
2023 Year-End Association Report

Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Improvement Association

To protect, preserve, and enhance our communities through stewardship, education, and advocacy.

The Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Improvement Association is governed by a volunteer Board of Governors who live within our communities and is managed by an Executive Administrator. The Association's 2023 Year-End Report outlines actions taken by the Board, committees, and volunteers on behalf of our communities.

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President's Letter

As we end 2023, I am reflecting on the past two years where I have had the honor to serve as President and the many accomplishments of the board members and the other volunteers who have served on our many committees.

I would like first to thank Debbie Codd, who served on the board for six years, leading our membership and communications efforts and kept the Association focused and on task. In September of 2023, she began serving as our Interim Executive Administrator in conjunction with Peggy Squitieri, who retired in 2020. In addition, Casey Codd has been invaluable in supporting our web and technology needs. The Association has not missed a beat, and we are all appreciative. We hope to have a new Executive Administrator on board in early 2024.

I would also like to welcome Renée Hamidi and David Owens to the Board. Their backgrounds and knowledge of our community have already been extremely valuable.

The 2023 accomplishments include:

- Monthly community clean-ups are conducted on the second Saturday of each month from 8 to 9 am, focused on areas of the community, including Bellona Avenue, N. Charles Street, Falls Road, Old Court Road, W. Joppa Road, and the areas around Roland Run. Both board members and members of the community participate in these clean-ups. We welcome your participation.
- The Association's E-News is distributed weekly to our members. E-News includes association news and events, community announcements, happenings in our area, and patron highlights.
- The Zoning Committee has addressed some 20-plus individual zoning activities, including monitoring and negotiating future residential development, working with communities regarding commercial development (including a brewpub, pickleball courts, and veterinary clinics), as well as noise complaints and neglected homes.
- The Events Committee sponsored a speaker series and a community day with games and food.
- Continued engagement with Baltimore County officials in dealing with stormwater management to mitigate flooding.
- Working with the Baltimore County Police Department to monitor criminal activity in our communities and to share accurate information and public safety information with our neighbors.

Our 2024 initiatives are planned to include:

- Hiring a new Executive Administrator.
- Publish weekly E-News to communicate activities in and around the community and the Association's committees.
- Monthly Second Saturday clean-ups.
- Continued monitoring of developments in our community and to bring impacted parties together.
- Identifying new construction projects that require the attention of the Design Review Panel. This County chartered panel reviews all new residential construction in our community and additions to existing structures that account for an increase in size of an additional 50% or more.
- Work with the impacted neighborhoods of the proposed NCR bike trail to make sure that the residents' concerns are heard.

To our members, Thank you. We can't do this without your support. If you are not a member, please consider joining us.

We are also looking for interested community members to serve on our committees. Most of our board members started as engaged committee members, and we would love your participation.

All the best for a happy, healthy 2024.

Jamie Cahn

Jamie Cahn, President, December 2023

Who We Are

The Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Area Improvement Association’s mission is to protect, preserve, and enhance our communities through stewardship, education, and advocacy. The Association works closely with elected officials, environmental planners, law enforcement officials, and neighborhood associations to address local issues and advocate for favorable resolutions for our community. The Association has nearly 1,000 household members. The Association is managed by an elected board of governors from the community that directs the activities of several active committees. Our Executive Administrator coordinates member requests and maintains close contact with local government and law enforcement officials. The office is located in the historic Rider House at 8013 Bellona Avenue.

