

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

January Issue 2011

Seven Oaks Evanswood



CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION
SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND

January Meeting

For SOECA Residents

Monday, January 24

Silver Spring LIBRARY

7:30 — 9 pm

Basement Room

Note: Library Doors are closed and locked at 8 pm

(due to budget cuts)

Please arrive early.

AGENDA

7:00 Welcome & Greetings

7:35 Reports & Updates

- Dues Discussion
- Chelsea School Update
- Ellsworth Park Playground Renovation Task Force
- Lighting & Sidewalk Survey
- Zoning Re-Write
- Good Neighbor Awards

8:00 Land Use Presentations

8:00 First Baptist Church

8:40 SS Historical Society

8:55 Business Meeting:

- Membership Report
- Treasurers Report
- Approval of December 2010 Meeting Minutes
- New Business

9:00 Adjourn

SOECA Boundaries include: Colesville Road on the West, Cedar and Fenton Streets on the South, Bonifant and Wayne, on the East, and Franklin & Caroline Avenues on the North

Presenters: January 2011 Meeting

Josh Adler of Lakritz Adler Developers & John Torti of Torti Gallas Architects The First Baptist Church on Wayne Avenue across from Whole Foods has hired Lakritz Adler developer to build a multi-use residential and retail building on their property that includes the church, parking lots, and land from the corner of Fenton Street, to Wayne Avenue and Bonifant Streets. The existing church building will be replaced and a new church will be built on Wayne, further from the current corner site. Since the developers presented their first plans to SOECA at our January 2010 meeting, an SOECA/East Silver Spring Civic Association joint committee, including immediately impacted neighbors, have been in discussions with the developers and negotiated modifications. The developers and their architect will present their new plans.

Marci Stickle and George French, Silver Spring Historical Society The Silver Spring Historical Society and the Montgomery County Historical Society, with support from Montgomery Preservation, Inc. and other local historical societies have nominated the 1956 Art Deco First Baptist Church (Façade & Special Features) for Historic Preservation. The Church was designed by a leading regional and Silver Spring architect Roland S. Senseman (1912-2001.) The Historic Society will present their case for historic preservation.

SOECA Charrette: November 4, 2010

The final SOECA Charrette report by Urban Planners, John Marcolin and John Carter, with the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Department, will be posted on the SOECA website. If space allows it will be in the next newsletter.

Fillmore Music Hall

On January 4, 2011 the Silver Spring Regional Services Center held a meeting to discuss the **Parameters of Community Use of the Fillmore Music Hall for Non-Profits**; specifically who qualifies for discounted rates and use. This article gives the flavor of the discussion, but not a full or accurate account. <http://silverspring.patch.com/articles/non-profits-want-to-ensure-community-use-of-new-fillmore-music-venue>

Next Meeting: Monday, March 7, 2011 Silver Spring Library, 7:30 pm

Presenter: Barbara Hoover, www.ConservationMontgomery.org

This group is advocating for streams and water quality, storm water management and forest conservation, and advocating to reinstate the funds for our County Street Tree Program. See What's at Stake .

www.soeca.org | email: soeca.board@gmail.com

A Message to Our SOECA Community

By Bill Kaupert, SOECA Treasurer & Membership Man

As we embark on our journey through a new year, please permit me to offer a few observations, comments, and items of information for our newsletter readers.

Most of our members know that our Association's sole source of financial income consists of your annual dues- \$10.00 per household of two adults and \$5.00 for retired and single member households. (Several single and retired members still choose to pay full dues, which is much appreciated.)

Your dues permit our Association to maintain a treasury adequate to meet the demands of effectively representing our community locally, on the County level, and when necessary, before a State agency. Recent examples include: the Purple Line; the Chelsea School property; the crosswalks and bump-outs on Dale Drive; the character and quality of central Silver Spring amenities and public uses; the Springvale Terrace retirement properties; State plans for reconfiguration of important and failing traffic intersections; traffic calming devices on our streets; attempts to change local zoning laws that could negatively impact our community; membership and participation in umbrella citizen's organizations; liaison to, and coordination and participation with other Silver Spring and local advisory groups, Planning and Park Departments, and County Council on issues that directly impact our community; obtaining and reproducing documentation to support our position on issues; publication of our SOECA Newsletter (which can cost hundreds of dollars per issue for 750 households, depending on the number of pages; a Neighborhood Watch Program, fees for use of the Silver Spring Library and Civic Building meeting rooms; and other unforeseen expenses as they arise.

