

Park Hills Civic Association General Meeting – Summary

October 1, 2014 7:30 pm
Silver Spring International Middle School

Introductions - 32 members of the community attended.

Secretary's Report - Paul Guinnessy

Treasurer's Report - Leslie Downey reported a balance of \$311 in the checking account. She thanked community for its support over the past year.

Vice-President's Report - Chris Richardson reported that:

- The Pedestrian Safety campaign in which signs were placed up on the first day of the new school year to raise awareness of more kids on the street was a great success.
- Residential Wayne/PLIAG - Thanks to Montgomery County executive Ike Leggett, the new local purple line group that consists of associations and other interested parties along the Purple Line (Purple Line Implementation Advisory Group) has been meeting frequently to discuss local impacts. Richardson thanked all the people who made it happen, particularly the representatives from the local, state, and county level who have turned up .
- The new library and outreach strategy - is coming soon! Richardson mentioned that he would talk to library manager Frank Ware to find ways to engage the community when the new library opens.
- Sweeping the Creek/Adopt the Road - This event held on 28 September was a big success.Thanks to Anne Kaiser for serving as coordinator of this Fall's program.
- The Thanksgiving Parade - Our Park Hills Civic Association is marching again in this year's Thanksgiving Parade. Park Hills will be the only civic association in the parade for the second year in a row. The current plan is to follow the same practice as last time and encourage residents to walk along and join us for coffee and hot chocolate afterwards.

Election of PHCA Treasurer - Alan Bowser - Alan Bowser regretfully announced Leslie Downey's retirement as PHCA treasurer. Elise Heyrman Klumpner was nominated as her replacement and voted unanimously into the the position.

President's Report - Alan Bowser reported:

- Board proposal - The Park Hills Civic Association Executive Committee proposes to increase Association dues to \$15 annually, beginning in January 2014. As prescribed on our bylaws, the vote will be held at the next meeting.

•Voter Registration Deadline & Election Day - Alan Bowser - Early voting begins on October 23 and runs through October 30. Election Day is November 4, 2014.

Montgomery County Police Briefing - Shooting on Wayne Ave - Police report and discussion

Officer Joy Patil and one of her colleagues gave the community an update on the recent 31 August shooting close to the school. Patil said that her understanding from the detective is that the victim is refusing to cooperate with the police, leading them to believe that the victim isn't being forthcoming with his statements regarding the incident. Patel claimed that this event is not reflective of the safety of the community as a whole as the victim was passing through the neighborhood and doesn't live here. She asked the community to engage more in keeping their eyes open and know your neighbors.

Resident Carol Bengle Gilbert spoke about the shooting (which was near her house) and pointed out that despite the event happening days earlier, the police still haven't gone door-to-door and ask the neighbors what they heard.

Patil said that they spent over an hour looking for evidence, and even bought out a metal detector to look for shell casings (which were never found). Because the victim ran zigzag across the Wayne Avenue after he was shot, it is impossible to identify the exact location of the shooting.

MPCD said that the number one crime issue in the county is car thefts and three to four vehicles were broken into on Wayne Ave during July and August. It pays to be diligent to lock your car doors.

In another incident, a school kid had their iPhone stolen at knifepoint on the 15th September. The event was after school, and Patil pointed out that if the kids hid their valuables then its less likely they will be stolen.

Patil said there was no information reported on a recent disturbance and a threat on Wayne and Dale (see Park Hills Listserv for more details). Subscribe to the listserv at parkhillscivic-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. Join the Facebook Group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ParkHills/>. Visit the PHCA website at www.parkhillscivic.com

In answer to a question, MCPD observed that the State and Montgomery County are seeing a lot more heroin overdoses, partly because the level of purity is so erratic and so many drug users are accidentally overdosing.

Crime in the Park Hills are is pretty low compared to Downtown Silver Spring, and nearby neighborhoods. Many of the police officers who deal with this area are stations at the Georgia Avenue Fire Station 1 (not the restaurant) and are readily available to respond to calls for service. Currently, residents cannot visit the police substation, but that might change in the future.

Other business - Transit issue.

A PHCA members advocated for a new J4 bus stop near the Dale Drive/Wayne Avenue intersection. A petition will be circulated. The current stop is at the Crescent House. The location is not controlled by the County, but if 45-50 signatures are gathered and submitted to WMATA, then they will consider putting in a stop.

Guest speaker - County Executive Ike Leggett discussed some of the challenges facing Montgomery County in recent years.

- Finances - The county came out better than a lot of places from the recession. Reserves are highest that they have ever been, but it also came at the cost of some cuts, such as opening times at the library. Leggett managed to increase the size of the police force by 143 officers during the recession.
- Currently the school system is growing between 2000-2800 additional students per year for the next five years. To combat this, the county is trying to improve the existing space and infrastructure at the schools rather than build new schools.
- Transportation - always looks good on paper. The developers always have great plans on paper. In reality transportation and development requires money and the answers to a number of questions, such as what's the impact on the environment and the quality of life for existing residents, etc..
- There are 100,000 jobs in the pipeline that are dependent on transportation and need taxes to pay for improvements.

Questions from the audience.

Q: What happens to the purple line public private partnership at the end of the 35 year contract? Would this leave a burden on the state or the local residents? How much will it cost to ride?

A: Leggett answered that it was the only option to get the purple line funded.

Q: What is the status of the Silver Spring Transit Center?

A: The county is now looking at the overlay repairs. Leggett said he takes full responsibility for refusing to settle with doing a minor repair, and instead he hired experts to make sure the patch would be done correctly and properly. Leggett said he hired Norman Augustine to form a committee to evaluate the report and this committee recommended to do the full expensive repair. The county will sue the firms involved in doing the shoddy work later. The repairs will be finished at the end of the year.

Q: Is the Purple Line traction power substation going to be on Wayne Avenue above ground?

A: Leggett said that the current plans seem to address community concerns, but that the community needed to stay vigilant and on top of this until it is done

Q: What is the status Old Blair Auditorium?

A: Leggett said it will get done, but costs have skyrocketed. "We need to rethink that." Leggett also mentioned that one structure he is concerned about, is the new library. He had recently seen some documents that suggested some work for the purple line might impact the opening date, and is looking into it.

Q: Now that Pepco has been bought, are the options for converting our existing grid into a smart grid that would be more reliable and less prone to massive outages?

A: Leggett said he had met the new owners and they are open to the upgrading the grid, the question is what will the cost be? And would residents pay for it?

Q: There seems to be lots of potholes around, why?

A: Leggett said we had had a harsh winter and he had increased the road repair budget by 20% to compensate for the damage.

Q: Trees - After the trees are cut down on public land, the stumps remain. Is there plans to do a more aggressive stump removal?

A: Leggett said the county is still working on a backlog of trees that had fallen in large storms over the last few years.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35pm.

Paul Guinnessy, Secretary