

Situated in the green hills & valleys of Sligo Creek & its tributaries, abutting the burgeoning downtown Silver Spring

April 2015 Issue



Next meeting:  
Tuesday, April 28  
7:30 – 9:30 pm  
Silver Spring International  
Middle School Media Ctr.

#### AGENDA

7:30 – 8:30: Old Silver Spring Library reuse: Montgomery County Parks and Dept. of Recreation

8:30 – 9:30: Discussion on SOECA traffic protections, proposed by-law amendment

Old & new business

Next meeting: **TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 7:30 pm, SILVER SPRING INT'L MIDDLE SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER**

#### Minutes of the Feb. 19 SOECA/PHCA meeting

The meeting, held at SSIMS jointly with Park Hills Civic Association, featured our new District 5 Councilmember Tom Hucker. A paraphrase of his remarks follows.

I live near Three Oaks Drive. I represented the area in the Assembly for eight years, focusing on environment, local government, and economic matters. I served on the bi-county committee (four as chair), which oversees WSSC and Park & Planning, and the federal committee.

The **Purple Line [PL]** brings people to jobs on the west side of the County and students to UMD, and relieves traffic. It's our number one economic development priority for the County. I chaired the Assembly's Purple Line caucus, and I'm on the Board of Purple Line Now. Gov. Hogan is looking assiduously at how not to say no, but keep costs down. I know there are concerns about station locations, noise, etc., but none will get resolved until there is a decision. I'll be your strongest advocate, for pedestrian safety, for example.

The arguments for the **Independent Transit Authority (ITA)** that Leggett proposed weren't strong and the rollout was miserable. We need to find as much revenue as possible for transit, and we can't count on the State as much as we thought. We have to decide what our self-interest is and how to sustain growth. **BRT [Bus Rapid Transit]** is promising as well. The previous Council approved BRT and asked Leggett to suggest a revenue source. He will propose something in May.

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**This month's contra dance at the Civic Building: Thu., May 14, 7 to 10pm. Come early for beginners' session. \$10 (FSGW members \$8).**

SOECA boundaries are: Colesville Road on the West, Cedar and Fenton Streets on the South, Bonifant and Wayne on the East, and Franklin and Caroline Avenues on the North.

Hogan ran against the “rain” tax, actually a tax on pollution to support **stormwater management**. Montgomery County has had a fee to manage stormwater. I put in a bill to have other counties contribute too. Prince George’s County, Baltimore City, and Howard County supported it, pressed by the EPA who said they would revoke permits if stormwater runoff wasn’t addressed. The bill hasn’t affected Montgomery County: we were already paying a self-imposed fee. Even if the law is repealed, EPA will require counties to clean up the pollution.

**In the subsequent discussion**, Hucker explained that the ITA was proposed in part to circumvent the County DOT’s focus on roads because agencies change direction very slowly. But with the recent retirement of the Director of Transportation, Hucker and others think that transit should stay in the DOT, whereas an ITA, with an un-elected Board like WSSC or M-NCPPC or WMATA, would be less transparent and responsive.

Some noted that the PL would be much less expensive if it were a BRT-like system. Hucker responded that that idea was cast aside after many meetings and that there is more economic development potential near permanent stations. People prefer rail, he said, because of the quality of buses; because buses try to go on every possible route, they are slow and unreliable. He would like to improve the bus system, but it would require a high quality rapid transit experience.

Another question was whether the neighborhoods’ PL concerns would be addressed, particularly in the face of Gov. Hogan’s desire to reduce costs. Hucker said that MTA has seemed very arrogant and unresponsive, but that Leggett has moved in the right direction by putting Tom Street in charge of the County’s input to MTA. Hucker acknowledges that the west side of the County has received more deference. He plans to be very engaged, and if it takes a couple million more to address these issues, he’ll fight for them.

Anne Edwards, who coordinates the Wayne Ave Working Group on PL Design, pointed out that the push for widening Wayne comes from the County, not the State, and wondered if it will be widened if Hogan decides against the PL.