What We Do and Membership Benefits

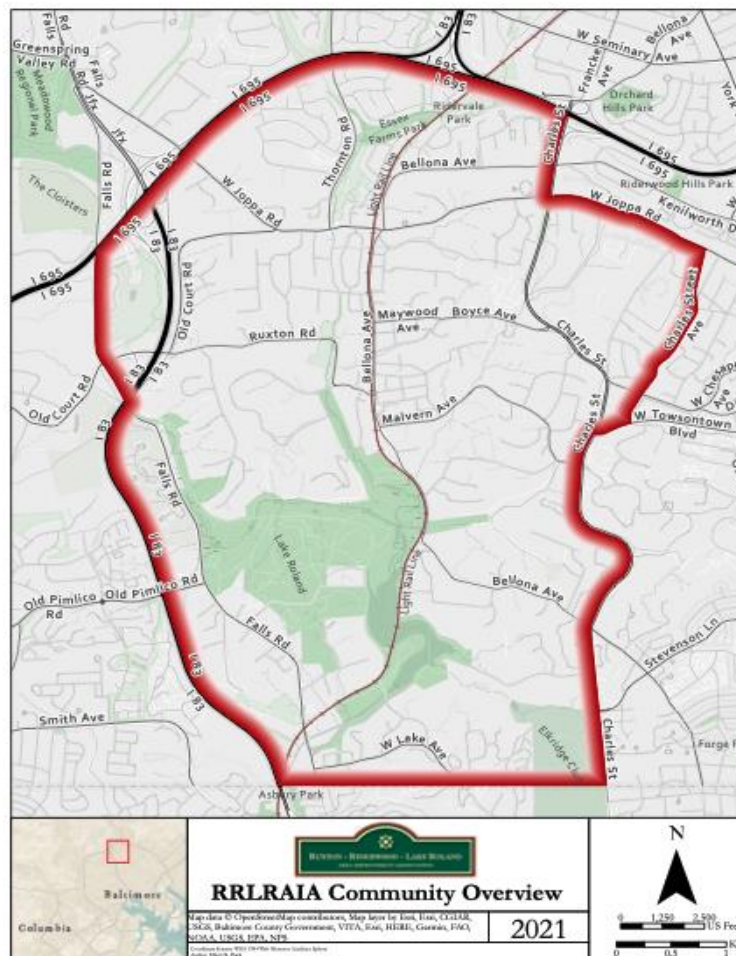
A summary of actions performed by the Association, its board, members, and volunteers in 2023 is outlined in the Committee Reports section and showcases the benefits of membership.

Where are the Boundaries?

The Association covers over 4,200 acres or 6.6 square miles and is bounded on the north by the Baltimore Beltway; on the west by the Jones Falls Expressway (I-83) north to the overpass at Falls Road, then north on Falls Road to the Baltimore Beltway; on the south by the Baltimore City line; and on the east by N. Charles Street, plus the area between N. Charles Street and Charles Street Avenue extended to its terminus at W. Joppa Road.

Why We Started

The Association was formed in 1953 when a neighborhood organization meeting drew more than 200 residents to adopt a constitution and bylaws. Its first project was to prevent the new I-83 link from being routed through Ruxton, past the L’Hirondelle Club, and over Lake Roland. The Association also vigorously promoted the interceptor sewer line to help stop pollution in Lake Roland and was active in numerous zoning issues.



Board of Governors

The Board of Governors are volunteers representing all corners of our community. Board members hold offices for a term of three years and serve up to two consecutive terms. Each board member sits on Association committees where their personal interest and talents will benefit the community. New board members are nominated and elected by the Association members at the Annual Meeting in the Fall. Board members must be Association members. The Board meets at least five times per year in addition to the Annual Meeting, and committees meet as needed.

Officers

President – Jamie Cahn | 1st Vice President – Matt McGlone | 2nd Vice President - Dod Poe
Treasurer – Kathleen Lane | Secretary – Patty Mochel

