

## **First Anniversary of PATH**

PATH celebrated its first anniversary by holding an internal action at Asbury United Methodist Church on April 29, 2007. At this action we reviewed the actions of the past year, including the candidates' accountability session last Fall. We heard updates from the action teams on affordable housing, public transportation and youth. We accepted the following recommended areas for action proposed by these teams:

- The creation of a power point presentation on the myths and facts of affordable housing, which we would take inside our institutions, and show to as many of our members as we can.
- The support of mobile home park residents who are interested in organizing themselves to be in a stronger position if and when their park comes up for sale.
- Working with our youth as they seek to establish increased and accessible programming, such as job preparation and mentoring for youths wishing to take their first steps in the workforce.
- The research of alternative ways of serving our elderly and disabled residents who need reliable transportation to stores and senior and medical centers.

We also determined to identify new leaders inside our institutions. We set up two-day training dates for these leaders. The next one is Wednesday and Thursday, June 13-14, 2006, at First Presbyterian Church, which is located at the southeast corner of Routes 29 and 108. The sessions are 7-9 PM. No registration is required.

## **First PATH Win!**

On April 2, 2007 100 of us celebrated the county's reduction by half of waiting times for buses from Howard Transit. This request was made at our very first public assembly last summer. Service was also increased, as we requested, allowing workers to have earlier and later service to get to and from work. County executive Ken Ulman joined us in our celebration and thanked us for our work. State delegate Liz Bobo also was present.

Many of our leaders rode the buses to get to the celebration. They took the opportunity to visit with riders and to talk about the new service. We thank our Transportation Action Team for their steady work in developing this issue and carrying out this action. Team members are:

Co-chair Gini Edwards, Glenmar United Methodist Church  
Co-chair Jim Morrill, Mt. Zion United Methodist Church  
Gail Holm, St. John United Methodist/Presbyterian Church  
Roy Ferguson, St. John United Methodist/Presbyterian Church  
Sheila Solomon, St. Alphonsus Rodriguez Catholic Church  
Ron Stevens, Glenmar United Methodist Church  
Farrell McAfee, St. Mark's Episcopal Church  
Bob Herstein, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbia

John Eberhard, St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Community  
Joyce Baer, Grandmothers for Peace

### **Meetings with county officials**

Follow-up meetings were held with County executive Ken Ulman and Councilwoman Courtney Watson, as well as State delegates Liz Bobo, Steve DeBoy and Jimmy Malone. These meetings continue to develop strong relationships with our public servants. Mr. Ulman pointed out how he incorporated into his first budget several initiatives in each of the issue areas which we had identified for action.

We also met with Planning and Zoning director Marsha McLaughlin and her deputy, Steve Lafferty, as well as Housing director Stacy Spann and his deputy, Tom Carbo. They shared what their offices are doing to advance affordable housing, including the county's taking over of Guilford Gardens and turning it into a showcase of what can be done with mixed housing in the county. We shared our intent to develop an educational module on affordable housing, which would dispel myths and provide relevant facts around this vital issue. Both county directors agreed to review our presentation once it is prepared.

### **PATH Training - Mark your calendars!**

Our next two-day training will be Wednesday and Thursday, June 13-14, 2007 from 7-9 PM at First Presbyterian Church, Room 154, 9325 Presbyterian Circle, Columbia, Maryland, 21045. The church is located at the southeast corner of Routes 29 and 108. This training is designed for new leaders from PATH institutions.

### **Mobile Home Parks**

At the April 29 PATH Action held at Asbury United Methodist Church, PATH endorsed the following resolution: [that PATH ask its State representatives to introduce legislation providing mobile home residents with the right of first refusal and similar statutory protections.](#)

#### **Background:**

Most residents of mobile home parks own their homes, but they do not own the land their home sits on. They pay rent for that land which rent may also include assessments for water, sewage, trash pickup, and even a property tax assessment (for land they do not own). In Howard County these rents run from \$450 to \$585 per month (some we're acquainted with). As rents rise, the value of homes decreases. The always present fear that the park will close and its land use changed, means that residents live with a constant reminder that they could lose the investment they have in their homes. One corrective to this imbalance between the property rights of the park owner and the property rights of the home owner is to give the park residents the right of first refusal to buy the park when it comes up for sale (right of first refusal means if the residents can match the first (or best) offer for the park, that offer must be refused and park sold to the residents). The residents would then have charge of running the park themselves.

PATH believes that Howard County's commitment to "preservation of existing affordable housing"<sup>1</sup> must include preservation of existing mobile home parks. PATH will not simply accept the idea that those remaining parks "are likely to disappear," without helping the residents seek alternatives to their eviction.

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<sup>1</sup>*Report of the Howard County Task Force on Affordable Housing*, November 13, 2006, p. 3.

**“Manufactured housing is the most overlooked sector of the U.S. housing market, although it represents home to approximately 10 million families—about 8 percent of the population. From 1997 to 2002, a full two thirds of all new homes affordable to families at or below 80 percent of area median income (AMI) were manufactured, nearly all of it unsubsidized.”<sup>2</sup> Unsubsidized—that means no government support!**

**Past Actions:**

PATH has been meeting with residents of the Capitol Mobile Park since the first house meeting of 8 residents in November. Since then we have had the following meetings at St. Augustine Church:

- January 26 with 16 residents,
- February 26 with 17 residents (5 had not attended earlier meetings)—Captain Sandy Regler spoke to us. The action we took at this meeting was to contact other parks.
- May 8 with 25 residents from three parks (Deep Run and Chesapeake Mobile Home Park in Anne Arundel County).

At the May 8 action, we decided to conduct walks through the three parks to locate residents who wanted to join with us in our efforts to protect the investments we have in our homes.

**Next Action:**

August 27 (Monday) is our next meeting at St. Augustine Catholic Church, Elkridge, MD.

**Directions to the Church:** From MD 100, take US 1 north toward Baltimore. Drive 2.2 miles to stop light (Montgomery Road), turn right take the left hand turn onto Old Washington Road. The church is 0.7 miles on your left.

**For Information Contact:** Wendel Thompson, 410-730-1457 or email: [wendelth@yahoo.com](mailto:wendelth@yahoo.com)

**Links:**

1. I'M HOME project: <http://www.cfed.org/home.m>
2. Opportunity Finance Network:  
<http://www.opportunityfinance.net/about/about.aspx>
3. Conference May 16 in Massachusetts:  
[http://www.rcapsolutions.org/manufactured\\_housing.htm](http://www.rcapsolutions.org/manufactured_housing.htm)
4. Delaware Manufactured Home Owners Association: <http://www.dmhoa.org/>
5. Resident Owned Communities (ROC): <http://www.rocusa.org/>
6. Paul Bradley speech, February 21, 2007 (ROC USA):  
[http://209.85.165.104/search?q=cache:Rt\\_Inb2Mq4QJ:www.rocusa.org/neighbor\\_workspeech.pdf+paul+bradley+roc&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=us](http://209.85.165.104/search?q=cache:Rt_Inb2Mq4QJ:www.rocusa.org/neighbor_workspeech.pdf+paul+bradley+roc&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=us)

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<sup>2</sup>Fannie Mae Newsletter—*Housing Facts and Findings*, 2005 volume 7, Issue 4