create a welcoming environment.

Public Infrastructure - because residents are faced unfair practices with drivability, parking and water bill issues.

I am determined to create a healthy, safe, and prosperous environment for Wilmington residents from all walks of life. In order for communities and businesses to thrive, we must work hand-in-hand. All branches of government are accountable to the public who elect us. We have major challenges to overcome but there are also tremendous opportunities to build the Wilmington we all envision together.

"*United We Serve Wilmington*" is not simply my campaign motto, but the manner in which I plan to govern. It's my core belief and how I will lead as Council President.

Sincerely, ***Rysheema Dixon***

Steven Anzulewicz &amp; Associates

**Steve Anzulewicz**

ABR, AHWD, Associate Owner

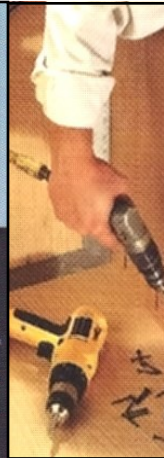
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of New Castle County and is acceptable to all. Repurposing our libraries without increasing the budget and develop programs which include the arts to increase patron's participation. Improvements to our local parks so that our children can have a safe environment to play, preserve our farmlands, and our wildlife. Finally, to support community policing and provide greater resources while strengthening our public safety.

To volunteer or make a donation please visit my website at [www.ajaaajavon.com](http://www.ajaaajavon.com) or you may contact me at (302) 408-0065.

Sincerely, **Ajawavi Ajavon**

**BHCA**

Advertising space can be purchased by organizations, businesses, and contractors recommended by residents, for \$100 for a full page ad, \$50 for a half page, and \$25 for a business card size.

Ads requested by neighborhood children, lost and found, or announcements about neighborhood activities are included at no cost.

*(Continued from page 1) Mayor's Message Continued*

years from \$34 million to a projected \$52 million That's a healthy 30% of our operating budget. We have budget reserves on hand of \$17 million and other unassigned cash of over \$5 million.

We made things better for children and families by restoring the William "Hicks" Anderson Community Center, Rodney Square, Eden Park and many other neighborhood parks. We overhauled one of our fire stations and purchased much-needed fire apparatus. Our agreement with Salesianum produced a \$24 million rebuilding of the old Baynard Stadium complex. Our transportation infrastructure is being improved, and the \$20 million Southbridge Wilmington Wetlands Park is well under construction.

The private sector has made enormous investments in recent years, worth hundreds of millions of dollars to our City. Downtown is unrecognizable from where it once was. The Riverfront continues to thrive. There are over 1,000 apartments completed, planned or under construction, with three new hotels opened and new restaurants like Bardea and DECO serving patrons across the entire city. The seven-mile Markell Trail is a great new attraction. The \$50 million bridge and road project across the Christina River will lead directly to the new 76ers Fieldhouse, and the Pine Box -- a 150,000 square foot music and entertainment sound stage -- is under construction on the 7<sup>th</sup> Street peninsula.

Our challenges are real. So real, I expect long-lasting and profound changes in our society from COVID-19. But I also truly believe that there are too many good things about our City for us to be pessimistic about Wilmington's future. It just takes a belief in one another and a commitment to working together. I am honored to be your Mayor and look forward to continuing to lead our great City.

**Mayor Mike Purzycki**