Board of Governors & Committee Involvement

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Bill Baker | Events, Public Facilities, Zoning-Code Enforcement |
| Jeffrey Budnitz | Falls Road-Bare Hills-Lake Roland (Chair), Flooding (Chair), Sewer, Zoning-Code Enforcement |
| Jamie Cahn | Zoning-Code Enforcement (Chair), Community Plan, Falls Road-Bare Hills-Lake Roland |
| Catherine Dreese | Public Facilities (Chair), Communications |
| Meg Ferguson | Finance, Nominating, Community Plan |
| Renee Hamidi | Community Plan, Sewer, Zoning-Code Enforcement |
| Blair Iodice | Flooding, Membership, Nominating-Governance |
| Jason Jones | Membership (Chair), Events, Public Facilities |
| Kathleen Lane | Events (Chair), Finance (Chair), Public Facilities, Zoning-Code Enforcement |
| Paul Matino | Community Plan, Membership, Public Facilities |
| Matt McGlone | Communications (Chair), Nominating-Governance, Public Facilities, Zoning-Code Enforcement |
| Patty Mochel | Sewer (Chair), Communications, Events, Public Facilities, Zoning-Code Enforcement |
| Mike Muldowney | Falls Road-Bare Hills-Lake Roland, Flooding, Zoning-Code Enforcement |
| David Owen | Finance, Public Facilities, Sewer, Zoning-Code Enforcement |
| Elliott Plack | Flooding, Public Facilities, Zoning-Code Enforcement |
| Dod Poe | Public Facilities, Zoning-Code Enforcement |

2023 Committee Reports

Zoning and Code Enforcement

The Zoning and Code Enforcement Committee was busy in 2023 with much going on in the background. Below is a list of activities undertaken by this committee in the interests of the community:

- Special exception for veterinary use at 1423 Clarkview Road for relocation of Falls Road Animal Hospital
- Structure addition at 703 Abell Ridge Circle
- Development plan for 1400 Walnut Lane
- Stormwater management issue at 2010 Ridgecrest Court
- Construction concerns regarding 8315-8317 Bellona Avenue
- Subdivision of 1857 & 1861 Circle Road concerns
- 1310 Hollins Lane subdivision and variance request
- 1710 Ruxton Road Design Review Panel (DRP) review and meeting
- Development activity and land clearing on 2.7 acres on North Charles Street
- 1919 Ruxton Road sale, subdivision, and potential connection road to Circle Road
- Bellona Lane use variance for medical/dental building development
- Pickleball use at the former Davey Tree site by Coppermine
- CZMP issue - 6119 Falls Road - zoning change request
- W. Joppa Road Royal Farm temporary signage
- Advocating a crosswalk at N. Charles Street and Stevenson Lane as part of the community plan
- Moon Rise Festival noise complaint response
- State Highway Administration - Bellona Avenue repaving complaint
- Continued monitoring of plans for the proposed Brewpub continue

Monitored:

- Torch Hill on Seminary
- Greenspring Manor on Joppa Road
- Lutherville Transit Oriented Development
- Falls Road/Old Pimlico Self-Storage
- L'Hirondelle Club Pickleball
- Lake Avenue side-yard shed variance
- Falls Road water main replacement
- N. Charles Street water main replacement
- NCR-Jones Falls bike trail feasibility study

Other committee activities:

- Tree removal on Thornton Road
- Roland Run blockage clearing
- Gained unanimous County Council support for the adoption of our Community Plan 2020

Current areas of focus include:

- NCR-Jones Falls bike trail and its impact on our communities
- Coppermine's plan to construct pickleball courts on the former Davey Tree site in Bare Hills
- Possible construction of medical building construction on Bellona Lane

If you are aware of any projects we should be monitoring, please contact our office at office@rrlraia.org.

Public Facilities, Enhancements, and Historic Preservation

The Public Facilities, Enhancements, and Historic Preservation Committee identifies and pursues community beautification and revitalization projects. This includes funding, monitoring the community for opportunities for improvement, as well as working with state and county agencies to enlist their assistance when needed. Some of this committee's projects include Second Saturday Street & Stream Clean-ups, invasive vine removal workdays, and the development of preservation and education projects. The committee advocates for action to address traffic-related concerns, sidewalks, road and bridge improvements, and light rail issues.

