



March 2018 Issue

Our next meeting will be **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14** from **7:00 to 9:00 pm** in the **Media Center at Silver Spring International Middle School**.

Upcoming SOECA Membership Meeting Dates and Presentations

Wednesday, March 14, 2018; 7-9pm at Silver Spring International Middle School—Topic: Cathy Carr of Greenheart Landscape Design will discuss ideas for our yards and gardens as we prepare for Spring.

Wednesday, May 9, 2018; 7-9pm at Silver Spring International Middle School—Topic: Public Safety/Public Schools and election of SOECA officers.

Help SOECA Form a Position on Reclassification of Dale Drive and Wayne Avenue at the March Meeting

Montgomery County's Planning Board is considering changes to the classification of Dale Drive and Wayne Avenue. A group of residents has written the Planning Board in support of the down-classification of Dale Drive from Arterial to Minor Arterial. They believe this change will lead to greater safety for drivers and pedestrians. They support the reclassification of Wayne as a Minor Arterial road between Cedar and Manchester Place. At our March meeting, we will hear from these residents about their efforts and vote on whether SOECA should take a position on the reclassification of these roads.

Officer Elections To Be Held at May Meeting

SOECA elects its officers in May of each year. There are openings on SOECA's board for 2018-19. If you are interested in serving as an officer, please send an email to Tina Guina, Chair of our Nominating Committee, at guina.tina@gmail.com. She will be happy to answer your questions and help you understand the various roles that need to be filled for the upcoming year.

Permit Parking in East Silver Spring

Montgomery County is considering creating a large residential permit parking zone in East Silver Spring in advance of the Purple Line being built. To learn more, call 240-777-2190. Comments can be submitted to TrafficOps@montgomerycountymd.gov up to 5pm on March 5.

SOECA Officers

Michael Bufalini, President
Mike Kirby, 1st Vice President
Vacant, 2nd Vice President
David Hartmann, Treasurer
Kristen Conte, Secretary

Board Actions Since Last Membership Meeting

1. Sent a letter to our state and local representatives insisting that two lanes of the Lyttonsville Place bridge remain open during construction of the Purple Line.
2. Contacted MC Police about the use of traffic cameras on Wayne Avenue.
3. Welcomed Lynn and Tad Grodzki as co-chairs of SOECA's Social Cmte.

Agenda for March 14 Meeting

1. Presentation by Cathy Carr of Greenheart Landscape Design
2. SOECA position on reclassification of Wayne Avenue and Dale Drive
2. Approval of January Meeting Minutes
3. Business Update
4. Announcements
5. Committee Reports
6. New Business

SOECA Boundaries

Colesville Road on the West;
Cedar and Fenton Streets on the South;
Bonifant Street and Wayne Avenue on the East;
Franklin and Caroline Avenues on the North.

Social Committee

Calling all neighbors, please join the SOECA Social Committee! Lynn and Tad Grodzki are the new chairs and welcome others who want to participate in creating events to enhance neighborhood connection. Just email Lynn at: lynngrodzki@gmail.com about your interest to volunteer.

Upcoming Social Committee Event: A Happy Hour!

Wed, **March 28 from 5-7 PM** at Mrs. K's Restaurant: <http://mrsks.com>. For the first 2018 Happy Hour, we will meet at our old favorite, Mrs. K's, in the downstairs bar, with a separate back room set up just for us! SOECA is providing some free munchies from the wonderful bar menu, and all drinks are available for purchase at the bar.

Minutes of the Jan. 13, 2018 Membership Meeting

The January 13th meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm and the agenda for the meeting was approved.

Presentation by Maryland State Highway Administration: Michael Bufalini introduced Derek Gunn, Acting Assistant District Engineer for District 3 of the State Highway Administration, and Keith Riniker of Sabra, Wang & Associates, Inc. Sabra, Wang is a civil engineering firm hired to provide technical advice on traffic engineering and ITS (Intelligent Traffic Solutions).

Mr. Gunn noted that the SHA is responsible for managing the flow of cars, cyclists, and pedestrians; it is a balancing act as each mode of movement presents its own set of challenges. He noted that residents were the eyes and ears of the SHA and SHA is committed to listening to the issues and concerns of residents.

