
Mission Helper Update

1 message

William Meyer <williamkmeyer@gmail.com>

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To: William Meyer <williamkmeyer@gmail.com>

Neighbors: Hello again. We've had lots of inquiries about what's going on at the Mission Helpers site, so we wanted to summarize what we have learned and our concerns. We then have updates on fundraising and other items. Please note that this information, and links to key documents and emails, can also be found at our website, www.MHneighbors.com.

Our Concerns: The MH property is a four-acre site with 49 parking spaces and a single ingress/egress onto Chestnut Avenue. There are no sidewalks on Chestnut or Joppa. For decades, the site was a quiet place where the Mission Helpers nuns resided. There were few events, no traffic, no noise, and no problems.

The nuns sold the property in [December 2025 for \\$3.2 million](#). The lot is zoned [DR2, which permits two residences per acre, and other uses](#), including "churches, other buildings for religious worship or other religious institutions." Since the sale, we have attempted to communicate with the new owner to find out its plans. Here is what we have learned (or not learned):

- The new owner – a Delaware LLC – refuses to identify itself, although it has identified a member of its Board, Yosef Chaim Salazar, to serve as point of contact." See [March 5 email](#) ("we respectfully feel it is not incumbent on us to identify ourselves). We don't understand the mystery, which itself is concerning.
- We've spoken with Rabbi Mayer Kleiner, the rabbi at the [Owings Mills Synagogue \(OMS\)](#) who told us that OMS will be renting the space from the new owner. OMS currently operates a large wedding and events center at its Owings Mills site ("Ateres Elka"), with packages for [315+ guests including dinner, bands, stretch limousine, etc.](#)
- Based on two conversations with Rabbi Kleiner, we now believe that OMS intends to hold the same kind of weddings and events at the MH site that it conducts at its Owings Mills site.
- The new owner's designated contact person, Yosef Chaim Salazar, also confirmed in [his March 5 email](#) that "we intend to use the property to practice our faith, which may include Shabbos services, bar/bat mitzvahs, religious studies, retreats, weddings, summer camps, etc., all which are permitted by right."

The MH neighbors believe that using the site for some of these events is incompatible with the residential character of the neighborhood. The neighborhood simply cannot handle the traffic, parking and congestion that would result from hosting large events for 300+ people at the MH site. There is no place for event goers to park or walk, and traffic would be a nightmare. Despite multiple requests, the new owner and Rabbi Kleiner have refused to address these concerns.

Updates: Since our last email, there has been some news:

- On advice of counsel, we notified the new owner on **March 6** that it should halt all improvements on the property until all required approvals were obtained. **Mr. Salazar responded on March 15** by asserting that "plans for the property have not been finalized and no improvements have started. Rest assured that when plans are finalized, we will share them and obtain all required approvals."
- The MH site lies within the boundaries of the Ruxton Riderwood Lake Roland Area Improvement Ass'n (RRLRAIA) and borders the West Towson Association (WTA) (the border is the middle of Chestnut). Both neighborhood associations are aware of the issue, both are supportive of our efforts, and both are monitoring events. Both are copied on this email.
- Councilman Mike Ertel is aware of the issue and is also supportive of our efforts. He is also copied.
- We are aware of the similar situation that unfolded in recent years at Aigburth Avenue near Towson University. It has many lessons for us, and counsel is also aware.
- We are also in touch with Blakehurst attorneys, who told us the following:

"Blakehurst is monitoring the situation very closely and is considering all options to best preserve and protect the Blakehurst community specifically and the neighborhood generally. The restrictions and limitations of record were designed to preserve and protect the quiet enjoyment of the Community and the surrounding neighborhood and Blakehurst demands and expects that those restrictions and conditions will be honored and enforced to the letter."

Our Response: On March 7, the MH neighbors met by Zoom and decided to retain legal counsel, Michael McCann, to represent our interests and to preserve the residential nature of the neighborhood. Michael has a lot of experience in these issues and came highly recommended. We set a fundraising goal of \$20,000 for legal and related expenses.

Camilia Alvarez is graciously serving as treasurer and will keep track of donations and expenditures. With the assistance of Betsy Sexton, they opened a bank account for this purpose. In just over a week, we have raised \$12,500 from 13 households, which is

a great start -- thank you so much! Michael is already on the case. We ask that other neighbors please consider donating what they can. Here's how:

- Please make checks payable to Camila Henao Arbelaez or Elizabeth Sexton and drop them off at 623 Chestnut Ave.
- Zelle payments can be sent to camila.henao85@outlook.com or by using the QR code below (Camilia's phone number is 202-460-5234).
- For direct deposits or wire transfers, please contact her for account and routing information.



We will continue to update neighbors via email and on the MHneighbors.com site, but feel free to call or email me with any questions (williamkmeyer@gmail.com). Thanks for contributing.

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