

## **Park Hills Civic Association General Meeting – Summary**

Approximately 75 neighbors attended the **January 18, 2007** joint meeting of the Park Hills and Seven Oaks-Evanswood Civic Associations – the first one ever – held in the Sligo Creek Elementary School cafeteria.

**1. Meet Valerie Ervin – County Council Member.** The meeting began with a surprise guest: Montgomery County Councilmember, Valerie Ervin, who is a neighbor in the Park Hills-Seven Oaks area. Ms. Ervin announced her plan to open an office in Silver Spring, stated her intention to convene a meeting with the Sligo Creek Elementary School principal to resolve the teacher parking shortage, and declared her support for the Purple Line transit project. Residents may contact Ms. Ervin with any questions or concerns at the following number: 240-777-7960.

**2. Dale Drive Sidewalk Project.** The County has asked for local support of a sidewalk construction project on Dale Drive, running roughly from Hartford Road to Mansfield Avenue. Alan Bowser stated that there was a meeting with immediately affected residents and that they supported the project. In an email to Park Hills Civic Association members, Mr. Bowser asked for comments, and those that were received were positive. Mr. Bowser proposed that the Civic Association communicate to the County that its members are in favor of the project that will start, if there is funding from the State of Maryland, in 2008. Bowser then made a motion that the Park Hills Civic Association send a letter to be drafted in support of the sidewalk construction project. All those present supported this motion.

**3. Sligo Creek Elementary School Teacher's Parking.** This is an issue that was raised on the listserv in the Fall. Sandra Fair, our Treasurer, who lives on Schuyler across from the school, has been following this issue and, in recent weeks, deliberating with her neighbor and County Council Member, Valerie Ervin. As noted above, Ms. Ervin will meet with the Sligo Creek Elementary School to find solutions to this long-standing problem.

**4. Neighborhood Watch.** At last September's meeting, the Civic Association discussed setting up a Neighborhood Watch program in Park Hills. The job is made somewhat easier since the Schuyler, Dartmouth, Ashford and Greenbrier streets and roads in the Park Hills Civic Association territory have been organized by the Seven Oaks-Evanswood Civic Association. Rather than get into a turf fight over these boundaries, on these issue, Park Hills needs to work to see that we share our information and cooperate to make the neighborhood safer. Jim Preston, who is working on the public safety issues for Park Hills, gave a brief overview of the Neighborhood Watch program and asked for volunteers to be block captains, reassuring the assembled as to the minimal time requirements involved in being a block captain.

**5. Bylaws.** As some of you well know, Park Hills has long needed to update the Civic Association's bylaws that date from the mid-1950s. Anne Gavin, who has taken on that task, informed everyone that she has prepared an initial revised draft after careful scrutiny of the current by-laws. Anne Gavin, Association Vice President, has reviewed the current Association bylaws that date from the mid-1950s. Proposed bylaw revisions will be posted on the listserv for the general membership to review. A vote will be taken on the proposed bylaw revisions at the Association's next General Meeting.

**6. Purple Line Focus Group.** For quite some time, we have been talking about and meeting about the Purple Line and its impact on our Park Hills neighborhood. Chris Richardson, who has been leading that effort, convened a Purple Line Community Focus Group in his home on December 14, 2006. Sixty percent of the participants favored the Wayne Avenue alignment for bus rapid transit – provided there is tunneling underneath the Silver Spring Transit Center and Spring Street. Forty percent of the participants, on the other hand, supported East Silver Spring alignments, as long as they have a minimal impact on Sligo Creek Park. Participants had also generated a number of specific questions about the Purple Line – 130 to be exact – which Mr. Richardson then compiled and sent to Michael Madden, Project Manager of the Purple Line for the Maryland Transit Administration. The Civic Association is looking forward to reconvening a meeting with the MTA to discuss the Bi-County Transitway's impact on Silver Spring as this project moves forward.

**7. 527 Dale Drive.** This will remain an agenda item for the Civic Association, but right now, there is not much to report. As far as anyone can tell, the renovations on the property have not yet started. As we find out more information, we will pass it along.

**8. Seven Oaks-Evanswood.** Since this was a joint meeting of the Park Hills and Seven Oaks Civic Associations, Mark Gabriele - President of the Seven Oaks-Evanswood Civic Association – then took time to conduct the group's official business.

**9. Sligo Creek Pollution.** Following recent newspaper articles and postings of the Friends of Sligo Creeks website, the issue of pollution in Sligo Creek has received considerable attention. The Gazette recently reported that a spill in December allowed 100,000 gallons of sewerage to flow into Sligo Creek at the Bennington tributary, near Colesville Road. Some neighbors are concerned about the spills themselves, as well as the adequacy of public notice, posting of warning signs at the site of the spills and downstream, and the water quality of the creek. To address some of these issues, the Civic Association invited representatives from Washington Suburban Sanitation Commission to inform local residents about recent sewage overflow incidents and what steps they will take to minimize their recurrence. WSSC informed the audience that construction debris was the principal culprit behind the discharge of 100,000 gallons into Sligo Creek with grease from downtown restaurants being a contributing factor. The Civic Association will follow up with the appropriate officials in the weeks to come. In addition, the Neighborhoods Committee of the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board, which Mr. Bowser chairs, will discuss the Sligo Creek spills and related water quality issues at its January 29<sup>th</sup> meeting at the Silver Spring Regional Center.

**10. Downtown Silver Spring.** Gary Stith, who is the Director of the Silver Spring Regional Services Center, finished the meeting with a brief presentation on a number of upcoming public works projects: the new Silver Spring library, the major overhaul of the Silver Spring Transit Center, and the design of Veterans Plaza and the new Civic Building. Mr. Stith explained that a recently established nonprofit organization - Silver Spring Town Center, Inc. - will assist in providing community-based programming for the new Silver Spring Civic Building. Mr. Stith also took a number of questions and comments from the audience: concern about the traffic-heavy location of the new library; a plea for green space to replace the surprisingly popular astroturf in the downtown park that will become Veterans Plaza; a question about the commercial viability of City Place and what plans are in the works to make it more so; a request for a status report on the new Birchmere venue.