Mr. Gunn reviewed the three highway projects scheduled for Colesville Road.

1. WSSC is currently replacing several miles of 100-year old water mains from Georgia Avenue to the Beltway. The next two projects cannot begin until WSSC's work is finished.
2. SHA will repair Colesville Road (patching and resurfacing the roadway) from MD 384 to St. Andrews Way starting in July 2018.
3. SHA will repair Colesville Road (patching and resurfacing) from St. Andrews Way to Stewart Lane starting in July 2019.

Residents expressed concerns about the safety of pedestrians at the intersection of Sligo Creek Parkway and Colesville Road and about the use of reversible lanes on Colesville Road. The reversible lanes create long traffic backups in the non-preferred direction, create dangerous situations, and cause confusion for drivers. Residents gave many examples of traffic accidents – or near accidents – caused by drivers either not understanding what lane/lanes they could use or drivers purposefully using a lane incorrectly. Mr. Gunn noted that SHA is aware of some of the problems. Mr. Riniker noted that reversible lanes are good systems for maximizing traffic flow through an area. They work best when there is an imbalance in traffic flow (i.e., when most traffic is moving in one direction, such as in rush hours). When traffic is more equally distributed in both directions, then reversible lanes don't serve the intended purpose.

Residents asked about the safety of the un-signalized crosswalks on Colesville Road. One resident said it made no sense to have un-signalized crosswalks on a six-lane state road with a speed limit over 25 MPH. These crosswalks should be eliminated, or a HAWK Signal should be installed. HAWKs stop road traffic, so pedestrians can cross safely.

Mr. Gunn was asked about traffic apps that are directing traffic onto neighborhood streets when there are backups on the roads, such as Colesville Road, that were designed to handle a large volume of traffic. The state is very aware of this problem. SHA would, of course, prefer that traffic stay on roads designed to handle it. There are things SHA can do to encourage traffic to remain on the state road (tweak the timing of lights when volume increases, use more smart signals, etc.). The state set up a new office of Innovative Planning and Engineering to work on this, and other, issues.

On other issues raised were:

1. A resident suggested the SHA consider changes to the Beltway ramps on Colesville Road. There are ideas that SHA could use to slow traffic that don't require significant re-engineering of the ramps. Mr. Gunn said SHA would look into this.
2. Slowing traffic on Colesville Road: Traffic can be calmed by narrowing lanes (through actual reduction of lanes or using striping to make the lanes appear narrower) but this technique can also increase accidents, so its use has to be studied carefully.

Mr. Gunn had a handout about Governor Hogan's \$9MM plan to increase the capacity of both the Beltway and Route 270. The handout will be shared with SOECA on its website, Facebook Page, and listserv. Mr. Gunn expressed optimism about the future. The state is looking at smart lanes where use of lanes changes as traffic volumes change and the use of smart technology to help improve mobility for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists.

Minutes of November 2017 Meeting: The minutes of the November 2017 membership meeting were unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report: Mike Kirby reported a balance of \$9,799.56 in the checking account. SOECA has 170 member households as of December 2017, and expenses during November and December totaled \$343.76 for room rental and newsletter production. SOECA just ended its annual membership drive and the balance in the checking account will be used to pay expenses until the 2018 membership drive in October.

Announcements:

1. Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board, in conjunction with Montgomery County, is holding a Dockless Bike Town Hall Meeting on January 22nd.
2. On January 21st, the Silver Spring Time Bank will hold a Skill-Share at the Silver Spring Civic Building.
3. Mr. Bufalini confirmed that the SOECA board had sent a letter to County Executive Leggett about the use of the site of the former Silver Spring Library. The letter reflected all the issues voted on at SOECA's November 2017 meeting.

An informal poll was taken about whether holding a meeting on a Saturday afternoon achieved its purpose of attracting more attendees than evening meetings. The results were inconclusive. While the January 13th meeting had good attendance, several people at the meeting indicated they strongly preferred weeknights for our meetings.

Committee Reports: The Traffic Committee reported that a group of residents on Ellsworth Drive was working with the County on traffic calming measures for Ellsworth Drive.

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 pm.

