

SOECA MEETING MINUTES: November 14th, 2019

Prepared by Claire Zietz

31 in attendance.

Meeting agenda was approved by unanimous vote.

Minutes of last meeting were approved by unanimous vote.

Treasurer's Report: Balance in the checking account is \$10,035.48, a high for the year due to membership renewal. Expenses September through November included the November 2019 newsletter and room rental (\$319.60), annual block party (\$701.42) Note: the raffle during the block party brought in \$353; and a \$25 donation to the Prezco listserv migration to Google Groups. There are 17 new member households this year so far. The Treasurer's Report was approved by unanimous vote.

Announcements:

- Michael Buffalini: attended a Montgomery County meeting to address the large effort of up-and-coming county pedestrian safety plans and is happy to share details with others if they contact him. To note: Mcatlas-org.pedplan has a map of at risk areas. An advisory committee is forming for interested citizens.

New Business/Committee Reports: None.

SPEAKERS

TOPIC: Resolution for increased safety at Sligo Creek Elementary School and Silver Spring International Middle School

Two neighbors made a presentation to the group concerning overall pedestrian safety issues and a specific incident in September at the crosswalk at Dale Drive and Dartmouth Avenue, where a neighborhood child was almost struck by a car while walking home from school. It is a concern that the crosswalk is difficult to see due to the hill approach from both sides. Matters will only be compounded by the Purple Line construction detour for several months in 2020.

With an inconsistent and high speed limit on Dale and the fact that there are no notices of the upcoming crosswalk, the group is seeking changes: they have formed a parent group which has been in touch with a number of local groups and individuals, including Purple Line construction. Jean Kavanaugh has been an advisor. They requested SOECA support and backing to move forward and get action.

Montgomery County is said to have a plan to limit any dangerous pedestrian occurrences by 2030 but that does not include any special protection for this specific intersection, especially during the Purple Line construction.

During the open session, neighbors spoke in support of this, citing other occurrences and attempts at working with the county on safety for this area. There were suggestions from the representatives and SOECA members such as a hawk beacon, establishing a standardized, safe speed limit, clear signage, etc.

A middle school student spoke up to say that she walks there every morning and afternoon and saw a three year old almost get hit.

The president of Park Hills association was present and spoke in support of the resolution. He also mentioned that Woodside Park Association may join as well to get a concerted effort.

David Hartmann read an email from another neighbor who has spent much time getting the county to use stamped color concrete throughout our neighborhood to try and help with the traffic effort and suggested this as a possibility for help.

Tom Hucker, District 5 Councilmember who was present, was asked to comment: he spoke of the section of Dale between Georgia and Colesville as an example, which was mostly a grassroots led effort that ended up seeing positive results. He suggested he could hold a hearing on it, as a worksession, as he chairs the safety committee.

The resolution was put forth to the membership. It was approved by unanimous vote.

To become involved in this effort as it moves forward, please reach out to Michael Janson at Daledrivetrafficsafety@gmail.com .

TOPIC: Centronia Center planned for the old Silver Spring Library property

Jonathan Genn spoke to the group as a representative of the Gudelsky Family. The family plans to repurpose the former Silver Spring Library site as an early child care and education facility for 0 – 5 years old, centering on 125-50 families with financial need. Anticipated hours of operation could range from 6am to 10pm.

History: in 2016 Montgomery County issued a request for proposal for this repurposing, and the Gudelsky Family plan, in partnership with Centronia, was selected.

While the organization has not yet had access to the building, plans are being prepared for the exact details of layout of the building, new addition, parking needs, etc, with an anticipated completion date at the end of 2021 or early 2022.

They are focusing on preserving the façade, which dates back to 1957. The space in front of the building will remain green. The space on the side of the dog park is also anticipated to be preserved. Centronia-designed gardens (they utilize a garden-to-table food prep plan for the children) as well as an outdoor playground will be on the property.

In addition to early childhood care and education during the weekdays, they also anticipate having assembly rooms available outside of those hours for intergenerational activities.

They are sensitive to the pedestrian safety concerns and will have traffic analysis and reports done as they proceed with the plans.

During a question and answer session, neighbor Jonathan Miller, member of the board of Chelsea Heights, voiced concern about a likely increase in traffic through their neighborhood. Other neighbors asked about pedestrian safety issues and availability of parking at the lot near the dog park.

Mr. Genn stated that during their upcoming planning process, they will conduct a traffic study to inform their planning, as they are only now beginning the process. There were many requests for the Gudelsky Family to keep SOECA involved with results of traffic studies and plans as they are developing.

To contact Jonathan Genn for any questions or comments, email him at jonathan@percontee.com.

TOPIC: Presentation by Councilmember Tom Hucker

Tom Hucker, District 5 Council member, spoke to the group of his background, history, and accomplishments. He has been on the council for five years and currently serves on the Environmental and Transportation committees. He has authored and passed over 50 bills, many environmentally focused (such as regulating the amount of lead in Montgomery County public and school drinking water and pesticide laws), and most recently on tenant rights, solar bills, and the highway plan.

After his talk, he conducted an extensive question and answer session around such topics as small cell tower legislation, tenant laws, pedestrian safety, universal pre-k, the tear-down tax, Purple Line safety issues, and school safety. Mr. Hucker mentioned that he could create a few committees for the above mentioned issues, and spoke about extending the hearing/town hall meeting he proposes for local pedestrian safety to expand it to include Purple Line issues as well.

There being no further business, Mr. Bufalini adjourned the meeting at 8:44pm