As you may surmise, a necessary human element is involved in each of the matters. Your elected SOECA president, vice-presidents, secretary, and volunteer delegates and members of a few standing and ad hoc committees sacrifice unstintingly some of their precious personal time to address these matters, including travel to meetings at their expense. Your newsletter coordinator, Raul Camino, delivers packets to block captains who deliver newsletters to over 700 households. Besides my duties as your treasurer, I'm your membership man. I also deliver newsletters to five block captains and distribute 26 newsletters on my own route. (This doesn't give me bragging rights.) My purpose is to emphasize how important your dues are.

Our membership list is formatted alphabetically and by due date of member dues. Most of our members respond promptly to my annual dues letter, which I greatly appreciate. If I haven't received your dues by the next anniversary date, my letter asks you to please consider renewing. If two years have elapsed you are no longer a member in good standing. I ask you to consider rejoining SOECA. This is important. According to our By-Laws, only members in good standing may vote at meetings on motions and resolutions. Thank you for your promptness in submitting your dues.

On final thought: If you would like to be a more active member of SOECA by joining or starting a committee, please contact our president Kathleen Samiy via email: SOECABoard@gmail.com. If you would consider joining our list of reserve block captains (a current block captain may move away or be temporarily absent) please contact member Peter Perenyi at 301- 587-2250; email: soecablockcaptains@gmail.com

*SOECA is an exciting and challenging Citizens' Association!
Thank you for reading this message.*

For Discussion/Business Meeting: Annual Dues

SOECA dues have remained at the \$10/household of 2 and \$5/household of retired and single residents for well over 10 years or more. The annual fee was raised then lowered again to the current rate, during a period of advocacy over land use in the mid-1990's. Our expenses have gone up for meeting rooms (The Civic Building costs \$50/meeting for half a room-which is too small for our purposes or \$100/meeting for a large room; and the Library basement room (equivalent size to large Civic Bldg room) costs us \$30/meeting/hour, but the Library, due to cut budgets, is now only available 2 nights a week (Monday and Wednesday) and is more difficult to get on nights we need it. We now seek new venues to host meetings and future social events. Whereas, just three to four years ago the Library meeting room cost was only \$15/meeting.) The cost of the newsletter has gone up so we can include not just the meeting minutes, but so we can provide articles and updates on ongoing issues in our community that may or may not be discussed at each meeting. We are in the midst of revamping our website, and now have several committees (Pedestrian Safety, Zoning, Land Use, Park Playground, Neighborhood Watch, and Social Events-more to come.) We are revamping our website to be more user-friendly, and hold more content, we have 'branded' our neighborhood with a new "logo" and meeting signs, and much more. We would like to host more meetings and host social events that we can underwrite some nominal costs, including an SOECA picnic. For all this we would like to maintain and grow our resources as proactive for the community.

Street Lighting & Sidewalk Survey

Dear Neighbors, Do you want a sidewalk by the curb in front of your home? Is there a place on your walk to downtown or to Sligo Park that might better serve our community if a sidewalk was built for pedestrian safety reasons?

Do you want [*more*] street lights in 'dark' stretches of your neighborhood street, like on Ellsworth Drive by the SS Library and along the curb at the Ellsworth Playground? or behind the Schools on Schuyler?

As discussed in our recent SOECA meetings improved overhead street lighting has been identified as a priority, and as a 'safe' solution for dark spots on our streets. In addition some neighbors have expressed an interest in improving the sidewalk network in our neighborhood. In order to gain a better understanding of where lighting is needed, and if sidewalks are a priority for the entire community we have developed a survey with only 8 questions that will take about 2 minutes to do.

