



June 2021

To all the Friends of Olde Mill and Barlowe Field:

Wow what a year! Recently we established the new memorial garden at the parking lot entrance, I think it is a nice upgrade, and we have plans for a sign (are you a craftsman? See below) a bench, and a Crepe Myrtle tree. If you have been by recently, you would see new mulch under the existing swing set, and we are all set to install our recently acquired second swing set adjacent to it, and later the climbing structure on the other side. Many volunteers showed up at our recent community day to plant flowers and distribute mulch into the gardens. We added dirt to the climbing hill and cleaned up some of the curbs and signage. We still have some clean-up of invasive plants along the edge of our woods and removal of a few small trees that have been allowed to sprout up where they are not supposed to be.

I need volunteers to help us with some drainage repairs, we need to dig a few small drainage ditches (mechanically) and to lay in some drainpipe to address muddy areas in the playground and along the edge of the basketball court.

We have planted something new by the path at the woods, a blueberry bush, the county recommended it, they are Maryland Native Plants. We found a specimen that is about 3' tall now and producing a few young berries, we are excited to see what it can produce next year, I hope to get to taste a ripe one before the birds do. The plant was about \$30 and if any of you would like to donate to obtain more of them just let me know.

Craftsman candidates: we have a sign structure concept and are looking for someone who can carry it out and make us a new sign, if it turns out the way we hope, we would like to create 2 more. I am not talking about the artwork of the sign surface itself but the sign structure that we would temporarily mount a banner on with permanent sign artwork to be created later.

Not related to plants: We have some sports concepts we would like to advance.

1. The local police outreach effort currently involves some kickball games in selected communities, we are waiting on our date, we will share it as soon as we get it, but we need some kickball ringers to help us show the police how it is done. Stay tuned.
2. We would like to install 2 new backboards and poles on the basketball court, not to replace the existing but to add to them. The cost is anticipated to be about \$3,000 to get good equipment and get it installed, currently we have no funds for this but that is where you come in, support our fundraisers but we are also looking for dedicated donations to go into the account for this project, donations would be tax deductible because FOOM is a tax-free entity. If you would be interested in helping to manage this project, contact me.

3. We would like to put together a simple, casual summer volleyball event, perhaps a small 4 x 4 tournament in July to get neighbors together to meet each other and burn off some energy. If you are interested in assisting or playing contact me.

4. Speaking of 4 x 4 competition, we would like to do a September fund raiser for the park with a 4 x 4 soccer tournament, small fields, short games (good news to those of us who tire quickly) but also small goals, no goalies, with a wide age range. Each team (up to 5 players to allow a substitute) would get a minimum of 3 games, more if they advance, everything would be by age group from young to too old with food and fun all around. Anticipated cost is \$125 per team (\$25 per player if you have 5) and would include an event t shirt and other awards. We need volunteers and refs as well as players. We would like to offer some age-appropriate clinics for various age groups of about an hour each, would you be willing to lead one? Contact me if you are interested in this event.

5. We have had requests to install a Pickleball court near the basketball court, apparently this is a new very popular game like a mash up of tennis and ping pong. Contact me if you think you can support this effort.

And for those who simply like to walk their dog at the park, which seems to be an ever-growing group, we would like to install a 50' x 50' dog run between the basketball court and pool in the flat area, we need about 200' of 4' high chain link fencing installed to get this project started, that cost is about \$4,000, again direct donations to this project will be accepted.

Each month I say if you are interested contact me, and I mean it. I am Randal Stites, VP of VOMCA and President of Friends of Olde Mill (FOOM), we take care of maintenance and improvements at Barlow Field, a park that is wholly owned and managed by The Village of Olde Mill Community Association. It cannot exist and function without donations and volunteers to make it happen and we need more of both to meet our goals for beautification, events, and availability to those in the community. I can be reached at 202-441-1232, or at rstites@polingerco.com, if I cannot answer please leave me a message. It is our community and our responsibility.

Randal Stites

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Raising money for a new playground