

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

Seven Oaks Evanswood

Next meeting: TUESDAY, JAN. 12, 7:30 pm, SILVER SPRING INTERNATIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL CAFETERIA

Councilmember Tom Hucke

Councilmember Tom Hucker, our District 5 representative, will be our speaker at this month's meeting.

Purple Line Update

The Residential Wayne Ave. Working Group, with members from four civic associations and other area groups, has worked since 2013 to make the Purple Line better and safer for the communities along Wayne Ave. The group's recently issued a status report can be found on the SOECA listserv and will be posted on the SOECA website. Here is a summary of the 8-page report.

Status of areas of focus:

* Pedestrian safety: The community urgently needs to press on this issue. Despite neighborhood requests, there is no comprehensive plan and no budget for such a plan.

* Expansion of the Wayne & Dale intersection: The County insists that for traffic safety reasons, it must let the State go ahead with nearly doubling the width of Wayne at Dale, while neighbors are worried about schoolchildren using lengthy crosswalks. The County plans a meeting soon to seek input.

* 13-foot retaining wall at Wayne & Dale: The neighborhood, which objects, and the County/State are at an impasse because if the intersection is widened, the wall is needed to support the school's parking lot.

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**Next meeting:
Tuesday, Jan. 12
7:30 – 9:30 pm
Silver Spring International
Middle School Cafeteria**

AGENDA

**7:30 – 8:30: Councilmember Tom
Hucker**

8:30: Discussion on changing SOECA dues to be due in October. Current concerns, such as Purple Line, traffic.

In this issue:

Purple Line update

Water Watchdogs Tree Canopy Initiative BRT advisory committee Oct. 27 minutes

The next Thursday evening contra dances at the Civic Building are on Jan. 14 and Feb. 11, 7:00 – 10:00. All dances are taught; come early for the 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.

* Power substations near homes: A better location for the Wayne Ave. substation may have been found, but not for the Flower Ave./Arliss St. substation.

* Utility pole mitigation along Wayne Ave.: County Executive Leggett's aides say he will work with the utilities to find ways to prevent a forest of poles when light rail poles are added to our streets.

* Removal of trees along Wayne Ave.: Current plans will result in removal of all trees between Fenton St. and Sligo Creek, including those at the school. After County pressure, MTA has agreed to have an arborist review the plans and give special instructions to digging crews. Residents also want a replanting plan and budget, neither of which now exists for Wayne – although those plans exist for other neighborhoods

* Stormwater runoff into Sligo Creek: The community is concerned that stormwater runoff would be compensated by mitigation far from Wayne Ave., thereby failing to protect the Creek.

* Imbalance of mitigation investments across the County: The neighborhood insists that funding for mitigating the effects of the PL must be equitable with what is being budgeted for other parts of the County.

Maintaining the area's residential character:

The downtown to Sligo Creek stretch is unique along the route as the only residential stretch where the PL will share lanes with cars within 30 ft. of private homes and front yards. Nowhere else in the US do light rail cars as large as the Purple Line's (nearly 100 ft.) share lanes in such a compact residential setting. (The H Street line in DC uses 66-ft. cars.) To help make the PL compatible with the neighborhood, the community is asking the State to build in more protection from the predictable effects than it has to date.

Participants in the dialog:

Civics and citizens: Park Hills CA, SOECA, East Silver Spring CA, Sligo-Branview CA, Sligo Creek PTA, SSIMS PTSA, Friends of Sligo Creek, Silver Spring Library Advisory Committee. Area residents have voiced opinions individually on numerous occasions, but only in larger groups have they had any effect.

Elected officials:

* The greatest help has been from Ike Leggett and his staff, creating county-wide platforms to work on solutions and to mediate when impasses are reached.

* Congressman Chris Van Hollen has been helpful and an honest broker, giving valuable advice; staff members have monitored the process and attended every important meeting.

* Senator Barbara Mikulski has done the same.

* County Council involvement has been limited to a few members, voicing encouragement but with no engagement like that from Leggett and his staff, despite the Council's potential influence with the State and authority in County issues like the environment. Staff from the offices of Marc Elrich, Hans Riemer, and Tom Hucker have been consistent observers.

* Our state legislative delegation (District 20): Several have listened, but none has taken any action with this State-level public works project. Their low level of involvement is disproportionate to the impact of the PL on this area.

Next steps:

* The MTA is reviewing four bids. The contract should be awarded, and construction started, in 2016.

* The County plans to hold a meeting in early 2016 for input on the enlargement of the Wayne & Dale intersection, and the Civics will publicize the date when it is set.

* The winning bidder is required to form a community input process during construction. There is no clarity on what they are supposed to do with that input.

Water Watchdogs

The Friends of Sligo Creek **Water WatchDogs** (WWD) citizen pollution reporting system, headed by Anne Vorce, monitors Sligo Creek and its tributaries for runoff events from sites throughout the SOECA neighborhoods and downtown. Anyone can use WWD to report problems to the Dept. of Permitting Services (DPS). If you see a runoff problem or other pollution, email WWD at ReportSligoPollution@fosc.org. It will be relayed directly to DPS.

BRT Advisory Committee

Lori Zeller is SOECA's representative on the Corridor Advisory Committee (CAC) studying bus rapid transit (BRT) on Colesville Rd. (US29) from the Transit Center to New Hampshire Ave. The CAC is not a voting or decision-making body, but a forum for soliciting community input.