On the Transit Center, Hucker said that there is optimism that construction will be finished by May. WMATA then has 60 days to decide to accept it, and they would have a hard time backing out. He said that the County’s approach, keeping the contractor on site while bringing in an additional design firm, was the

right one. In the legal fight to come, the County’s case is much stronger than he thought a year ago.

On the questionnaire that the Parks Dept. sent out in January, which asked among other things about the possibility of selling County-owned open space, Hucker said that the Department had backed off, but never said why they asked the questions.

Hucker favors making the old library an intergenerational recreation center. He doesn’t like the proposal to extend the term of a Parks & Planning Board member if the member [Casey Anderson] becomes Chair.

Other discussion touched on the Old Blair Auditorium (he favors accelerating its renovation in the capital budget), the new Library, the MCPS Superintendent search (the timing of the decision to oust Supt. Starr was poor), and the fact that Rockville will not be subject to the anti-puppy-mill bill.

## **BRT advisory committee**

SOECA resident Lori Zeller represent us on the County’s Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Corridor Advisory Committee (CAC) for the southern portion of Colesville Road from New Hampshire Ave to the Silver Spring Metro station. The Committee is studying the potential for BRT; Lori will communicate what is going on at the CAC meetings and bring the our needs and concerns to the attention of the rest of the committee. The CAC also includes representatives from other civic associations, from local businesses, and at-large members. The first meeting of the full CAC on February 28 brought together volunteers for each of the BRT routes which are currently being studied: Rte. 355, Veirs Mill Road, and Colesville Road. The second meeting of the CAC, specific to the southern part of Colesville Road, took place on March 31.

All the presentations and materials from CAC meetings can be found at [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/RTS/us29section2.html](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/RTS/us29section2.html). There is ample information regarding the county’s plans for rapid transit, the planning process and the stage we are currently in, as well as resources to learn more about BRT. If you would like to ask Lori questions or provide feedback, please email her at [ZellerTransit@gmail.com](mailto:ZellerTransit@gmail.com).

## **Purple Line Update**

All is on “pause” while Gov. Hogan decides (by mid-May) whether to cancel the PL completely or go ahead at reduced cost. If the PL goes ahead, companies bidding for the 30-year build and operate contract will have until August to rewrite their final pro-

posals. A March walk down Wayne Ave. with MTA and County officials showed, in addition to the badly-placed traction power substation, that Wayne would nearly double in width from added car traffic lanes at the schools near Dale Drive, and that construction damage would take out all large shrubs and trees along the Wayne widening between Fenton and Dale, including those on private properties. We will continue to work to improve PL implementation on Wayne.

## SSCAB Update

The Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board (SSCAB) April meeting focused on a “dialog” with the County’s Dept. of General Services on the status of various capital projects. More information can be found in Regional Services Director Reemberto Rodriguez’s email blasts online at [bit.ly/1vvn3py](http://bit.ly/1vvn3py), or in Facebook events at [on.fb.me/1BZbzr4](https://on.fb.me/1BZbzr4).

## The Future of the Old Library

The old location of the Silver Spring Library closed in March. The new Library at Wayne & Fenton will open this spring, possibly by the end of May. The old library building and the parking lots are available for reuse by other local government agencies. The process of County agencies, Parks Department, MCPS, and others expressing interest in the property is now going on. SOECA is on record as supporting the Ellsworth Park expansion and using the building for intergenerational recreation.

## Tree Canopy Initiative

The second planting phase of the tree program started a year ago by Sligo Creek Neighbors for a Sustainable Community (SCNSCI) is planned for April 29 to May 1. Casey Trees arborists will plant 67 or more trees, bringing the total since last year to about 120. Over 50 SOECA residents have participated so far. To sign up for next fall’s planting, send name, address, and phone number to [sevenoaksevenswood@gmail.com](mailto:sevenoaksevenswood@gmail.com) and specify whether the tree(s) will go on private property or County right-of-way (ROW). More details are in the February SOECA newsletter. (You didn’t frame your copy? Go to [www.soeca.org/page1/newsletters.html](http://www.soeca.org/page1/newsletters.html).)

