



SEVEN OAKS –EVANSWOOD CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

of Silver Spring, Maryland

NEXT MEETING:

**Thurs. Jan 14th,
2010**

**7:30 – 9:00 p.m.,
at the**

Silver Spring Library

AGENDA

- Khursheed Bilgrami,
County Traffic
Operations Engineer, on
Dale Dr/Colesville Rd
Intersection

Improvements

- First Baptist Church
property development:
Representatives of
Lakritz Adler Real
Estate Investments,
developers of the First
Baptist Church property

Business Meeting:

Old Business:

Approval of Minutes

Treasurers Report

New Business

Adjourn by 9:30 p.m.

■ Happy New Year! –

- Our December meeting was cancelled due to both of the proposed speakers canceling (both rescheduled). The first speaker for our January meeting will be Mr. Khursheed Bilgrami, who will explain the County's planned improvements along Dale Drive. This will be followed by a presentation by the developers handling the property belonging to the First Baptist Church, along Fenton, bounded by Wayne and Bonifant. Some details on the proposed development are included within this newsletter; a comprehensive description will be provided at our meeting on Thursday, January 14th. We hope to see you there.

HOW TO JOIN SOECA'S LISTSERV:

There are two ways to join the SOECA Listserve:

(1) Via email

- Send an e-mail to: soeca-subscribe@yahoogroups.com with the word "subscribe" in the subject line.
- The ListServe moderator will email you asking for your name and address by response email and after this email exchange, the moderator will add you to the list-serve.
- You will then receive a confirmation e-mail from "Yahoo Groups" of your addition to the list-serve

(2) Via Yahoo Groups at <http://groups.yahoo.com/> (if you already have, or will set up, a free yahoo id)

- 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 the group, and click "Join" at the bottom.
- The ListServe moderator will email you asking for your name and address by a personal response email and after this email exchange, the moderator will add you to the list-serve.
- You will then receive a confirmation e-mail from "Yahoo Groups" of your addition to the list-serve

You can post a message to the community by sending an e-mail to:

soeca@egroups.com or soeca@yahoogroups.com (Note that it can sometimes take several minutes for your post to be visible so please wait before sending the message again thinking it didn't get through.)

Future SOECA Meetings:

- Thursday, March 4
- Tuesday, April 20
- Wednesday, May 26

SOECA MINUTES OCTOBER 29, 2009

Meeting was called to order at 7:40 pm by Mark Gabriele.

Announcement: The Executive Committee sent out the newsletter electronically to a self-selected newsletter distribution list. It will be sent out in the usual paper format next time. Please make sure your email address is correct for the email distribution list. Send an email to the newsletter distribution email (soeca.newsletter@gmail.com) if you want to receive the newsletter electronically.

Silver Spring Regional Center. Reemberto Rodriguez, the new director of the SSRC, reviewed downtown priorities, changes and issues. There are five regional centers in the county. SSRC is the smallest. SSRC covers a region south of Beltway, including Takoma Park and Four Corners.

Mr. Rodriguez grew up in Atlanta GA and lived there almost 40 years of his life. He is an urban planner and architect by training and worked for Neighborworks America (www.nw.org) which works with communities throughout the country, including Montgomery County, on affordable housing and community engagement. Mr. Rodriguez moved to East Silver Spring by choice. He was on the board of Impact Silver Spring.

Mr. Rodriguez commented on many community activities around Silver Spring. He noted Community Service Day where he saw young people creating an "inspiration wall" in collaboration with the new Medication Museum located next to Pyramid Atlantic. Mr. Rodriguez urged us all to say "thank you" when we see one of the 35 men and women wearing red shirts around downtown Silver Spring. They are the Urban District Team of SSRC and keep SS clean and safe.

Mr. Rodriguez mentioned the unveiling last October of the new SS Library exterior design. He mentioned October's food drive and a "Neighbors Campaign" in Long Branch, a kind of "door knocking with empathy to connect with folks, see what their gifts might be."

Mr. Rodriguez then discussed the physical development of Silver Spring.

