



## Mount Pleasant Village Newsletter

### Volume 8, Issue 2 - July 2022

[www.mountpleasantvillage.org](http://www.mountpleasantvillage.org)

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## Welcome New Members!

Toni Harmer - 19th Street NW

Hester Ohbi - Pierce Mill Road NW

Troy Hughes - 19th Street NW

Rod Carroll and Nancy Sainburg - Pierce Mill Road NW

Robert Greenstein - 19th Street NW

Kelly Callahan - Park Road NW

\*New since publication of February newsletter

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## **Annual Village Picnic at Last!**

**by Clara Morton, Village Intern**

On June 19th, 2022, the Village hosted its annual picnic for the first time since 2019. After having to put it off many times due to COVID, and even once in the fall due to a construction conflict, the planners of the event were very happy to see it successfully through this time around.

Boasting about 50 attendees, the picnic was hosted at the fields by Peirce Mill and included a barbecue and potluck, as in years past. My personal favorite foods were the beet salad and the pie, but the two tables set up in the grass were piled high with all sorts of delicious foods.

The event spoke to the truly intergenerational component of our Mount Pleasant Village, with many younger family members of the Villagers making appearances, including grandkids! To entertain them, we set up sports and crafts, and brought in some high school volunteers from the Youth Corps arm of our volunteer service, NHN. On top of that, there was a highly popular face painter, Natasha Nenadovic. (She was not only an attraction for the kids, but Leo Sanchez, Bancroft cluster coordinator, was seen with a David Bowie-esque star around his eye.)

This year, the picnic also fell on both Father's Day and Juneteenth. The latter was an important focus for the Diversity Committee, who helped the planning group with organizing the picnic. They suggested that the potluck foods have a red theme, which is a color that runs throughout the holiday as a way to pay respect to those who died in the Atlantic slave trade. Diversity co-chair Rick Reinhard also took a few moments to say some very thoughtful words, reminding everyone about the importance of honoring this important new holiday.

All in all, planners of the picnic agreed that it was a success. Let us hope for as great a success next year and for many years to come!

Below are some pictures taken by our NHN youth volunteers.







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## Mount Pleasant Street Re-Imagined

The Partnership Committee is engaged in *The Mount Pleasant Street Vision Project*. The project supports a renewed vision for the commercial heart of the Mount Pleasant neighborhood, the place where Village members and the community gather. We believe a viable approach to addressing a renewed Mount Pleasant Street must start with a community-based conversation that engages neighborhood institutions, local businesses, and residents along with District leaders.

Toward that end the Committee has reached out to local businesses, churches, and other neighborhood institutions to determine the level of interest in the community and has received very encouraging support. While gathering community input is critical, the ultimate decision maker is the District Government, in particular the Office of Planning (OP) and District Department of Transportation (DDOT). The Committee has conducted a “walk” on Mount Pleasant Street with the Office of Planning to begin setting the stage for ongoing community engagement and hopes to schedule a similar “walk” with DDOT. With the Board’s support, the Committee has commissioned an “ideas paper” from a local expert in community planning that can help to focus and encourage community engagement and has conducted a survey of Village members to determine their interests and



opinions.

As in all things involving public funding, budget cycles and competing priorities impact the speed and scope of a project of this nature. It is well to remember that OP issued a report/plan for Mount Pleasant Street in 2010 that was never acted upon. That said, every conversation with District leaders has started with the recognition that Covid-related changes such as working from home, outdoor eateries, new businesses, and other lifestyle changes have fundamentally altered how residents are using our commercial corridor, and that there is a significant opportunity to improve the physical appearance and public safety of Mount Pleasant Street. With a unique combination of "patience and pushiness" we hope to get something done!

For more information about the *Vision Project* , please contact Jan or Josephine, co-chairs of the Partnership Committee.