Deadline: Monday Feb 21, 2011

We will use the results of this survey to help inform next steps. This will include working with PEPCO and the **Montgomery County Police to have overhead street lights installed to deter crime.** In addition, if there is adequate support for sidewalks, then the Board will appoint a steering committee to work with the county to get future funding for a CIP project (a multi-year effort). Results will be posted on the listserv, in the March newsletter and discussed at the Monday, March 7, SOECA meeting. Please forward this survey to members of the community who may not be on the listserv, and encourage your neighbors to take this survey too.
ps: Survey includes streets in the Park Hills neighborhood "overlap" streets west of the 2 schools, between Wayne/Dale/Greenbrier and Sligo Creek.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Z5L5WFF>

Happy New Year, Kathleen Samiy, SOECA President & Bruce Altevogt, Chair Pedestrian Safety Committee

Neighborhood Watch Training with Officer Joy Patil, Silver Spring 3rd District

(A Partnership between SOECA and Park Hills Civic Association) To join the Neighborhood Watch Program, become a Block Captain or to RSVP to attend these NW training sessions please contact: Carolyn Michell, at ccmichell@verizon.net

Training Dates: Monday, January 31 and Tuesday, February 15, 2011 (6:30 to 9 pm) Georgia Avenue, Police Substation Conference Rm.

In light of the recent crimes in our respective neighborhoods throughout the summer and fall of 2010 and throughout the December holidays, we are all eager to get this program up and running. Between our two neighborhoods we hope to have a core group of 20-25 volunteers. All who are interested in participating in the Neighborhood Watch program are encouraged to attend these training sessions. Attendance is important to the success of the program as well as an opportunity for the volunteers and police to get to know each other.

Notices of the training sessions will be sent out to those that have already volunteered to be NW block captains and dates will also be posted on the SOECA list serve.

Ellsworth Park Playground Renovations

On November 9, 2010 SOECA several residents attended the Park Department public meeting on the renovation of Parks in Silver Spring, including Ellsworth Urban Park's Playground equipment. An article on this subject was presented in the December newsletter indicating the two 5,000 sq ft playground equipment areas (total of 11,000 sq ft.) will be consolidated when renovated into one playground of 5,000 sq ft. of playground equipment (with the potential for an open playing area.) Implementation is on a scheduled track for new playground equipment in summer 2011. If you wish to participate in the outcome, now is the time.

In early December the SOECA President reached out the Park Department Landscape Architect/Lead, CJ Lilly, to continue a dialogue and partnership as residents have a stake in the outcome of the Park playground site. At this time we learned that on Dec 3 the online survey soliciting input was closed and an outside consultant LSG Inc will be moving forward with the design process. As we go to press on the newsletter, the Park Dept is still awaiting a concept plan from the consultant that can be presented and shared with SOECA.

The Park Dept was invited to present at our January 24 meeting, (and now our March 7 meeting.) We also asked for a site visit (less abstract than a board room show and tell) to discuss options of what might be planned on this land. The Park Department, however, is asking SOECA to clarify objectives and what we want to accomplish for a site visit and concept plan, for this we need residents to lead the conversation and outcome. Residents interested in being on a task force or a committee to liaison on this project please contact soeca.board@gmail.com.

SOECA December 8, 2010 Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order by President Kathleen Samiy at 7:37 pm at the Silver Spring Library.

This evening's main topic:

Neighborhood safety. The meeting was devoted primarily to a discussion with Montgomery County Police with police representatives Cdr. Donald Johnson, commander of the 3rd police district, and Officer Joy Patel, the community liaison.

Cdr. Johnson opened with an overview of the 3rd District, which extends from Howard County to Takoma Park, and from Prince George's County to Bethesda, and which is home to 240,000 residents. We in are in the "George" sector, the most challenging of the three that make up the district. Although statistics show that crime has gone down over the last decade or so, they understand our feelings about safety and recent crimes in our community. They realize that a sustained partnership with our community is important to improving safety.

He gave an overview of police operations, which include analysis of crime trends. They look at statistics daily, so it is very important to get reports from citizens, even for small matters. They are constantly prioritizing their efforts: crimes against persons (e.g., robberies) take priority over crimes against property (e.g., burglaries). They keep their investigations quiet, and put their efforts into following the better leads if they are available. They do plainclothes operations about five days a week and get many drug busts.

Their most important source of information is citizens.

- If in doubt, call 911. If they are busy, they will prioritize your call; don't be offended.
- Give them a description of the subject, exactly what they are doing, what clothing they are wearing (people rarely change clothes after committing a crime), and any vehicle tags.

Stay on the phone with the communications center so you can convey more information.

Cdr. Johnson also outlined the distinctions between burglary (someone breaks in to your house and takes things), theft (e.g., breaking into a car and taking things), robbery (stealing face to face), and home invasion robbery (someone breaks in to your house while you are there; rare in the 3rd District).