1. Civic Building. This should be completed summer 2010. The Veterans Plaza should be a premier experience. The Civic Building will be our community's living room and patio, a gathering place where we bump into each other, convene, talk things through.
2. New Library. This project should break ground early summer 2010. The Buildings at Fenton and Wayne will be knocked down before January 2010. Most people don't know the library is going there.
3. Metro Transit Center. There was a slowdown in construction because of deep utilities. Now things are back on track. The transit center wants private development, but it is not happening in this economy.

Questions: What kind of incentives is SSRC offering to small businesses to come to SS? How can we spruce up the business district?

Mr. Rodriguez: In Fenton Village, the existing small businesses are the heart and soul of what's there. Economic times are tough. Coffee and the Fenton Street Market are two opportunities for new business. Living Ruff has been successful through word of mouth advertising. The County's economic development program does offer some level of assistance. We can help by supporting the Buy Local effort.

Questions: What about the ice skating rink: will it open this winter?

Mr. Rodriguez: No, the ice skating rink won't open this season.

Question: Will there be a skate park at Georgia and Spring Street?

Mr. Rodriguez: Yes, Park and Planning in response to youth requests, are meeting next Wednesday night about a skate park. The County is installing a temporary skateboard park. It might open in January 2010. Skaters did serious damage to Discovery Building and plaza. Will the park alleviate some of those tension points? Maybe.

Question: What about naming the Civic Center?

Mr. Rodriguez: This is a contentious issue. The working name until further notice is "Silver Spring Civic Building at Veterans Plaza."

Question: In the context of much more development coming to DTSS (Purple Line, the possibility of a Dale Drive station, high density development to follow, DTSS only one third completed, increasing traffic), we hope your office can pay more attention to these issues.

Mr. Rodriguez: Thanks for highlighting these critical pieces. Development always evolving. The pace over the last 15 years has been fast. The Third District Police Station is moving. The Purple Line piece is huge, and connection to growth policy is a good point. My understanding is the Purple Line (PL) will not imply that the development at neighborhood stations will be different than currently allowed. There are battles to be fought, to guard against development. I understand there is more input to be gathered about the possibility of a PL station at Dale and Wayne.

Question: The MTA has not been honest in its promotion of the PL (brochures showing green canopied streets, people strolling by). In reality, there won't be mature trees, or space to stroll. The Wayne Ave garage and Whole Foods parking lot are already difficult to exit during rush hour. What will happen when trains are going by a few feet away?

Mr. Rodriguez: There is a Town Hall Meeting at Takoma Middle School with Ike Leggett next week (November 12). This is a good opportunity to voice our concerns. If you have specific questions, please email me. I will stay on it until there is complete resolution. The quality of life issue is vital. silver.spring@montgomerycountymd.gov

Chelsea School Sale. Mark Gabriele announced that the Chelsea School is up for sale. The school is considering moving to Prince George's County since all of its students are currently from PG and DC. Tony Messina, headmaster, will keep SOECA informed of any progress on that sale. Chelsea School does not own the properties facing Cedar Ave.

Rain Gardens. Jean Cavanaugh summarized consultations on storm water abatement among a few of her neighbors and a Friends of Sligo Creek representative, pursuant to the guest speaker on rain gardens several months ago. A few SOECA residents on Worth Ave. are discussing with FOESC methods to absorb storm water before it reaches Sligo Creek. The walk through with expert Diane Cameron highlighted a variety of opportunities to absorb storm water, including rain gardens or variations.

SOECA resident Elaine Ellis expressed opposition to rain gardens. Please see her memo inserted in the newsletter below.

Jean reiterated FOSC's assurance that any storm water abatement project including rain gardens are done only when residents and homeowners volunteer to participate. Mark reassured those assembled that no unwanted FOSC rain gardens would be initiated in SOECA. SOECA's role is to inform and educate members on topics of concern to the community.

Procedural: Those present unanimously approved the minutes from the September 22, 2009 minutes.

Treasurer's report. The current balance in the checking account is \$5,437.53 as of October 29, 2009. The CD is worth \$2,220.17 and will mature on November 22 2009. Interest is 0.25%. We have one new member household since the September 22 meeting – Andrew and Donalda Barnes at 711 Woodside Parkway. Woodside Parkway neighbors, please welcome our new neighbors.

New Business. Greg Lewis, the Executive Director of the Washington Revels announced they had moved into their new building on Dale Drive at Dartmouth two weeks ago. He asked if it is possible for an organization to join SOECA. The Revels will announce their Open House soon.

