



March 2019 Issue

Our next meeting will be Wednesday, March 13, from 7-9pm in the Media Center at Silver Spring International Middle School.

Upcoming 2019 SOECA Membership Meeting Dates

Wednesday, March 13, 2019 from 7-9 PM, Media Center, Silver Spring International Middle School

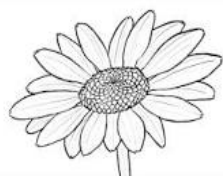
Wednesday, May 8, 2019 from 7-9 PM

March Meeting Highlights

As we go to press, the agenda for part of our membership meeting on Wednesday, March 13 is still fluid. We are hoping for a discussion with County Officials; while invitations have been extended, we are still waiting on acceptances. Once the agenda is complete, we will announce it on the listserv and on the website (About -> Announcements).

Our business meeting will include several important items:

1. We will vote on amendments to SOECA's bylaws. Amendments have been proposed by a Bylaw Task Force established last summer. The proposed changes have been circulated on the Listserv, posted to SOECA's website, distributed at the January meeting, and copies will be available at the March meeting.
2. Jean Cavanaugh will review traffic calming measures for Sligo Creek Parkway. See January meeting minutes for more details.
3. Elaine Ellis will discuss some ideas she has been working on to strengthen Montgomery County's zoning laws.



CELEBRATE SPRING AT SOECA'S HAPPY HOUR ON MARCH 27TH

Join us on Wednesday, March 27 from 5-8 PM at Mrs. K's, downstairs in the back room (the Chef's Room). It's time to get together at our old favorite, Mrs. K's, in the downstairs bar, with a separate back room set up just for us! SOECA is providing free munchies from the wonderful bar menu, and all drinks are priced for happy hour, available for purchase at the bar. We have extended the hours so more can join us. No need to sign up or RSVP for the Happy Hour, just save the date and come on over!

SOECA Officers

Michael Bufalini, President
Onuka Ibe, Vice President
Chris Reynolds, Vice President
David Hartmann, Treasurer
Kristen Conte, Secretary

Agenda for March Meeting

1. Featured Speakers:
 - a. County Executive Marc Elrich (invited)
 - b. Councilmember Tom Hucker (invited)
2. Business Meeting:
 - a. Approve Agenda
 - b. Approve Minutes
 - c. Treasurer's Report
 - d. Review and Vote on Revised SOECA Bylaws
 - e. Review and Vote on resolution in favor of traffic calming measures on Sligo Creek Parkway
 - f. Discussion of zoning law changes
 - g. Announcements and Committee Reports
 - h. New Business
 - i. Adjourn

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.

MINUTES OF JANUARY 26, 2019 MEETING

Michael Bufalini welcomed everyone and introduced the first speaker of the day – Ms. Ann English, RainScapes Program Manager, Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Ms. English noted that most development in our area pre-dates the County's stormwater management laws, and, therefore, DEP must work with private homeowners in our area to reduce runoff. RainScapes address the stormwater management problem by converting yard and impervious surfaces into functional spaces that soak up rainwater. RainScapes provide multiple benefits for homeowners and the community, such as habitat and food sources for wildlife; decreased maintenance for homeowners; emphasis on use of native plants; improved water quality; introduction of interesting and unusual landscaping features; among other benefits. The County has a rebate program that helps cover the costs of qualifying projects. RainScapes are one way to help with stormwater runoff, but there are other strategies that the County encourages and supports with grant funds, such as conservation landscaping, green roofs, rain barrels, and cisterns.

Next Mr. Edmundo Vasquez and Ms. Susan Cook-Patton discussed a Mosquito Abatement Project being planned by a group of SOECA residents. The project asks homeowners to install mosquito traps on their property in order to reduce the local mosquito population and reduce the number of viable larva throughout the spring and summer. The Sligo Park Hills neighborhood was able to reduce its mosquito population last summer by 80% using these same traps. The traps cost about \$25 each, require minimal maintenance throughout the season, can be reused from year-to-year, and present no risks to people or other animals. Neighbors interested in participating in the project should contact Susan Cook-Patton at cookpatton@gmail.com as soon as possible. Ms. Cook-Patton and Mr. Vasquez asked SOECA to consider serving as a fiscal agent for the project by purchasing the traps and collecting payments from participants. The project also needs to purchase a BG-Sentinel Trap to measure the effectiveness of the project; this piece of equipment costs about \$400.00.

At the conclusion of the presentations, a business meeting was held.

Meeting agenda was approved by unanimous vote.

Minutes of last meeting approved by unanimous vote.

Treasurer's Report: Balance in checking account is \$10,862.54. Expenses in September through December time period were dues to Montgomery County Civic Federation (\$65); September Happy Hour (\$233.45); September Newsletter and meeting room rental (\$246.67); Application for EIN (\$245); and October Block Party (\$260.14, net -- \$670 in Income and \$930.14 in Expense). The Treasurer's Report was approved by unanimous vote.

Volunteer Recognition: Michael Bufalini thanked the SOECA Social Committee for the events it had planned for the neighborhood this year.

