



SEVEN OAKS –EVANSWOOD CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

of Silver Spring, Maryland

**** September 22nd Meeting Program**

TOPICS:

- **Old Business:**
 - Rain Gardens
 - Listserve Membership
- **Updates:**
 - Dale Drive Pedestrian Improvements
 - Purple Line update

When: Tuesday, September 22nd, at 7:30 p.m.

*Upcoming meetings: Thursday, October 29th;
Wednesday, December 9th.*

This is the first newsletter since May, and much has happened over the summer – so, we have expanded this newsletter so as to give you updates on a variety of issues, including the Purple Line, proposed construction along Dale Drive (both widening at Colesville and pedestrian safety improvements), and the information provided by the Friends of Sligo Creek on rain gardens.

**Join Us --
First Meeting of the
new season**

**Tuesday, Sept. 22nd, 2009
7:30 – 9:00 p.m.**

**LOCATION: Silver
Spring Branch,
Montgomery County
Public Library**

AGENDA

**Old Business: Rain Gardens
Listserves Membership
Updates: Dale Drive
Pedestrian Safety
-Purple Line**

Business Meeting:

Approval of the Minutes
Treasurer's Report
Announcements
Old Business: Reports
New Business
Adjourn by 9:00 p.m.

OFFICERS

**President: Mark Gabriele
301-565-3395**

**Vice Presidents:
Kathleen Samiy
Jonathan Jay**

**Secretary:
Jean Cavanaugh**

**Treasurer: Bill Kaupert
301-585-3385**

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association's news and information**

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and much more!*

SOECA Meeting Minutes May 13, 2009

Meeting was called to order by Mark Gabriele at 7:40 p.m.

Moment of Silence. Jack Gilson, a long time resident of Seven Oaks, past president of SOECA, and dedicated community activist, passed away in April of this year. Those assembled took a moment of silence in memory and recognition of our neighbor, Jack Gilson. *See below.*

SOECA Officer Slate. The nominating committee presented a slate of nominees, all incumbents, to be officers of SOECA. A motion was made to accept this slate of incumbents. The motion was approved. All SOECA officers will serve another year in their current positions.

Old Business. A proposal introduced by a SOECA member to consider amending SOECA's bylaws to include multifamily residents, ie apartment dwellers, in SOECA's community was unanimously tabled after discussion.

Hold Your Water. Kit Gage, representing Friends of Sligo Creek (FOSC) Stormwater Committee, gave a talk promoting rain gardens as a mechanism for preserving Sligo Creek and Anacostia watershed. FOSC received two grants from Chesapeake Bay Trust to conduct education and outreach with the goal of limiting the vast amount of runoff that finds its way into the creek. Creek levels have recently varied between drought and flood, with flooded conditions occurring even after a two inch rainfall. This is due to the increase in impervious surfaces (ie pavement) in the region, and decrease of pervious surfaces, trees and plants that could absorb this runoff. The flora and fauna of Sligo Creek cannot survive the extreme conditions of drought and flood.

There are several ways to reduce rainwater runoff. They include: rain gardens, pervious pavement, green roofs, rain barrels, native

plants rather than lawn, and trees. Montgomery County Parks also created several holding ponds for Wheaton parking lot runoff.

FOSC will work with SOECA to walk through our neighborhood to identify appropriate places for rain gardens or other rain holding solutions. FOSC teams with CASA de Maryland and the county to provide labor and materials (sandy soil and plants) for a limited number of rain gardens. The county also offers a rebate for people installing pervious paving, rain barrels, planting trees and native plants.

Rain gardens can be designed for shade or sun. Gardeners remove the top layer of earth, which is typically clay, and replace with 50% sandy soil. They put berms on the downhill side of the garden and fill with durable native plants. Rain gardens must be 10 feet from trees and downhill from homes. Rain gardens need weeding just like a regular garden. When it rains, water is absorbed quickly by the soil and plants, so there is no mosquito breeding, according to FOSC.

SOECA neighbors who are geographically close should coordinate to request a visit from a FOSC rain garden expert. The expert will walk through your neighborhood and evaluate appropriate sites for rain gardens or suggest other water holding methods. They will identify those suitable to receive the materials and labor grant.

Note: SOECA Board followed up with the community on FOSC's offer to help coordinate rain gardens, but only three people replied, not enough to bring FOSC out for consultations. FOSC needs to work with larger groups in a community. We can try again. If interested, contact Jean Cavanaugh, jeancavanaugh@fastmail.fm

Dale Drive Pedestrian Safety Issues. On April 26, Khursheed Bilgrami (KB), traffic engineer for the County Department of Transportation, led a walk through of the SOECA portion of Dale Drive. He proposed implementing in Summer 2009 some "first step" safety

improvements including crosswalks, bump outs and signage at Ellsworth and Greebriar crossings.