Move to adjourn unanimously approved at 9:30 pm

CURRENT NEWS

First Baptist Church Property at Wayne, Fenton, and Bonifant within Neighborhood to Become Multi-Use Development

Developers for the First Baptist Church property on the east side of Fenton Street (that is, neighborhood side) between Wayne Avenue and Bonifant Street will be filing development plans with the Planning Board early this year.

The current church and other buildings on the site presently owned by the church would be replaced by a two-building multi-use development. On Fenton between Wayne and Bonifant and stretching eastward will be a five-story structure, with approximately 200 apartment units, or condominium units, depending on the market. The westward (Fenton-side) half of the first floor of the building will be retail, with most of the stores opening up on Fenton across from the new Silver Spring Library and Purple Line station. The second building would be a new First Baptist Church, to be constructed on the eastern portion of the property. Between the two buildings would be a courtyard. The entrance to the church, although fronting on Wayne Avenue, would be from the courtyard on the western side of the church. Behind the church, on Bonifant Street, would be a playground for a day care center with a chain-link fence.

There would be underground parking in the residential/retail building, with approximately 90 to 100 parking spaces for apartment residents and approximately 15 handicapped spaces for the church. There would be no public parking in the garage by the public or church attendees other than for the handicapped spaces. The entrances to the residential building and the parking garage would both be on Bonifant, and there would be a loading dock on Bonifant.

Under current tentative plans, the residential/retail building will be approximately 60 feet high at the corner of Wayne and Fenton. The land slopes down from Wayne to Bonifant, and the building would be about 70 feet in height at the corner of Bonifant and Fenton. Along Bonifant, from Fenton back towards the residential neighborhood, the building height would run from 70 feet to about 66 feet. The

church would be 30 to 50 feet in height. Projected setbacks of the residential/retail building from the curb are 20 feet on Wayne and Fenton, and 15 feet on Bonifant.

The developer is Lakritz Adler of Washington, DC, and the architects are Torti Gallas of Silver Spring. The developer believes that if the project is approved, construction could begin in about two years and be completed within 16 months after that.

At a December 22 pre-submission-plan public meeting, announcing the proposed project, attended primarily by residents in the nearby residential neighborhood (both SOECA and East Silver Spring Civic Association), residents raised concerns about the neighborhood impact of the design elements on the Bonifant side of the project and whether the public use features of the project are adequate and practical.

2010 Vintage Silver Spring Calendar: This calendar is on sale now. This year's theme is "Then and Now" and the calendar features historic photos of Silver Spring accompanied by current photos of the sites. The cost is \$10, with proceeds benefiting the many programs sponsored by the Friends of the Library, Silver Spring Chapter. To get yours:

- * *Stop at the library*, 8901 Colesville Road Saturdays between 10-3 when Friends' volunteers will be selling them just inside the main entrance.
- * *Pre-paid pickup*. Send a check for \$10 per calendar to the Friends of the Library, Silver Spring Chapter, 8901 Colesville Road, Silver Spring, MD, 20910. Include your phone number or email address and we'll let you know when the calendar can be picked up at the Circulation Desk. (Though library employees are not permitted to handle money for the calendars - thus the prepaid pickup - they can give you a calendar that's paid for and being held for pickup.)
- * *By mail*. Send a check for \$12 per calendar (the additional \$2 is to cover postage) to the Friends of the Library, Silver Spring Chapter, 8901 Colesville Road, Silver Spring, MD, 20910. We'll mail the calendar out within 2-3 days after receiving your order.

Rain Gardens and Stormwater Abatement.

A team of activists in Friends of Sligo Creek (FOSC) are working together to implement a range of stormwater solutions emphasizing native plants and other ways to soak up rainwater. Sligo Creek's watershed – all the land that drains into Sligo Creek – comprises about 11 square miles in Southern Montgomery County; it includes about 19,000 single-family homes. Since most suburban lots include impervious roofs and driveways plus compacted clay soils, rainwater that hits these surfaces funnels quickly into Sligo Creek and then into the Anacostia River and the Chesapeake Bay. The stormwater hits the stream hard, causing streambank erosion, and

carrying pollutants including trash, oil and grease, and phosphorus.