Officer Patel provided more information on recent arrests. In the SOECA and Park Hills area, they have arrested 15 people in the past month for thefts from vehicles. She urged people to keep calling in information, even about past thefts, so the police can update their information on the suspects. The last theft [before Dec. 8] was Nov. 22.

Officer Patel pointed out that many of the cars were unlocked. In any case, the thieves are looking for items such as GPS receivers, cell phones, gym bags, etc., so we should keep things out of plain view, whether our cars are locked or not. If vehicles throughout the neighborhood look empty, thieves will be less tempted to return, but if even some have visible items, they will continue to come back. It is also a good idea to write down the make, model, and serial number for items you might leave in the car, even sometimes.

Officer Patel provided additional information on reporting to the police:

- Crimes without a suspect (e.g., in the morning, you find that your car has been broken into during the night) can be reported on line at montgomerycountymd.gov/police.
- If you report something on line, also call the non-emergency police number (301-279-8000) so the police can talk to you, take fingerprints, etc. The evidence may be useful years later. There is also a crime tip line (240-773-8477) that can be anonymous.

Finally, Officer Patel discussed Neighborhood Watch. They are

looking for two volunteer coordinators, and hope to give a refresher training course after the first of the year.

A lengthy question and answer session followed, rearranged and summarized in part here

Q: How safe is it to walk in the neighborhood?

A: Use common sense: stay where it is well lit; walk with someone; keep valuables out of sight. The typical robbery victim is 20 years old or less, because the robbers are young too, and want iPods and the like, rather than your purse. There was an average of about one mugging per day in 2004, but that rate has been reduced a lot, with the biggest reduction in the CBD. Followup: Lighting is poor throughout the neighborhood.

Q: What is the difference between a gang and a group? Where are the robbers from?

A: The distinction is fuzzy, but a gang is a group that gets together for criminal purposes. Of the seven arrested recently, all are from the Manchester & Piney Branch area. Overall, about 35% of arrests were of non-County residents, mostly from the District and Prince George's County.

Q: What is the relationship between the Secure Communities program and asking about immigration status?

A: We don't ask about immigration status. Anyone who is arrested for one of about 15 serious crimes, such as murder, rape, or robbery, will be asked, by the Department of Corrections—not the police.

Q: Should we worry about robbers being armed? How dangerous are they?

A: For thefts from vehicles and for burglary, the probability is low. Street robbers typically don't have weapons. The more "professional" robbers who do have weapons tend to target delivery men or commercial establishments. For most of the street robbers, it's as

much about the thrill of intimidating and dominating as anything else.

Q: How should we follow up? It's frustrating to go to court and find we have to return.

A: Find out who is handling the case to find out which day you really have to come. Often, you don't get to testify, e.g. when there is a plea agreement. The sentencing stage would be an opportunity to have an impact. A community prosecutor would be a good point of contact, and would also be able to present a court with a community impact statement when there are multiple small misdemeanors. There is no community prosecutor at present.

Q: With the Fillmore coming, the police will be overstretched. How about using helicopter patrols?

A: We have several officers certified as pilots, and have been given a helicopter from the Department of Natural Resources, but we need money to maintain them, which we are trying to get. We are also exploring using a team of officers on bikes focused on the CBD.

Q: What do robbers do with the things they steal?

A: There are two categories. One is kids skipping school and doing an opportunistic robbery or theft. They are looking for such things as cash, jewelry, and kid's electronic games. The other is career criminals trying to make a profit. They are after electronics, laptops, and the like. They pawn them or sell them on eBay or Craig's List. That's why it's important to record serial numbers, etc.

Kathleen thanked the officers, and told the meeting that SOECA will work on a lighting inventory with Officer Patel. Anyone who wants to lead the coordination should email Kathleen at soeca.board@gmail.com.

OTHER TOPICS:

Neighborhood Watch : Those who want to help should contact Carolyn Michell or Joe Gerbasi. Carolyn will put the information on the listserv.

Chelsea School: No Update.

Dale Drive widening near Mrs. K's: No new information.

Ellsworth Park Playground: The "wooden" playground is slated for replacement. The "metal" one would be removed. The changes are scheduled to be finished by the end of next summer, 2011.

Library Building and Ellsworth Park Re-use: We learned that the overflow parking lot is County property, not Park property, so it will remain part of the Library property. Vicki Warren is leading the effort on re-use of the Library, but is not present this evening.