[janfenty@gmail.com](mailto:janfenty@gmail.com)

[josephineescalantedc@gmail.com](mailto:josephineescalantedc@gmail.com)

## Mount Pleasant Street Survey Results

Earlier this year, the Mount Pleasant Village Board authorized the Partnership Committee to initiate the "**Mount Pleasant Street Vision Project.**" Its goal is to kick off a multi-stakeholder process to address concerns about Mount Pleasant Street and to plan improvements that are inviting and accommodating for people of all ages.

On June 10, 2022, the Village distributed a quick survey intended to find out how Mount Pleasant Village members use Mount Pleasant Street, what they might like to see changed, and what might increase their use of the local businesses.

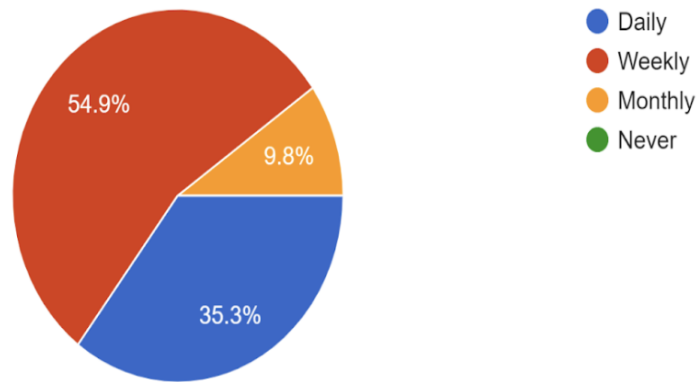
To date, fifty-one (51) Villagers have completed the Survey. Thank you for your feedback and insights! Your answers will help guide the Partnership Committee as it seeks to understand the needs and desires shared by residents, Mount Pleasant Street businesses, and neighborhood institutions. At the end of this process, we hope to create a more livable, walkable, age-friendly community for all of us.

Below are the top responses to each of the Mount Pleasant Street Survey Questions. In response to the request for other thoughts or priorities related to improvements to Mount Pleasant Street, Villagers responded with a variety of suggestions. These included a clean up of

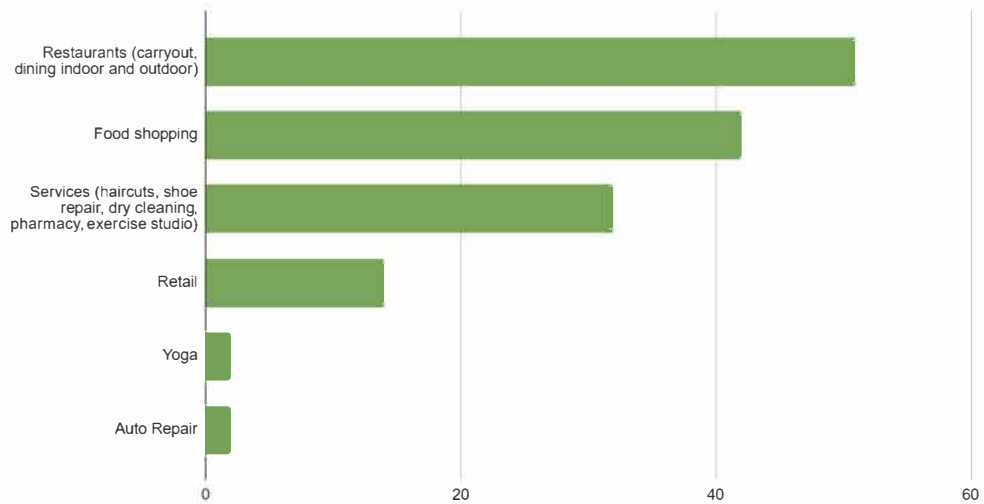
Amigos Park, store front improvements, more mental health providers, more trees and greenery, a hardware store, a better diversity of businesses, services for the homeless, retaining the character of the street by staving off national store chains, closing the streeteries and reopening the sidewalks, removing the brick pavement, and adding a pet store, among other suggestions. Thanks again to the Villagers who've provided feedback on the Mount Pleasant Street Vision Project. If you'd like to take this survey and have not done so, you can do so [HERE](#).