## Water Watchdogs

The Chesapeake Bay Trust has awarded a \$15,000 grant to the Friends of Sligo Creek to expand its citizen pollution reporting system, known as **Water WatchDogs** (WWD) and headed by SOECA’s own Anne Vorce. WWD monitors Sligo Creek and its tribu-

taries for runoff events from the Chelsea construction site and from other sources in downtown Silver Spring, reporting problems to the Dept. of Permitting Services (DPS). If you see a runoff problem or other pollution in Sligo Creek, email WWD at **ReportSligoPollution@fosc.org**. It will be relayed directly to DPS. The grant will fund new outreach efforts to raise awareness of this easy-to-use reporting system, to conduct workshops on water pollution identification, and to organize and promote a bikeathon to raise citizen awareness about water quality for Sligo Creek and the Anacostia River into which it drains.

## Improvements to Ellsworth Park

As many of you may remember, several neighbors met with the staff at the Planning Commission in December 2014 to share concerns about safety issues at Ellsworth Park. M-NCPPC took those concerns seriously and committed to making improvements to enhance the park’s safety. Since that time, M-NCPPC has trimmed low tree branches along the edge of the park next to Ellsworth Court, and recently completed installing pathway lights within the park. This summer, they will repair and color-coat the tennis courts (blue). Their landscape designer is working on some concepts to deal with the eroding hillside between the playground and the road. Lastly, with regard to the dog park, they are still waiting for permits to be issued and it’s likely that work will not begin until Fall.

## Nominating Committee

Our elections take place at the last meeting of the year (early June). Incumbents will run again, challengers welcome, and we need a second Vice President. Contact our nominating committee, Carolyn Michell ([ccmichell@verizon.net](mailto:ccmichell@verizon.net)) to put your name in nomination for one of the offices.

## Proposed Bylaw Amendment

The SOECA Board proposes that to continue SOECA’s long standing representation of the community of R-60 zoned detached homes, Article IV(2) of the bylaws be amended to read:

(2): SOECA membership is limited to residents of the R-60 zoned areas inside association boundaries.

SOECA members in good standing may vote at the April 28 meeting supporting or opposing this amendment. Bylaws can be found at [www.soeca.org/page3/files/SOECA%20Bylaws-2001.pdf](http://www.soeca.org/page3/files/SOECA%20Bylaws-2001.pdf).

**Seven Oaks Evanswood  
Citizens Association  
Silver Spring, Maryland  
[www.soeca.org](http://www.soeca.org)**

**SOECA officers**

Jean Cavanaugh, President  
Kathleen Samiy, Past President  
Michael Gurwitz, Vice President  
Tom Armstrong, Secretary  
Bill Kaupert, Treasurer

**Resident volunteers**

Jonathan Bernstein, Listserv &  
web site manager, SSCAB rep  
Lori Zeller, BRT Committee rep

**Contact SOECA:**

[soeca.board@gmail.com](mailto:soeca.board@gmail.com)

**Two ways to join SOECA's listserv:**

1) Via email:

- Send an email to [soeca-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:soeca-subscribe@yahoogroups.com) with the word "subscribe" in the subject line.
- The listserv moderator will email you asking for your name and address and will add you after you respond.
- You will receive a confirmation email from "YahooGroups."

2) If you have a Yahoo Groups account:

- Go to <http://groups.yahoo.com>, find SOECA, and click "Join this group."
- Fill in the form, including the email address you wish to use, adding a comment about yourself and why you would like to join, and click on "Join."
- The listserv moderator will email you asking for your name and address and will add you after you respond.
- You will receive a confirmation email from Yahoo.

Once you have joined, post messages by sending email to [soeca@egroups.com](mailto:soeca@egroups.com) or [soeca@yahoogroups.com](mailto:soeca@yahoogroups.com).

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**SOECA membership 2014-15 Renew annual dues**

Send this slip plus \$20 annual dues per household (\$10 for seniors and single members) to:

**Bill Kaupert, SOECA Treasurer, 9222 Manchester Road, Silver Spring, MD 20901**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

Send an email to [soeca.board@gmail.com](mailto:soeca.board@gmail.com) if:

- You want to receive the newsletter electronically, or
- You want to check the status of your membership.

If you want to join the listserv, see the instructions above.

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