Lori reports that there have been two meetings of our CAC since her last report. The first, in September, was an optional meeting which presented a background of regional transportation planning and modeling. For documents and video from that session, see the section for Meeting #4 at bit.ly/1MwjH7Q.

The most recent meeting, on December 2, was a convening of the full CAC. The full agenda, presentation, handouts and video recording are available in the section for Meeting #5, also at bit.ly/1MwjH7Q. The official meeting notes have not yet been released, but will be linked to the same website.

County and State staff and contractors explained that there will be public meetings in spring 2016 to present the project purpose and need and conceptual alternatives and receive public comment. Participants then broke into small groups to discuss how they imagine BRT may look on our portion of US29, including concepts for running-way options (see presentation for images), station locations and other considerations. The CAC staff collected comments.

If you have questions or comments, please contact Lori at ZellerTransit@gmail.com.

Minutes of October 27 Meeting

Our guest was Officer Joy Patil of MCPD, who talked about public safety in the area. The area has been quiet, with some thefts from vehicles over the last 4 to 6 weeks and a couple arrests, and no burglaries since August. Thefts from vehicles are typically at night, while burglaries are mid-day. Thieves like to come in a back door and take things that are easy to carry. If you get, for instance, a new TV, don't announce it by leaving the box at the curb overnight – and write down the model and serial number. Thieves don't like conflict, so if someone knocks, make sure they know you are home. If they ask for someone who doesn't live there, they may be casing the neighborhood, so give the police a call. The police offer free home security surveys to check doors (e.g., is there dry rot around the frame?), windows (double panes are a good deterrent), locks, etc. Get to know your neighbors, be observant, and read the listserv. Motion sensors, alarm systems, and dogs (even ankle-biters) are good to have.

There have been some traffic complaints around schools. Go slow near Dartmouth & Greenwich and Schuyler & Greenwich where students are being dropped off; don't park too close to driveways (5 ft.), hydrants (15 ft.), crosswalks (20 ft.), intersections (30 ft.), or on the wrong side of the street. Don't pass a schoolbus with its stop sign deployed except on a divided street; police get lots of complaints about that.

A range of questions and concerns came up.

* Are thieves using "smart keys" to steal from cars and re-lock them? The police haven't seen that. Thieves don't even use "slim jims." They try door handles as they walk down the street, or break out a window if they see something in the car.

* If you see someone doing that, who do you call? Call 911 if it's in progress – or if something else, like a fight, is about to happen.

* When should we call County vs. Park police? Call MCPD first; the response is faster. They will call Park

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Police if needed; they're on the same radio system. The departments have worked jointly on burglaries.

* Where are the new headquarters? New Hampshire Ave. and Rte. 29 in White Oak. There is also a police office in the firehouse on Georgia Ave.

Traffic issues also came up, particularly regarding enforcement at stop signs, regulation (or lack thereof) of dumpster placement, and problems with getting the County DOT to respond. SOECA is setting up a traffic committee to deal with this area.

Kathleen Samiy updated us on Water Watchdogs, [see above]. They are producing materials and planning workshops to inform people of what to look for.

Kathleen also updated us on the tree canopy initiative started in 2014 by a group of SOECA members. The initiative led to the planting of 150 trees on private property, with 35 to 50 more trees to come, which exhausts the funds for those plantings. For trees on County right-of-way, the DOT program is slow, but may get under way next spring.

Past President Jean Cavanaugh added that ash trees are threatened by the emerald ash borer. Trees can be saved with a particular pesticide. The County is preparing a public information campaign; meanwhile, if you have an ash tree, consult an arborist.

Jean also gave us a short update on efforts to mitigate the effects of the Purple Line if it is built.

Treasurer David Hartmann reported that the SOECA checking account holds \$6278.86. There are two new member households, one on Pershing Dr. and another in the Chelsea Heights development. David suggests that we should have an outreach program, such making sure that each house is invited to our social events.

David proposed that we make dues due in October – members who join after April or so would pay half – which would make things simpler for him. How to transition to this system is still to be determined. We will put this topic in the agenda for the next meeting.

President Jonathan Shurberg reported that SOECA has drafted a letter to County Executive Ike Leggett to have the neighborhood traffic plan of 1993 reinforced, with copies Councilmember Tom Hucker and possibly to the County DOT. This activity is prompted by, among other concerns, the reconfiguration by EYA [the Chelsea Heights developer] of Ellsworth between the old Library and Cedar St., which removed the barrier that should force traffic to turn right onto Cedar.

Vice-President Tina Guina used this discussion as an opportunity to invite people to participate in SOECA's newly-formed traffic committee.

Seven Oaks Evanswood

Citizens Association

Silver Spring, Maryland

www.soecla.org

SOECA officers

Jonathan Shurberg, President

Jean Cavanaugh, Past President

Rachel Bowers, 1st Vice President

Tina Guina, 2nd Vice President

Tom Armstrong, Secretary

David Hartmann, Treasurer

Resident volunteers

Jonathan Bernstein, Listserv & web site manager, SSCAB rep

Lori Zeller, BRT Committee rep

Contact SOECA:

soeca.board@gmail.com

Two ways to join SOECA's listserv:

1) Via email:

- Send an email to 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 or soeca@yahoogroups.com.

SOECA Membership Form

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

David Hartmann, SOECA Treasurer, 407 Ellsworth Drive, Silver Spring, MD 20910

Name: _____ Today's Date: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: Home _____ Cell _____ Email _____

Send an email to 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.