

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

The Park Hills Civic Association held a General Meeting on **Thursday, October 16, 2008** at the Silver Spring International Middle School Library beginning at 7:00 pm. Attending: Jeanette Anders, Adele Biancarelli, Bob Bor, Alan Bowser, Jody Calemine, Mary Clive, Mildred Dickerson, Leslie Downey, Sandra Fair, Evelyn Foley, Frank Foley, Anne Gavin, Paul Guinnessy, Sara Horton, Christine Keck, Sandy Kemper, Gary Klauber, Larry Kupers, Chris Richardson, Jim Riley, Carolyn Schick, Bruce Segal, Tom Senko, Don Slater, Tina Slater, Jean Walker, Dwight Wilson, and Daria Zakharova.

**Treasurer’s Report.** Sandra Fair, PHCA Treasurer, reported a balance of approximately \$860 in the Civic Association’s bank account. Approximately 92 households are paid members of the Park Hills Civic Association.

**Secretary’s Report.** Chris Richardson, PHCA Secretary, reported that the previous PHCA General Meeting took place on May 15, 2008, while the Executive Committee recently met on July 27, 2008. Park Hills held its annual BBQ in Sligo Creek Park on September 20, 2008 and also participated in National Walk to School Day on October 8, 2008. Richardson noted that membership on the Park Hills Civic Association listserv currently stands at 188. The Park Hills community includes approximately 328 residential households, plus two apartment buildings.

**Neighborhood Watch Update.** Alan Bowser discussed the status of the Neighborhood Watch Program and asked for volunteers to be block captains. Neighbors interested in helping out should contact Alan Bowser [abowser@starpower.net](mailto:abowser@starpower.net)

### **MCPD Public Safety Update.**

Lt. Paul Liquorie of the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) - and long-time resident of Silver Spring - reviewed crime statistics for the area of East Silver Spring bounded by (a) Piney Branch Rd., (b) Flower Ave., (c) Colesville Rd., and (d) Fenton St. between the period January-September 2008. Of note were the number of automobile larcenies (72) and stolen automobiles (31) in that time period. Lt. Liquorie made the following related observations in his discussion with Park Hills residents about crime and public safety:

- Where there are large congregations of vehicles (e.g., parking lots & garages), there is a higher likelihood of theft.
- The increasing trend in theft is county-wide.
- Recent spike in youth-on-youth violence is likely due to explosion in electronic devices (iPods, GPS, cell phones, XM).
- Thieves often look for telltale signs of suction cup on windshield – also, chargers plugged in the console.
- Be aware that listening to an I-pod in public – depending on the circumstances - does carry the potential to leave one distracted and, therefore, vulnerable to robbery or theft.
- Silver Spring’s downtown area is a central gathering spot for local youth.
- Gang participation is also on the rise locally and nationwide.
- “I’ve lived here for 30 years - why should I have to change my habits?” People often ask. Recognize that cars are now loaded with electronic devices unlike 10, 20, 30 years ago.

In response to this recent upswell in crime, the department has implemented 'smarter policing' techniques:

- Utilizing data points to help determine where to apply resources.
- Cross-referencing criminal activity with individuals already involved with the criminal justice system.
- Using information gleaned from 'field interviews' with potential suspects to link them to crimes committed later.
- Coordinating information more effectively with other jurisdictions.
- Supporting gang prevention efforts in the schools.
- Using registration information with Macintosh to verify owner of recovered iPod.

Lt. Liquorie did stress a number of key safety tips:

- Use the Police non-emergency number: 301-279-8000.
- Dial 911 anytime you suspect crime is happening in your neighborhood.
- Know your neighbors, be aware of doings on your street.
- Park away from dangerous or potentially hazardous surroundings.
- Report any suspicious activity (unknown person checking door handles).

In response to residents, who noticed eight non-working street lights on a recent nighttime walk through the Park Hills area, Lt. Liquorie pointed out that responsibility for fixing the problem can depend on several factors – e.g., Pepco is responsible for wiring or surge problems, whereas Montgomery County takes care of burnt-out bulbs -- unless the bad bulb is on a state road, in which case, MDOT is responsible.

Civic Association repeated its request for MCPD officers to alter driving routes beyond the usual arteries - Bonifant Street, Dale Drive, Colesville Road, et al. - and increase presence on streets like Fleetwood and Mansfield. Lt. Liquorie mentioned one aggravating factor in the Sligo Creek Park area to be lack of jurisdictional clarity between MCPD and Park Police.