The second step would be to nominate for the County's Capital Improvements Program more extensive pedestrian safety improvements the entire length of Dale Drive. SOECA member Bruce Altevogt agreed to be the lead on this project. *See update below.*

Dale Drive/Colesville Rd. Intersection "Improvements." The County will begin construction this summer to widen Dale Drive at Mrs. K's in spite of protests and re-signalization suggestions from SOECA and the County Planning Board. The County will acquire a small piece of land from Mrs. K's to enable the widening. Our County Councilwoman Valerie Ervin wrote a letter to the County DOT asking them to listen to the community. The Council later voted unanimously in favor of the widening project. A motion was made to set aside up to \$500 of SOECA funds to consult a lawyer on this issue. The motion was seconded and unanimously adopted.

Silver Spring Safety Summit. The Summit was held May 16 on the Takoma Park campus of Montgomery College. Two SOECA representatives, Sharon Lynch and Vicki Warren, joined a larger group of local civics and other parties to plan and carry out the Summit. There were six workshops addressing various crime, safety and youth issues the DTSS and surrounding community face.

Procedural. Those present unanimously approved the minutes from the April 2 meeting.

Treasurer's Report. The current balance in the checking account is \$5,463.71. The certificate of Deposit value is \$2,216.06, interest rate .5% with maturity May 26, 2009. SOECA membership increased by two families – Douglas Russo and Catherine Hilton-Russo, and Sonny and Marivic Olega Fetalcorin, both of Rowen Rd. SOECA has 193 households as members in good standing.

New Business. SOECA will discuss listserv membership policies during its next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.
Minutes submitted by Jean Cavanaugh,
Secretary.

A tribute to our neighbor Jack Gilson. Jack Gilson grew up in Silver Spring when it was more like "Mayberry." He grew up in a bungalow on Fenton Street. Jack enjoyed having a hand in shaping SS renewal and helping to prevent two huge mall projects. Jack received an award from the Park Police for his efforts in helping them make Sligo Creek Park safe. He also received an award for helping to get historic preservation for the Art Deco Montgomery Arms Apartments at corner of Fenton and Spring St. Jack served on the boards of the Montgomery County Civic Federation and Allied Civic Group. He started his activism as a founding member of the Silver Spring-Takoma Traffic Coalition, which prevented downtown becoming a big department store mall like Wheaton Plaza & Montgomery Mall. The Traffic Coalition was one of the first, if not the first local group to put forth "Town Center" pedestrian friendly concept for SS, including a grocery and hardware store--now Whole Foods and Strosneiders. He was president of SOECA and worked to get the neighborhood traffic protection plan that protects part of the SOECA neighborhood from cut through traffic. In summary, he loved Silver Spring, his home town.

Dale Drive Traffic Calming Initiative. Bruce Altevogt, SOECA's volunteer lead to coordinate with the county on this initiative, met with County DOT and Councilwoman Valerie Ervin's office regarding steps to improve safety on Dale Drive. Although DOT traffic engineer Khursheed Bilgrami, had recommended some "quick fix" calming measures as detailed in the minutes above, later discussions and July 6 community walk-through concluded that more extensive calming measures would have more

impact. The DOT agreed to fund calming measures described below primarily through the existing Intersection and Spot Improvements CIP. The goal is complete design and construction by the spring of 2010.

Kingsbury (south of the intersection):

- Install bump out on south bound Dale to help slow traffic coming down the hill
 - o Bump out will have a ramp to ensure access for bicycles.

Ellsworth:

- **Install a pedestrian refuge island on the south side of the intersection**
 - o **Note: To ensure enough width for the island it may be necessary to narrow the green space by a couple between the sidewalk and the roadway.**
- **Improve signage and curbs**

Pershing:

- **Improve bus stops on either side of Dale**
- **Upgrade curbs at the corner of Dale and Pershing (all four corners)**
- **Install bump out to narrow distance to cross Dale with ADA ramps**

Greenbrier:

- **Install a pedestrian refuge island on the north side of the intersection**
- **Improve signage (including removal or no left turn signs) and curbs**

Dartmouth

- **Install cross walk on south side of road**
- **Install bump-out on southwest corner (one already exists on southeast corner).**
- **Re-grade road to improve sightlines**
- **Install retaining wall along west side of Dale to improve sightlines**

Mansfield (note this is part of the currently funded CIP project that will install sidewalk on the east side of Dale from Mansfield to Hartford)

- **Install crosswalk**
- **Install bump outs to shorten distance**

needed to walk across street.