1) How often do you use businesses on Mount Pleasant Street?

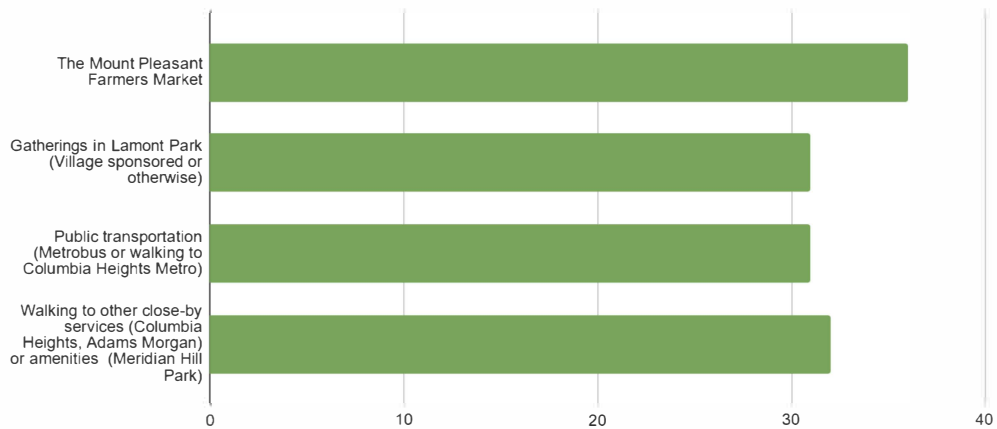
51 responses



2) What types of businesses do you use on Mount Pleasant Street now (or are you likely to use once the threat of Covid recedes)?



3) What else draws you to Mount Pleasant Street?







## Villagers Explore Hillwood

“Mrs. Post never bent down and dug up a plant but she had a vision of what she wanted [her garden] to look like,” said Leo Sanchez, docent and volunteer at Marjorie Merriweather Post’s Hillwood residence. “She was very interested in gardening and that was true all her life.”

Village members Leo Sanchez and BL Johnston, as trained museum docents, led about fifteen Villagers on a tour of Hillwood gardens and mansion for the second time in May. They spent a few hours on the grounds and ate at the Merriweather Café afterwards.

While there are many beautiful attractions at Hillwood, each of the eight gardens is brought together by a focus on French decorative arts. These tend to be objects that are artistic but also practical, like a painted urn. And while this bit of history is brought up in every tour, the style and focus of tours often falls to the tour guide.

Sanchez prefers to talk about the role of the common plant boxwood in his tours because of his passion for gardening. He became a volunteer and docent at the gardens as a training to become a certified master gardener years ago, and has continued to work there since. He also talks about the philosophies of gardening, discussing the wild, Japanese-style garden in contrast to the controlled, formal gardens. Throughout the tour, he made sure to engage village members, as he does with all groups, and was complimented on his “Socratic method” as a guide.

Both from visitors and docent, there were very positive reviews of this trip.

“Absolutely I would do it again. I do it all the time anyway,” said Leo. A third Hillwood tour may very much be in the Mount Pleasant Village’s future.

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## Lunch Learn and Act with Diversity Committee

You Are Welcome Here: Building Relationships with LGBTQ Members



The Diversity Committee’s latest effort to inform Village members about issues facing minority communities was a “Lunch, Learn, Act” Zoom meeting about LGBTQ+ safety and inclusion. Led by Bancroft Cluster coordinator Leo Sanchez and Sophia Ross, an employee with the Capital Hill Village, this meeting presented a new DC Villages document on LGBTQ+ Inclusion Best Practices.

This document focuses on six areas: materials, programs, outreach, member resources, feedback and discussion, and training. In each area, it emphasizes the importance of acknowledgement and inclusion of the LGBTQ+ community. (If you missed the Zoom and would like to learn about these best practices, the document can be found [here](#).)