SOECA's trees and gardens are helping to soak up stormwater, but some want to do more to keep stormwater from polluting Sligo Creek. **The FOSC stormwater team continues to seek opportunities throughout the SOECA neighborhood to build rain gardens and discuss other solutions** – please contact Diane Cameron (DCameron@audubonnaturalist.org) or Kit Gage (kgage@verizon.net) for more information.

The following letter to SOECA is being printed here at the request of its author:

Date: 10/29/2009
To: Seven Oaks Evanswood
Citizens Association (SOECA)
Cc: Mark Gabriele, Kathleen
Samiy, Jonathan Jay, Jean
Cavanaugh, Bill Kaupert
From: Elaine Ellis

In May 2009, SOECA provided its residents with a presentation on Rain Gardens. The presentation included an offer for free material and labor for homeowners to install a rain garden. SOECA homeowners interested in rain gardens were asked to coordinate walk through with a Friends of Sligo Creek (FOSC) rain garden expert. When I questioned Kit Gage, the guest speaker about whether or not the program was mandatory, she responded that it was not.

According to SOECA's September newsletter, the "*SOECA Board followed up with the community on FOSC's offer to help coordinate rain gardens, but only three people replied, not enough to bring FOSC out for consultations. FOSC needs to work with larger groups in a community.*

In September, my neighbor Sally Brown requested help from SOECA maintaining a public garden at the corner of Franklin Avenue and Ellsworth Drive. Mrs. Brown's original request was for help with landscaping and installing new plants around the stone pillars. Instead, she was steered towards installing a rain garden at this location. SOECA then coordinated a walk through on Saturday, October 24. Only, five neighbors participated. Yet, this small group of individuals seems to have presumed pre-maturely that the quadrant near Ellsworth, Hamilton and Worth would be good location for a pilot project to install rain garden and green streets that include public space. I am sure that the group's intentions are well meaning. But, this process is seriously flawed because it failed to include all the affected property owners in the decision-making process, and to provide information about potential adverse impacts.

SOECA should not unilaterally endorse and help implement projects that affect individual homeowners. Prior to SOECA's endorsement of a pilot program with any Montgomery County agency, **homeowners rightfully deserve a written response that specifically**

addresses, but is not limited to, the following information:

- Graphic design that illustrates total number #, locations, and dimensions (**surface area, ponding depth of rain garden surface, soil depth**) of each proposed "linear rain gardens next to a roadway?
- What are potential hazards from mosquitoes to humans (West Nile Virus), and pets (heartworms)?
- Would moisture from a rain garden affect the foundation of the historic stone pillars located at Franklin and Ellsworth?
- Are planned green streets *for "linear, skinny rain gardens next to a roadway*, wide enough for two-way traffic on proposed roadways? Currently, there is space for one car to pull to side of roadway while other cars pass by?
- Do homeowners lose any on-street parking from installation of "linear, skinny rain gardens, next to a roadway?
- Can swales be designed so that we continue to park along the grassy areas of public roadway?
- Are there any hazards during winter ice and snow from swales and skinny rain gardens next to a roadway?
- Are the narrow roads and cluster of homes near Ellsworth, Hamilton, and Worth Avenue most suitable place for a pilot rain garden project?
- Who is responsible for maintaining proposed pilot rain gardens next to public roadways?

Research from a recent rain garden study of Best Management Practices in Fairfax, Virginia cited key problems with filtering volume of storm water for which they were designed. Inadequate ponding depth was cited as most common problem that causes overflow, and lack of maintenance.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this matter and request for above listed information on proposed pilot program.

See

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/nvswcd/newsletter/rgresearch.htm#>

Editor's Note: As a point of clarification – SOECA neither sponsored, nor do we endorse, as this letter implies, any such project. The rain garden program presented by FOSC provides resources to assist individual

homeowners with construction of rain gardens to curb storm water runoff that adversely affects the Sligo Creek ecosystem. SOECA does endorse, in general, efforts to preserve and protect our watershed.

TO BECOME A MEMBER OF SOECA

Send this slip plus \$10 annual household dues (\$5 for senior citizens and single members) to: Bill Kaupert, SOECA Treasurer, 9222 Manchester Road, Silver Spring, MD 20901

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Would you like to receive this newsletter by email? Yes No *(please circle one)*

If yes, please print email address here: _____