### **Silver Spring Development Update.**

Dwayne Jenkins, Assistant Director of the Silver Spring Regional Services Center, updated Park Hills residents on three major development projects in the downtown area:

#### **I. Silver Spring Civic Building & Veterans Plaza**

Groundbreaking ceremony for the building and plaza took place on September 10<sup>th</sup>. When construction is completed – possibly by summer 2009 – the 1.5-acre site will contain the new 42,000 square-foot Civic Building that will be fronted by the three-quarter acre Veterans Plaza, featuring a brick surface surrounded by grass and trees. Veterans Plaza will be the site of a memorial to veterans of all wars and host year-round activities from concerts, markets and festivals and be converted to an ice rink from November through March.

#### **II. Silver Spring Transit Center**

Construction of the new Silver Spring Transit Center has already begun - in connection with the construction, all bus operations have been relocated to a new "interim operations site" on Wayne, Dixon, and Bonifant streets. The 8-acre site will be developed to accommodate a multi-level, pedestrian-friendly complex supporting rail traffic (Metro and MARC), bus traffic (local and

inter-city) and automobile traffic (taxi service and Kiss and Ride). Major features include doubling the number of bus bays, a 4,500 square foot inter-city bus building, and extensive provisions for safe pedestrian and vehicular traffic movement under a landmark canopy. Hiker/biker trail enhancements and retail development are also included in the design concept. Site map and bus plan can be found online at the following link:

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcgtmpl.asp?url=/content/DOT/projects/sstc/index.asp>

### III. Silver Spring Public Library

A site in downtown Silver Spring is being assembled for construction of a new downtown public library to begin, hopefully, in 2010. The 41,000 square-foot, 110-foot building will prominently face Wayne with exposures on Fenton and Bonifant Streets. The new facility will include 2-3 floors of library space, as well as an arts center, retail development, housing (MPDU, workforce, and commercial) and parking for residents only. A series of meetings of been held in July and August plus three design charrettes -- involving community input -- have been conducted in September and October. Notes from those meetings can be accessed on the web at the following link:

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/libtmpl.asp?url=/content/libraries/buildings/ssproject.asp>

### **Sligo Cabin Park Renovation.**

Kimberly Paniati and Marian Elsasser of the Maryland-National Capital Parks & Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) briefed Park Hills residents on plans for the renovation of Sligo Cabin Park. Situated on Wayne Avenue near Sligo Creek Parkway, Sligo Cabin Park is one of the oldest parks in the M-NCPPC system, having been acquired by the Commission in 1932. The current site for the park, unfortunately, is in a flood plain, so a new park and playground is being planned for a piece of land further up from the creek near the athletic field parking lot. The new playground will include one play structure, one tot structure, one climbing structure, one set of spring toys, one set of swings, and one “[talking bob](#)” device. No trees will be removed in the construction of the new park, but some overgrown shrubs will be removed for safety reasons. Presenters brought several design drawings for residents to study.

### **Purple Line Update.**

Chris Richardson, PHCA Purple Line Task Force Chair, reported on Purple Line developments since the last PHCA General meeting. With the release of the long-awaited Alternatives Analysis/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (AA/DEIS) on October 17<sup>th</sup>, the Purple Line Task Force will reconvene on **Thursday, October 30**, in order to scrutinize the contents of this report and make recommendations on behalf of the community. The Civic Association will then meet in a special session in mid-November - prior to MTA’s public hearing on **Saturday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>** in Silver Spring at Montgomery College’s Takoma Park campus - in order to take one last temperature taking by means of a community vote on the Purple Line.

The next key events in the Purple Line planning schedule are the public hearings convened by MTA followed by hearings by the Planning Board, County Council and ultimately a

recommendation by the State Secretary of Transportation and decision by Maryland Governor O'Malley.

An above-ground Wayne Avenue light rail alignment continues to receive the most attention in all MTA planning discussions to date, although no route or mode decisions have been made. Richardson summarized for residents the major impacts as a result of a light rail train traveling at street-level on Wayne including street widening and the addition of dedicated left-turn lanes for approximately 2/3 of the length between Fenton and Sligo Creek Parkway.

**New Business**

Leslie Downey suggested that the new Silver Spring Civic Building be named for former County Executive Doug Duncan.

**Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectively submitted.

Chris Richardson, PHCA Secretary.