Dockless Bike Town Hall

A Town Hall was held on Monday, January 22nd on the County's pilot project in Silver Spring using dockless bikes. Crowd estimates ranged from 120-150 and in true community tradition, the range of opinions did not disappoint! Many neighbors reacted quite negatively to the initial rollout and made strong negative points about downed bikes and bikes parked that obstruct others. Other neighbors faulted the initial rollout but praised the program for providing another alternative for transportation around Silver Spring. Some noticed the diminution of the number of bikes, after hundreds were deployed and then many pulled back after community response and MC DOT insistence. Others suggested the apps used to access the bikes do a better job instructing users where to park - and not park - them. Helpfully, all of the dockless bike service providers attended and listened attentively, pledging to improve their deployment of the bikes, improve their attention to where they were parked, as well as improve their response times for both users and nonusers. You can send feedback about this pilot program to mcdot.commuterservices@montgomerycountymd.gov.

Since the meeting, Tom Hucker's office has clarified that "Questions or concerns about the Dockless Bikeshare bikes should be directed to the individual companies (ofo, Limebike, Mobike and Spin), using the Customer Support contact information available either on the bike or from the company website. Feedback about the Dockless Bikeshare demonstration program or about a specific company should be directed via email to Montgomery County Department of Transportation at mcdot.commuterservices@montgomerycountymd.gov or by calling the TRiPS Commuter Store at 240.773.8747."

The Police Respond to Questions About Speeding on Wayne Avenue

The SOECA board contacted MC Police about speed enforcement on Wayne Avenue and received replies from both Commander Jones of the 3rd District, MC Police and Richard Hetherington of MC Police's Automated Traffic Enforcement Unit.

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Speed Enforcement continued from prior page

MC Police assures us they are aware of the speeding on Wayne Avenue. Speeding is monitored by assigning traffic officers to assess the situation and ticket violators as well as placing the Speed Monitoring Awareness Radar Trailer in the area to remind drivers of their speeds. The Police and the State of Maryland work collaboratively on road engineering and signal improvements.

In regard to issuing tickets, the enforcement threshold was legislatively set at 11 mph so citations aren't issued until a vehicle reaches 12 mph over the speed limit. MC Police recently conducted a study on speeding on Wayne near the schools and found that the average speed of vehicles at that location was 28.01 mph with the 85th percentile speed of 31.77 mph. That means that 85% of the vehicles are traveling at 32 mph or less. With 37 mph being the point at which citations are issued, 85% of the traffic is traveling within an acceptable range of speed.

Many residents were concerned that the traffic cameras on Wayne near Dale were either broken or permanently turned off. MC Police said neither

of those statements are correct. The Police have about 77 cameras in use at any given time at over 300 approved sites. They have a strict policy of not discussing which cameras are operational and which cameras are active at which site on any given day is not shared with the public.

Committee Chairs and Issue Representatives

- BRT CAT – Brian Feit
- Education Committee– Vacant
- Land Use – Chris Johansson
- Legislative Committee – Vacant
- Membership Committee – David Hartmann
- Montgomery County Civic Federation– Jean Cavanaugh
- Nominating Committee – Tina Guina
- Old Library Site – Steve Peck
- Safety Committee – Lynn Bailes
- SSCAB Representative – Jonathan Bernstein
- Social Committee– Lynn and Ted Grodzki
- Technology Committee – Jonathan Bernstein
- Traffic Committee – Jean Cavanaugh
- Purple Line CAT and Wayne Avenue Working Group – Erin Johansson

Join SOECA’s Listserv: Go to www.soeca.org to learn how.

SOECA Membership: Pay by Check or Paypal
Annual dues of \$20 per household or \$10 for seniors and single members

- **PayPal:** from the “About” drop-down menu at www.soeca.org, select “Join SOECA” and follow the instructions at the bottom of the page.
- **Check:** make it payable to SOECA and send it with this form to: David Hartmann, SOECA Treasurer, 407 Ellsworth Drive, Silver Spring, MD 20910

Name: _____ **Today’s Date:** _____

Address: _____

Telephone: Home _____ **Cell** _____ **Email** _____

Resident email addresses, street addresses, and phone numbers are not shared.