2023 Milestones

- **Second Saturday Clean-Ups:** Well over 50 bags of trash were removed from our neighborhoods. Multiple volunteers spent one hour on 12 Saturday mornings picking up trash in 2023.
- **Graffiti Removal:** Per the Association's request, the State Highway Administration removed graffiti from Speed Limit signs on Bellona Ave.
- **Vine Removal:** Members were educated about invasive vines and cleared vines on Essex Farm Trail off Thornton Road over multiple weeks with the help of many neighborhood volunteers and 18 volunteers from Towson University.
- **Sightline issues remedied:** Shrubs and vines were cut back at several intersections to improve driver safety.
- **Blue Water Baltimore Tree Planting:** 12 Association members had native trees planted on their properties through the Association's coordination with Blue Water Baltimore.
- **Stream Stewards:** Volunteers removed trash, including a metal shopping cart, from Roland Run stream near Circle Road and Roland Run near Joppa Road.
- **Stream Debris Removed:** Members cleared a downed tree that was blocking the flow of water from Roland Run into Lake Roland, as well as debris around the Circle Road bridge, resulting in better water flow and reduced flooding of the stream.
- **Strengthened Relationships with Baltimore County Police Department:** Along with routine interaction with our BCoPD community liaison, members of our Board attended meetings of the Police and Community Relations Council (PCRC) for the Towson Precinct.
- **BGE Purple Streetlights:** Dozens of faulty bulbs were replaced throughout our community.
- **Speeding:** Per the Association's request, a speed trailer was placed on Bellona Avenue.

Two members of the Public Facilities Committee, Matt McGlone and Catherine Dreese, are graduates of the Baltimore County Police Community Partnership Academy nine-week course.

Events

The Events Committee was busy in 2023 with the following social and educational events for our communities:

- **Speaker Series:** Over 60 people attended our inaugural Speaker Series on Sunday, April 16, at Hunt's Memorial Church. Bill Band, an association member and retired bay pilot, spoke about his experiences

photographing sharks, information on various species, benefits to ocean ecology, and the threats they face.

- **Summer Social** - the Association sponsored a summer social held at Church of the Good Shepherd, with a food truck and a visit from a fire engine from Lutherville Volunteer Fire Department, as well as games and good conversation with neighbors.
- **Shredder Day** - Hunt's Church held a very well-attended paper shredder day, which was promoted to Association members.
- **Annual Membership Meeting** - The Association's annual meeting was held on September 26th at the Church of the Good Shepherd, bringing together members for a yearly overview of the current and ongoing work of the Association on behalf of our communities. Guest speakers included Councilmen Izzy Patoka and Mike Ertel. The keynote speaker was University of Baltimore professor Stanley Kemp, who gave a fascinating presentation on the 'Ecology and Health of the Jones Falls Ecosystem.'
- **Speaker Series** - The second event in our Speaker Series was held on Sunday, October 15th, at Hunt's Memorial Church. This event featured Association member Kit Waskom Pollard, author of *Lost Restaurants of Baltimore* and contributing writer of the weekly column 'Hot Plate' for the Baltimore Fishbowl. Kit gave a fun and very interactive presentation of several historic and beloved restaurants of Baltimore's past featured in the book, many of which were fondly remembered by attendees. A book signing followed.

Community Plan

Every ten years, the Association develops a community plan that identifies the priorities within the community for the next ten years and steps to either achieve or act on those priorities. The primary goal of the [2020 Ruxton Riderwood Lake Roland Community Plan](#) is to help preserve and enhance the quality of life in our area communities. The plan has been developed to be an integral part of Baltimore County's 2030 Master Plan as it relates to our community and will serve as an implementation guide for the Association's Board, the Board's sub-committee members, and a myriad of Baltimore County and the State of Maryland agencies and their staff. The plan was adopted on April 3rd, 2023, by the Baltimore County Council for incorporation into the Baltimore County 2030 Mater Plan. [Visit the last three decades of community plans.](#)

Falls Road - Bare Hills - Lake Roland

The committee represents one of the five key focus areas of the past three [Association Community Plans](#) and promotes the goals and objectives outlined in the Plans. Activity this past year has included monitoring or advocating for positive outcomes for:

- Monitoring the sale of commercial land and proposed uses, including facilities for self-storage, a brewery, and a pickleball facility.
- Monitoring the Falls Road water main replacement project and communicating concerns to Baltimore County DPW or the prime contractor when they arise.