- **Improve signage and extend no-parking area to improve sightlines**

Hartford

- **Improve signage and paint ped x'ing on the road**
- **Note: ongoing sidewalk CIP will also address traffic speed coming southbound.**

Thayer

- **Improve signage to slow traffic down including installation of chevrons warning of a sharp turn.**

Dale Drive/Colesville Road Intersection

“Improvements” Update: Maryland Dept of Transportation's Rebecca Park notified SOECA that the design and drawings are 90% complete and construction will begin in Fall 2010 and end in Summer 2011. The budget had been estimated at \$2.5 million, but they will update for us the final cost of the project. MDOT is sending SOECA project drawings. MDOT will work with SOECA to visit the intersection at the end of September or beginning of October to review details of the project, and so SOECA can assess impact to the community.

Purple Line Update: State and County Decide: Purple Line Will Run at Surface on Wayne Avenue and through Downtown

On August 4, Governor Martin O'Malley announced the State's final decision for the mode and alignment of the Purple Line. The Governor ruled in favor of light rail and a route that will include running at street-level through downtown Silver Spring and on Wayne Avenue through our residential neighborhood. The Governor's decision follows the decisions/recommendations of Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett and a unanimous County Council in January. SOECA's attempts to have the Purple Line tunneled under Wayne Avenue failed.

Specifically, the route in our portion of Silver Spring will run as follows, all at street-level: After arriving from Bethesda at the Silver Spring Transit Center (Metro station), the train will, from west to east:

- run down Bonifant Avenue,
- cross Georgia Avenue,
- move into the two northern lanes of Bonifant between Georgia and Fenton Street,
- move off the street at a diagonal onto the grounds of the new Silver Spring library as the train approaches Fenton,
- stop at a 200-foot-long station at the library along Fenton between Bonifant and Wayne,
- enter diagonally into the intersection at Fenton and Wayne as a fifth stream of traffic,
- head northeast on Wayne, past the entrance to the Whole Foods shopping center parking lot, Cedar Street, Dale Drive, and Sligo Creek Parkway,
- on Wayne at a point 900 feet beyond Sligo Creek Parkway, head into a tunnel that will take it under Flower Avenue, surfacing in Long Branch on Arliss Street just before Piney Branch Road, and
- continue on to Langley Park, College Park, and New Carrollton.

According to the Maryland Transit Authority (MTA), which has been planning the Purple Line with the County, there will be 180-foot-long trains running every six minutes during three-hour peak periods in both the morning and evening – that is, trains in either direction passing any given point on the average of every three minutes during those periods (every five minutes at non-rush hour).

As we have reported in various updates over the last two years, the surface route through the downtown and on Wayne – the only essentially residential street in the 16 miles of the Purple Line – will in our view alter our community irrevocably and in adverse ways.

There are two major adverse impacts. First, as shown on MTA’s engineering drawings, there will be substantial widening of Wayne. The Purple Line will run on Wayne from Fenton Street to a point northeast of Sligo Creek Parkway just past the second large apartment building on the right-hand side of the road. That is just over a mile, and two-thirds of that distance will be widened. Some of the widening will bring Wayne to 70 feet, the width of Colesville Road. Some of the widening will be within the current right of way and some of it will be outside of it – but all of it will entail moving the curbs back and shortening front yards. The County’s Planning Department has estimated that up to 34 residential properties on Wayne might be affected. In addition, the curbs will be moved back in front of St. Michael’s school, Silver Spring International Middle School, Sligo Creek Elementary School, Sligo Creek Park, and the apartment buildings in the first 900 feet northeast of Sligo Creek Parkway. **All** of this one-mile length will be widened, **except** for these two stretches: from a few houses east of Cedar to about Greenbrier, and from the far side of the small (second) schools’ parking lot to the far side of the parking lot for the schools’ athletic field.

The second major adverse impact is on our downtown. We believe that many slowly moving trains during long rush hours in one of the most heavily congested downtown areas of the County (with considerably more development planned) – crossing Georgia Avenue, entering the intersection of Fenton and Wayne, and passing the backed-up entrance to the Whole Foods parking lot – has the potential to bring downtown traffic to even more of a standstill for several blocks on Georgia, Fenton, and Wayne. We will have both increased gridlock and streetcar mass transit that is far slower than Metro. Moreover, the route through the new Silver Spring library’s grounds has resulted in the actual library being planned for the third, fourth, and fifth floors.