“Our intent for a ‘take-away’ for the group was to seriously consider how do we, as a Village, welcome or embrace those of us who are LGBTQ+ in our neighborhood?” said organizer Leo Sanchez. He noted that he felt the attendees were receptive to the ideas being presented, and even joined a discussion at the end of the meeting which reflected on a case study.

This event was not the only effort by the Village to celebrate pride this year, however. There was a Pride Dance Party on June 24 as well as a pop-up pride celebration on June 10 with music and food, both of which received very positive feedback from attendees.

Moving forward, it is up to each Village to decide how the document and its suggestions will be adopted into their organization's policies and practices. The Diversity Committee will be essential to the Mount Pleasant Village in deciding how to use the information we have been given.

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## Glenstone Outing



"Glenstone is a place that seamlessly integrates art, architecture, and nature into a serene and contemplative environment," says the garden's website. Village members who took part in the March 10 trip to Glenstone tend to agree.

Jan Fenty, organizer of the trip, said that "people had been wanting to go," so the Village chartered a bus and drove to Potomac on a beautiful spring day to see the nature and art.

Among other creative and modern pieces, they saw the work of Richard Serra, which provides the background for the group photo below to the right. At Glenstone, one can see not only the works indoors in the museum, but wander through gardens and woods, surrounded by beautiful art and sculptures. Fenty described the walk through the woods as her favorite part.





After the Villagers had finished exploring, they had lunch at the gallery's café. Despite the transportation challenge of getting to Potomac, Jan said, "I would definitely do it again. It's a must." Since the exhibits are constantly changing, this is an outing that can continue to be interesting to Villagers as a trip destination.

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## Meet the Street: La Bahia



The latest Mount Pleasant Village "Meet the Street" (MTS) event was a lunch at La Bahia (The Bay), a Mexican and Salvadorian restaurant that opened during the pandemic. Located on Mount Pleasant Street at the corner of Lamont Street, the restaurant offers nachos, quesadillas, enchiladas, seafood and more. Given COVID safety issues and the lack of outdoor seating at Bahia, the 22 Villagers that joined MTS used the tables from Marx Café just next door.

Antonio, the owner of La Bahia, spoke to the Villagers with the help of Louise Meyer as a translator. He told them about himself and about starting his business. Coordinator Jan Fenty thought the food was great and recommends that Village members who were unable to attend visit Antonio's restaurant when they get the chance.

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## 2nd Annual Village Dance Party and Pride Month Celebration!

The second annual Village Dance Party took place on Lamont Plaza on June 24. This is a community event sponsored by Hello Neighbor to build intergenerational connections and community spirit. Since we were still celebrating Pride Month, we decorated with rainbow banners, flags and streamers, for a very festive look. Black lights (actually, ultraviolet) were hung from the trees, and reflective tape on the bricks made the plaza look extra-special. At 7:30 our DJs, Adam Krell and Winston Yu, kicked off the dancing, and the fun lasted until 10 pm! We distributed small flags, glow-sticks, heart stickers, Hello Neighbor buttons and cards, and plenty of water and juice boxes.

Thanks to volunteers Laura Breeden, Dick Ferber, Leo Sanchez, Martha Sipple, Farzan Illich, Judy Fisher, Olivia Cadaval, etc. who made it happen.

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## Join Mount Pleasant Village!

**Membership Fee:** \$50\* annually per individual. For more information, contact Michael Burke at [membership@mountpleasantvillage.org](mailto:membership@mountpleasantvillage.org).

**Donate:** Make a tax-deductible donation by sending a check to Mount Pleasant Village at 1735 Lamont Street NW, Washington, DC 20010 or clicking the “Donate Now” button on our home page ([mountpleasantvillage.org](http://mountpleasantvillage.org)).

\*Dues can be supported through a “scholarship” fund if the cost is a hardship.

The newsletter is a cooperative effort! If you have questions, comments, or news to share, contact: [info@mountpleasantvillage.org](mailto:info@mountpleasantvillage.org)