Activity at [Lake Roland](#) has included a park award, additional trail stabilization, the expansion of an education nature trail addressing trail access issues and parking concerns, bond funding for several park capital projects, additional memorial benches, outreach to other nature sites to aid with expertise or equipment, planting of

native trees and plants, implementation of the serpentine barrens management plan, fallen tree removal on trails and roadways, invasive plant management and weed warrior outings.

Board Member Jeffrey Budnitz was awarded the 2023 National Recreation and Parks Association's Robert M. Artz Advocate Award for his work as the Executive Founding Board Member and Treasurer of the Lake Roland Nature Council. This is the highest national award given to a volunteer in the National Recreation and Park Association community.

Flooding

The Flooding Committee, working collaboratively with the Baltimore County and State Government, advocates for actions to prevent flooding and the devastating impact of flooding on the community and the environment. Their focus is on the goals and action items in the [2020 Community Plan](#). These goals and actions were shared with the community and were developed with significant input from the community.

Sewer

The Sewer Committee met formally in September 2023 to discuss the statement issued by the Green Towson Alliance, which calls on Baltimore County to require a comprehensive review by outside experts of the methodology and information used by the Baltimore County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) to a) prepare the Basic Services Sewerage Map and b) review individual development plans to determine whether public sewerage facilities are adequate to support the development described in the plans.

The committee feels it is important as a community association to be aware of our neighbors' concerns about the safety of sanitary sewer lines that run through our community, including a major pipe under Lake Roland. The County plans to reline these sewer pipes as it works to comply with the 2005 Consent Decree issued by the Maryland Department of the Environment and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The Association is in regular contact with the Baltimore County Department of Public Works and Transportation about the sewer lining project slated to begin in the near future. We plan to hold a public meeting with the County Sewer Design Bureau Chief to update our community on how this project will take place.

Communications

The Communication Committee serves as a herald within the Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland community by keeping our membership updated on the events occurring in and around our area and on the issues of interest affecting our community that arise throughout the year. We do this through our weekly *E-News* newsletter, Association website, and social media accounts on Instagram and Facebook.

Over the past year, we publicized Association events in our community, such as our Speaker Series, Summer Social, Second Saturday Clean-Ups, Invasive Vine Removal events, and Stream Clean-Ups efforts, as well as outside events around us, such as local farmer markets, Lake Roland Nature Center events, local fairs, county meetings, etc.

Issues that we brought to the forefront through our various media for member awareness, discussion, and action include such things as local zoning topics, traffic and speeding concerns on our streets, the proposed NCR to

Jones Falls Bike Trail along Roland Run, flooding and sewer issues, street lighting, crime reports, community home sales, and more.

Membership

Membership dues fund all Association expenses. The committee coordinates the annual membership drive, sends Welcome Packets to new neighbors, and develops programs for our business patrons. Membership for 2023 was nearly 1,000 members, including 29 business patrons.

Nominating and Governance

The committee creates an annual slate of board members and officers, interviews potential candidates, and presents a list of potential candidates to the Board when a vacancy occurs. The committee identifies areas of expertise needed on the board and collects and maintains Conflict of Interest forms from each board member and the Executive Administrator. In October 2023, the Association welcomed seven new board members.

Finance

The committee supports and reviews the Association's finances, processes, and procedures. The Treasurer serves as the chairperson of the committee.

Thank You to Our 2023 Business Patrons!