There are a number of other adverse impacts of the surface route through Silver Spring that will

be with our community for years, and some of them are:

- The entrance from Wayne Avenue to the large parking lot for the two public schools will be closed due to the widening there, and traffic will be rerouted to Dale and the neighborhood streets behind the schools.
- Mixing slow trains running at the intersection of Wayne and Fenton and down Wayne with the traffic backups for both the Whole Foods parking lot and the Wayne Avenue Garage just west of Fenton will worsen already substantial traffic headaches.
- MTA has urged the County to merge the sidewalk on the north side of Wayne Avenue with the long-promised Green Trail, thereby raising issues of safety.
- If a station is built at Dale, as appears likely (see below), westbound traffic on Wayne will not be permitted to turn left onto Dale while a train is in the station.
- Parking restrictions on Wayne will be increased so that parking will be prohibited during longer rush hours in both the morning and evening than exist today.
- Traffic will increase on Wayne, and features of the route will encourage cut-through traffic in the neighborhoods on both sides of Wayne.
- Bonifant Street between Georgia and Fenton will have two lanes eliminated, with one of the remaining lanes being for traffic one way and the other being for parking (on the south side). Local businesses on the north side will have trouble receiving deliveries in an expedient manner.
- County initiatives for “transit-oriented development” will most likely result in pressure for increased commercial and higher-density residential development inside our community near the library station and the proposed station at Wayne and Dale. Decisions permitting such development can be made before

construction of the Purple Line begins.

There will probably be a station at Dale. The County Planning Department indicated to the County Planning Board and Council that it believed that there was little justification for a station at that location. However, the decision was made to build the Purple Line east of Dale so as to “accommodate a future station” at Dale. This means, as MTA has confirmed, that the Purple Line will be built so that the tracks diverge for a future station platform and that the road is widened in the same manner as it would be if the station were built initially. This virtually ensures a station at Dale. Although obviously some of us who live within a few blocks of Wayne and Dale find a station there convenient, we believe that the station is unnecessary due to the low density of the neighborhood and the proposed station’s proximity to other stations, that such a Dale station would create serious noise levels that will be experienced for several blocks, and, most importantly, that it will lead to denser development in the middle of our community.

SOECA pursued a tunneled route as a reasonable alternative to the surface route. Tunneling under downtown Silver Spring and Wayne through our community would have resulted in a far better Purple Line system than we will be getting, saved our downtown from worse gridlock, and prevented irreparable harm to our community.

In September 2007, SOECA voted to ask that MTA study tunneling in Silver Spring as a full-fledged route option. However, MTA has never made a full, fair, and objective study of tunneling. SOECA, in February 2008, at a meeting with record attendance which was three times that of the previous high, voted overwhelmingly against a street-level route on Wayne Avenue and in favor of a tunneled route. This decision came after several presentations in more than a three-year period from MTA, extensive research and review by SOECA’s Purple Line Task Force, and intensive discussion and debate on the listserv and at

SOECA meetings. Since then, this association has monitored developments, reviewed reports, checked facts, lobbied officials, given testimony at hearings, and submitted formal comments to state and local officials.

The major argument that was offered for several years for not tunneling under Wayne Avenue and downtown Silver Spring was that a tunnel would not be “cost effective,” for purposes of federal funding. Yet, after MTA released its study of the Purple Line in October 2008, MTA released figures which showed clearly that it is possible to build a Purple Line with a tunnel from the Silver Spring Transit Center to Wayne and Mansfield that is in fact cost effective and eligible for federal funding. MTA produced additional figures indicating that tunneling for that relatively small stretch (1.3 miles) would improve both the travel time and ridership for the entire Purple Line, without raising the total price of the Purple Line unreasonably.

Although there will be no tunneling through the downtown or under Wayne, on the same day that the Governor announced the route for the Purple Line, he also determined that there would be extensive tunneling on Baltimore’s shorter proposed east-west Red Line light rail – four miles of tunneling under downtown Baltimore and communities such as Fells Point and, in addition, five of 20 stations to be built underground.