New Business: Jean Cavanaugh reported that neighbors living on and near Sligo Creek parkway continue to be concerned about traffic safety issues. She announced that the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission changed the allowable gross vehicle weight (GVW) limit for commercial traffic on Sligo Creek Parkway from 2,000 pounds GVW to 10,000 pounds GVW. This has resulted in more commercial trucks of a larger size on the Parkway since the changes were put in place last year. Such heavy traffic on such a small, winding road presents increased safety risks for pedestrians and bicyclists and is causing increased vibrations which are disturbing wildlife. Of special concern are the students from Sligo Creek Elementary School and Silver Spring International Middle School that must walk along and cross Sligo Creek Parkway when going to and from school. She seeks SOECA support for the following goals:

1. Reduce gross vehicle weight to 7,000 pounds (this limit would still allow for personally-owned trucks and vans, and correspond with restrictions on similar County roads, such as Franklin Avenue and Bonifant Street).
2. Limit allowable trucks to 4 wheels.
3. Add additional traffic calming and pedestrian safety measures on the portions of Sligo Creek Parkway that fall within SOECA's boundaries.
4. Increase enforcement of traffic on Sligo Creek Parkway.

Jean will draft a resolution expressing SOECA's support for these measures for discussion and vote at the March 2019 membership meeting.

Elaine Ellis discussed the need for Montgomery County to adopt new laws to govern development within neighborhoods. At present, developers are not required to disclose possible negative impacts of a development on existing neighboring properties. Ms. Ellis believes a new law is needed to require this protection for existing homeowners. Mr. Bufalini said this item will be added to the agenda for the March 2019 membership meeting.

Proposed Changes to SOECA's Bylaws: Onuka Ibe, member of the SOECA Bylaw Task Force, discussed the proposed changes to the Bylaws. The Bylaws currently contain several formal requirements that don't match the reality of how the organization functions. Before reviewing the suggested amendments, he noted that there were no changes made to our dues structure, membership requirements, and membership voting structure. Substantive changes include:

- Updating the fiscal year to match the articles of incorporation,
- Leaving open the possibility of delivering the SOECA newsletter electronically, rather than physically, in the future (there are no plans to make that change, at present),
- Clarifying the roles of the various officers and streamlining the nominations process before officer elections,
- Eliminating specific (and outdated) requirements about the number and timing of meetings and a number of "standing committees" (we are not creating or eliminating any committees, just removing mention of particular committees from the bylaws to allow the officers more flexibility to align committees with current needs), and
- Altering the language around making amendments to the bylaws in order to allow us to vote on all the changes at once, rather than having to vote on each Article's changes individually.

The proposed amendments have been made available via the Listserv, website, and in print at this meeting and will be made available at the March meeting. If SOECA members have any questions about the proposed changes, they should contact the Executive Committee at soeca.board@gmail.com.

One member questioned the changes relating to the number of membership meetings to be held each year and how much prior notice is required for amending the Bylaws. He will email more detail about his issues to the SOECA board before the March meeting. Another member mentioned that SOECA's boundaries may be disputed by Park Hills Citizens' Association. She suggested a discussion with Chris Richardson to clarify the issues.

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 5:05 pm.

PET WASTE DISPOSAL IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

(Adapted with permission from Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection Website)

No one likes to find dog poop on the ground. It smells, makes parks and sidewalks look bad, and if you're not careful, can be tracked into your home on your shoes.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, dogs can serve as the hosts for up to 65 diseases that can be transmitted to humans; and every time it rains, dog waste left on the ground makes its way to our waterways causing elevated levels of bacteria in our rivers and streams! Studies have found that 20% of the bacteria contaminating some waterways can be traced back to the digestive system of dogs.

Rock Creek, Cabin John, and Anacostia watersheds in Montgomery County currently have elevated levels of bacteria.

Every pet owner plays a part in preventing water pollution in our rivers and streams. Responsible pet owners pick up after their pets, both at home and on public land.

Many people train their dogs to take care of business in their backyards. Make sure your backyard is cleaned regularly so that the dogs are not stepping on their own waste while in the yard and then bringing bacteria inside your home.

Bagged dog waste can be placed in your household trash for pick up during your regular trash day. Remember to make sure it is bagged appropriately to prevent odors or any other issues.

Please do not throw bagged pet waste in storm drains, leave it on the ground, toss it in someone else’s trash/recycling container, or toss it in the woods.

Of Special Interest to our Members in Chelsea Heights: Montgomery County's Pet Waste Management Program for Homeowner Associations

The MC Department of Environmental Protection is collaborating with homeowner associations, educating the community, and installing pet waste stations in common areas managed by the HOAs.

In the end, it is a win-win situation. Bacteria issues caused by pet waste are addressed and the community benefits from not having pet waste left on the ground. Imagine poop free play areas for all!

Since December 2014, 100 pet waste stations have been installed and about 68,000 pounds of waste has been collected through this program. Imagine that – more than 34 tons of poop!

Homeowner Associations Eligibility criteria:

- Located in Montgomery County.
- Currently do not have a pet waste management program
- Interested in having a pet waste management program

Eligible HOAs will receive:

- Onsite evaluation

- Outreach materials
- Depending on the extent of the issue, a certain number (to be decided with the HOA) of pet waste stations. The stations will be maintained up to a year. All for free!
- At the end of the year, the HOA can decide to adopt the stations by taking over the maintenance.

To learn more about the program, please contact Ana Arriaza, MC DEP at ana.arriaza@montgomerycountymd.gov.

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 – Vacant
- Old Library Site – Steve Peck
- Purple Line CAT and Wayne Avenue Working Group – Erin Johansson
- Safety Committee – Lynn Bailes
- Silver Spring Citizens’ Advisory Board Representative – Jonathan Bernstein
- Social Committee– Lynn and Ted Grodzki
- Technology Committee – Jonathan Bernstein
- Traffic Committee – Jean Cavanaugh

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 and home addresses are not shared.