

SOECA MEETING MINUTES: March 11th, 2020

Prepared by Claire Zietz

22 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 \$10,230.70. Expenses between December 2019 through February 2020 included food for the SOECA neighborhood Social Event at Astro Lab Brewery in February for \$193.87. The Treasurer's Report was approved by unanimous vote.

Announcements:

- Current President Michael Bufalini announced that there will be SOECA Board elections at the next meeting in May. He will not seek reelection as President. Please get in touch with the Board if you would like to participate or know anyone who would: soeca.board@gmail.com

New Business/Committee Reports:

- None

TOPIC: Neighborhood volunteer-based support group for those in need

Two neighbors spoke about a concern for those who might need help, especially during this Covid 19 pandemic. A volunteer-based group was proposed to help citizens and reach out efforts to neighbors.

The SOECA Board agreed to send out this information via email and to distribute a flyer to the community.

Another neighbor pointed out that organizations such as Silver Spring Village and Silver Spring Timebank might be useful partners and could overlap support.

The two neighbors will share information via listserv on how they would like to proceed, once details are decided and volunteers sign up.

To become involved in this effort as it moves forward, please reach out to soecanh@gmail.com.

SPEAKER: Evan Glass, County Councilmember at Large

Mr. Glass spoke first about Coronavirus. At a county executive meeting he had recently attended, he relayed concerns and actions already being taken. For example, many colleges

have already cancelled classes, but are still deciding what to do with the issue of Spring Break. At the time of the meeting, those at MCPS (Montgomery County Public Schools) had not yet made a decision on closures. Worries were voiced about what could happen to the public and private sector if parents had to stay at home to care for their children if those classes were cancelled.

He suggested that we sign up for text message or email alerts from both the state and county. For the state of Maryland visit: <https://www.mtmarylandalerts.com/LoginC.aspx>
For Montgomery County visit:
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/oemhs/alertmontgomery/>
His own newsletter can be signed up for here: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/glass/>

Mr. Glass then spoke of his time so far (15 months) of serving on the council. He has effected changes for the Montgomery Pay Equity Act, expanded the Kids Ride Free program for the bus system, and has many pending legislations including for economic development.

During the question and answer session, there was a question about public transportation: will bus service and metro buses be reduced with the introduction of Flash Buses (for example, near Sligo Creek and Colesville Road). Yes, service will be reduced but not all the details have been decided. A reconfiguration of bus lines has been proposed and a FLASH service for rapid transit down Route 29. Mr. Glass spoke of his work on multiple public transportation issues and how he is working with organizations against monetary cuts to service. He has already gotten a few services restored, but needs help from the public. He has a petition online and encourages people to sign and leave comments: <https://www.ipetitions.com/petition/stop-the-bus-cuts-1>.

A question was posited on what the statistics are for the changes to be viable, especially the FLASH service. Mr. Glass said there is an analysis that will be shared later this month.

A neighbor asked about plans for the bike network. Mr. Glass said there are plans in place but issues due to the utilities (such as Pepco) work that is going on. Since he serves on both the Transportation Committee and Health and Human Services Committee, he is speaking with constituents and taking input. He has taken notes from the disability community concerning floating bus stops and the color of the bike infrastructure, and will take that information back to the committees to make further improvements.

Another neighbor asked about Coronavirus and the school system. Mr. Glass said that the superintendent is making decisions and taking into account students, parents, and employees. We should expect to hear news soon.

A neighbor asked about the Purple Line: who is providing oversight of this monetary and budget part of the project? Mr. Glass commented that he felt this has been an issue from the beginning which he has tried to bring up with the Purple Line multiple times. As of yet, he does not have a solid answer. Another neighbor said there could be ways to impose oversight and environmental review, working with such organizations as the Sierra Club. Mr. Glass said that there are those who are leading efforts to help with this issue, but as of now he said there is still work to do with there being no recourse.

A question was asked about expanding the council and getting rid of at-large seats. Mr. Glass said that while some people do not like the makeup of the council, he believes at-large members play a good role of balance and to make sure there are multiple points of contact. There do not appear to be any actions pending for any changes.

There being no further business, Mr. Bufalini adjourned the meeting at 8:30pm.