The Purple Line which is now planned is not the Metro-like rapid transit we hoped it would be. MTA and WMATA data show that it will take the Purple Line 8 to 10 minutes more at rush hour to go end to end, from Bethesda to New Carrollton, than it takes to go on the Red Line from Bethesda to Metro Center in downtown DC and then transfer to the Orange Line to New Carrollton. MTA’s figures show that it will take the same amount of time to travel the 1 ½ miles from the Silver Spring Transit Center to the east side of Sligo Creek Parkway as it will have taken to go the 4 miles from Bethesda to the Transit Center. Furthermore, MTA says that the number of riders who would otherwise be

driving will be, at most, only 30% of the total ridership. The rest will be those who would otherwise ride the bus and other mass transit. Finally, MTA’s Draft Environmental Impact Statement indicated that this Purple Line route will increase, albeit somewhat, the total amount of carbon emissions in the greater Metropolitan Washington area over that which it would be if no Purple Line was built.

What’s next? MTA will prepare its application for federal funding and its final Environmental Impact Statement, to be submitted to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) next year. In the meantime, MTA will embark on the preliminary engineering stage, where precise engineering details will be determined. FTA and Congress will then decide on federal funding for the Purple Line for what might be as much as 50% of the cost. The State would allocate most of the rest of the funds, with the County accounting for the balance. MTA has recently indicated that construction might not begin earlier than 2013 or be completed sooner than 2016, depending on whether and when funding becomes available. Due to the street widening, including the demolition and rebuilding of the bridge over Sligo Creek, construction on Wayne will likely result in stretches of road or lanes being closed for long periods.

We will work with MTA and our elected officials to the extent they are willing to truly engage the community, through the civic associations, in some of the smaller details that remain to be determined. Within the parameters of the approved route, as discussed above, we will continue to do what we can to protect and enhance the community as Purple Line planning and implementation move forward.

We wish to thank all those who in one way or another helped further SOECA’s adopted position on the Purple Line route through the community. Moreover, we want to express our appreciation to everyone on all sides for expressing their views and participating in the long debate on the most important issue to have faced the community in a long time.

Sligo Creek Golf Course Closure Threatened.

The local community has recently been fighting threatened County closure of the Sligo Creek Golf Course. This golf course has been a center for all kinds of golfers: novices, low and moderate income users, youth, senior and golfers with special needs. The Montgomery County Revenue Authority (MCRA) had marked this course for expansion or closure because it didn't make money. Facing community opposition, MCRA returned control of the golf course to Park and Planning. The County Executive has requested \$150,000 in supplemental funds from the County Council to keep the course open another year while a more thorough study of the golf course is made. The proposal for supplemental funds needs 6 votes to pass. That supplemental will be introduced when the Council reconvenes Tuesday, Sept. 15. A public hearing has been scheduled on the request for Tuesday, Sept. 22, at 1:30 p.m. at the Council building in Rockville. The Planning, Housing and Economic Development committee also has scheduled a hearing on the golf course

for 2 pm., Thursday, Sept. 24. Meanwhile, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission has scheduled a meeting for 7 p.m., Sept. 24 to consider an interim use plan if the golf course closes. If you would like to support the Sligo Creek Golf Course, please write to the County Council about your support. You can also become involved through the newly formed Sligo Creek [Golf Association](http://www.sligocreekgolfassociation.org/), <http://www.sligocreekgolfassociation.org/>.

Fenton Street Market: Fenton Street Market, which will have the second of its two inaugural sessions on Saturday, October 3, 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM, at the southeast corner of Fenton Street and Silver Spring Ave., featuring “fine, unusual, handmade, and imported goods . . . plus live music and hot mini donuts.” The first market was on Septebmer 12. The Market is conceived and organized by Hannah McCann, a nearby Silver Spring resident. Plans are to have more of this in the future, if these first two sessions are successful.

TO BECOME A MEMBER OF SOECA

Send this slip plus \$10 annual household dues (\$5 for senior citizens and single members) to: Bill Kaupert, SOECA Treasurer, 9222 Manchester Road, Silver Spring, MD 20901

Name: _____

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(1) Via email

- Send an e-mail to: soeca-subscribe@yahoogroups.com with the word “subscribe” in the subject line.
- The ListServe moderator will email you asking for your name and address by response email and after this email exchange, the moderator will add you to the list-serve.
- You will then receive a confirmation e-mail from “Yahoo Groups” of your addition to the list-serve
- The ListServe moderator will email you asking for your name and address by a personal response email and after this email exchange, the moderator will add you to the list-serve.
- You will then receive a confirmation e-mail from “Yahoo Groups” of your addition to the list-serve

You can post a message to the community by sending an e-mail to: soeca@egroups.com or soeca@yahoogroups.com