Absolute Care Services LLC ♦ Blakehurst Senior Living ♦ Boys Latin School of Maryland ♦
Burdette, Koehler, Murphy & Associates ♦ Carpet Works ♦ Church of the Good Shepherd ♦
Continental Realty ♦ Coppermine Fieldhouse ♦ Cummings & Co. Realtors ♦
Delbert Adams Construction & Sunnyfields Cabinetry ♦ Falls Road Running Store ♦
Garden & Grounds ♦ Graul's Market and Wine Shop ♦ Haymaker Promotions ♦
Hunt's Church Preschool ♦ Hunt's Memorial United Methodist Church ♦ Mind Body Physical
Therapy ♦ Pickersgill Retirement Community ♦ Princeton Sports ♦ Pro Lawn Plus, Inc. ♦
Rutland Beard Florist ♦ Simply Beautiful Flowers ♦ Simply Pilates ♦ The Stretch Zone ♦
The Salon by Kenneth ♦ Towson Orthopaedic Associates ♦ Trinity Assembly of God ♦
Whole Health Realty

E-News Weekly Communications – Topics

The Association sends weekly E-News to members containing information on Association news and events, community announcements, happening in our area, and business patron highlights. Below are topics covered in 2023. For the full stories, visit rrlraia.org/news:

Association News and Events

- Second Saturday Street & Stream Cleanups
- 2022 Year-End Association Report
- Quarterly Homes Sold Report
- Sewer Committee Update
- Invasive Vine Removal
- Speaker Series - Predators in Peril, Lost Restaurants of Baltimore
- Board Member Spotlights
- Falls Road - Bare Hills - Lake Roland Area Committee Update
- Zoning and Code Enforcement Committee update
- Community Plan adopted by County Council
- Public Facilities, Enhancements, and Historic Preservation Committee Update
- Board Member Wins National Volunteer Award
- Board Members graduate from the Police Community Partnership Academy
- History of St. Johns Chapel
- Summer Social - food truck, fire engines, lawn games
- Noise Complaints
- Board Member Helps Repair Blue Meadow Trail - Lake Roland
- Keynote Speaker - History of the Jones Falls - Annual Meeting
- Speed Monitoring with Towson Police
- Crime Reports
- Adoption of Old Court Road
- Neglected Houses
- Roland Run Stream Blockage
- Storm Drains - Keep them Clear
- Thank You, Business Patrons!

Community Announcements

- Towson Communities Alliance News
- Towson Police & Community Relations Council
- Baltimore County District Town Hall Meetings
- Baltimore County Reuse and Recycling Information
- Annual Toad Ferry Project
- Trash, Recycling, and Yard Waste Reminders
- Citizen's Police Academy
- NCR-to-JFT Connection Study Public Meetings
- Community Shredding Events
- Maryland Department of Aging
- 2024 Comprehensive Zoning Map Process (CZMP)
- Vacant Home Watch & Burglary Prevention
- Local Fish Kill
- Native Garden Contest
- Tree Planting Program
- Woodland Stewardship Education Program
- Water line replacement updates - Falls Road, N. Charles Street and Ellenham Road
- Road Closures - Cycling Events
- Vehicle Theft Prevention & Warm-Up Auto Thefts
- Drinking Water Advisory
- BGE Purple Streetlight replacements
- National Prescription Take Back Day
- Congratulations Blakehurst Arboretum

Happening in Our Area

- Lake Roland Nature Council Events & Walks
- Irvine Nature Centers
- Towson Library Programs
- Baltimore Native Plant Sale
- Oregon Ridge Nature Council Events
- Hampton National Historic Site Events
- Farmers Markets
- Towson Garden Days & Spring Festival
- Towson Four on the Fourth Race
- Feet on the Street
- Baltimore County Restaurant Week
- Public Safety Day - Baltimore County
- Towson Fall Festival & Winterfest
- Yoga on the Lawn
- Towson Y Turkey Trot
- The Shops at Kenilworth Event