Purple Line: In August, MTA said that they would have Small Group Meetings, but they haven't happened yet. Park Hills Community Association hosted a panel discussion and is putting a report together from a panel discussion with the Planning Dept they held in October, which will be posted on the SOECA website when complete, along with an update from an SOECA rep. who was a guest at the Park Hills meeting.

Zoning Changes: The Planning Department is currently reconsidering the Counties Zoning Laws (a "Re-Write" Project) to consolidate the cumbersome and complicated to understand zoning documents articulating the zoning laws. The Department has taken the re-write a step further, and are making new categories of zoning, reinventing old zones with new naming, adding new zones and combining zones (mixed use housing). These newer revisions have future and important consequences on the types of infill and denser zoning that will be allowed in residential neighborhoods, and what transit zones within residential neighborhoods can be up-zoned within half and a quarter mile surrounding a transit stop (commuter bus lines and light rail), all by "right" of a developer rather than within the confines of a Master Plan or within the requests of Communities. Some of the Executive Committee members have been sitting in on meetings on this topic and will bring information to SOECA at the March or May meeting.

Good Neighbor Award: Kathleen announced the first recipient of the SOECA Good Neighbor Award. It was awarded to Bruce Altergot, who pushed for 4 years to have the County install traffic calming measures on Dale Drive.

Old Business: None.

Membership: There are seven new households. Bill Kaupert explained his system of different levels of notice to members whose memberships are in arrears

Treasurer's Report: The checking account stands at \$4,638.72, and the CD at \$2,224.31, with a whopping interest rate of 0.03%.

Next meeting: Monday, January 24, at 7:30 pm, in the Silver Spring Library.

Meeting adjourned at 9:16 pm.

NOTE

Re: County "Zoning Rewrite"

The SOECA Executive Committee leadership team is keeping abreast of the residential portion of the zoning law rewrite project.

We seek to understand and determine how and in what ways this will impact our community.

SOECA will bring residents zoning updates in 2011 and plans presentations and panel discussions on this topic throughout next year.

Master Plans are created with extensive community input and usually are in place for 20 years or many more. The current North and West Master Plan for our area of Silver Spring was finalized in 2000, and created under Smart Growth Policy of the County.

Zoning is the Law and the Rules that Developers must follow when planning, designing and building within Master Plan Areas.

**Seven Oaks Evanswood
Citizens Association
Silver Spring, Maryland
www.soeca.org**

SOECA Officers

Kathleen Samiy, President
Mark Gabriele, Past-President
Vicky Warren, Vice-President
Carolyn Michell, Vice-President
Tom Armstrong, Secretary
Bill Kaupert, Treasurer

Resident Volunteers

Jean Cavanaugh, PrezCo Liaison
Jonathan Bernstein,
List Serve & Website Manager
Charles Wolff, SOECA Historian

Contact SOECA:
soeca.board@gmail.com

TWO WAYS TO JOIN SOECA'S LISTSERV:

(1) Via email

- A) Send an e-mail to: soeca-subscribe@yahoogroups.com with the word "subscribe" in the subject line.
- B) The ListServ moderator will email you asking for your name and address by response email, adding you after you respond.
- C) You will then receive a confirmation e-mail from "YahooGroups."

(2) Via Yahoo Groups at <http://groups.yahoo.com/>

(Use this method, if you already have a Yahoo account set up)

- A) Find SOECA and click "Join this Group."
- B) 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. Click on "Join."
- C) The ListServ moderator will email you asking for your name and address by a personal response email adding you after you respond.
- D) You will then receive a confirmation e-mail from "YahooGroups."

Once you have joined....Post messages to the community by sending an e-mail to: soeca@egroups.com or soeca@yahoogroups.com

SOECA Membership 2011 Renew Annual Dues

**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: _____ Today's Date: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: Home) _____ Cell) _____ Work) _____

Would you like to receive the SOECA newsletter by: Email? Printed ? Both? (circle choices)

If by email, please print email address here: _____

Are you registered on the SOECA Yahoo Groups List Serve? Yes No (please circle one)

Would you like to receive SOECA Board e-communication? Yes No (please circle one)

If yes, please print email address here: _____

NOTE: Resident email addresses, street and phone numbers are held in strict confidence, they are not shared.