

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

The Park Hills Civic Association held a General Meeting on **Wednesday, March 24, 2010** at the Silver Spring International Middle School Library/Media Center beginning at 7:30 pm.

**Attendees:** Bob Bor; Alan Bowser; Jody Calemine; Leslie Downey; Sandra Fair; Evelyn Foley; Pat Garcia; Anne Gavin; Paul Guinnessy; Christine Jessup; Sandy Kemper; Gary Klauber; Greg Lewis; Chris Richardson; Billy Rose; Dave Ryan; Kate Ryan; Carolyn Schick; Nancy Schwiesow; Thomas Senko; Jessie Slater; Mary-Margaret Stacy; Russell Stacy; Stephanie Subramanian; Michael Ussery.

**Guests:** Rita Gale, Public Services Administrator for the Montgomery County Public Libraries; and Khursheed Bilgrami, Traffic Engineer with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation's Traffic Operations Division.

### **Secretary's Report.**

Chris Richardson, PHCA Secretary, reported that the Association's previous General Meeting took place on October 8, 2009; guest speakers at that meeting included Reemberto Rodriguez, Director of the Silver Spring Regional Services Center, and Christopher Lage, who discussed the proposed boundary change for Sligo Creek Elementary School. Additionally, the Association held a Special Community Meeting on November 23, 2009 devoted exclusively to the Maryland Transit Administration's proposed Purple Line station at Dale Drive. The Park Hills community includes approximately 333 residential households, plus two small apartment buildings on Dale Drive between Schuyler and Dartmouth.

### **Treasurer's Report.**

Sandra Fair, PHCA Treasurer, reported a balance of \$443.11 in the Civic Association's checking account.

### **President's Report.**

- Alan Bowser reported that Election of Officers will take place at May's PHCA General Meeting. Nancy Schwiesow has kindly agreed again to serve as Chair of the Nominating Committee.
- Bowser then proposed that the Civic Association send a letter to Montgomery County Council President, Nancy Floreen, nominating the entire community of Park Hills as a candidate for the Golden Shovel Award in light of the exemplary community spirit demonstrated during the Winter of 2009-2010.
- Bowser also entertained discussion about having the Civic Association write a letter of support in having the County Council reconsider the concept of a pedestrian bridge for the new Silver Spring Public Library.

<p><b><u>Motion Passed:</u></b> Park Hills Civic Association agreed to write a letter of support in having the County Council reconsider the concept of a pedestrian bridge for the new Silver Spring Public Library.</p>
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### **Purple Line Update.**

On November 23, 2009 at the Silver Spring International Middle School Library, Park Hills Civic Association held a Special Community Meeting devoted exclusively to MTA's proposed Purple Line station at Dale Drive. Representatives from the Maryland State Delegation, Montgomery County Council, Montgomery County Planning Board, Montgomery County Department of Transportation, and

Silver Spring International Middle School were in attendance along with the MTA Purple Line Planning Team. Park Hills residents ask questions about the proposed Dale Drive station and other issues related to the Purple Line. Richardson, Chair of the Civic Association's Purple Line Task Force, stated that he would be posting a detailed summary of this meeting on the listserv soon.

Meanwhile, the County Planning Board held its second worksession on the Purple Line Functional Master Plan on Thursday, April 8, 2010. The purpose of this worksession was to (1) provide the Planning Board with an opportunity to review the changes to the Public Hearing Draft Plan that have been made in response to the Board's direction at the first worksession; and (2) ask the Board to approve the proposed Planning Board Draft Plan, incorporating any additional changes the Planning Board may direct. The Planning Board approved Attachment A (click on web link below to access this document) as the Planning Board Draft Plan and forwarded the Plan to the County Executive and County Council: [http://www.montgomeryplanningboard.org/agenda/2010/documents/20100408\\_Purple\\_Line\\_Appendix\\_A\\_000.pdf](http://www.montgomeryplanningboard.org/agenda/2010/documents/20100408_Purple_Line_Appendix_A_000.pdf)

Note about the proposed Dale Drive station:

The Planning Board's Draft Functional Master Plan states on page 31 that the proposed Dale Drive station "is not included in initial construction phase; the timing of implementation to be determined."

#### **New Business.**

#### **Guest Speaker, Khursheed Bilgrami: Traffic Engineer, Montgomery County Department of Transportation – Traffic Operations Division.**

Khursheed Bilgrami, Traffic Engineer with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation's Traffic Operations Division, discussed the county's plans to implement traffic calming measures and pedestrian-friendly improvements on Dale Drive between Ellsworth Drive and Mansfield Road. Bilgrami took residents through the proposed changes at each intersection:

#### **Dale & Ellsworth Drive Conceptual Plan**

- Extended curb "bump outs" on both sides of Dale around its intersection with Ellsworth to (1) help slow down traffic (2) reduce length of time pedestrian is in the crosswalk.
- Pedestrian "refuge island" in the median of Dale.
- Split ladder-bar striped crosswalk.
- ADA-compliant curb ramps.

#### **Dale & Pershing Drive Conceptual Plan**

- Extended curb "bump outs" on both sides of Dale around its intersection with Pershing to (1) help slow down traffic (2) reduce length of time pedestrian is in the crosswalk.
- Ladder-bar striped crosswalk.

#### **Dale & Greenbrier Drive Conceptual Plan**

- Pedestrian "refuge island" in the median of Dale.
- Split ladder-bar striped crosswalk.
- New recessed curbs on both sides of Dale.

#### **Dale & Dartmouth Avenue Conceptual Plan**

- Ladder-bar striped crosswalk.
- Extended curb "bump out" on Dale around its intersection with Dartmouth to (1) help slow down traffic (2) reduce length of time pedestrian is in the crosswalk.

- Because of sight line problems, clear away vegetation along the roadside to enhance sight distance 75-100 feet.

### **Dale & Mansfield Road**

- Striped crosswalk.
- Extended curb “bump out” 110 feet on the north side of Dale around its intersection with Mansfield with parking restrictions to improve the sight line.
- Clear away vegetation on south side of Dale to enhance sight distance.
- Sidewalk with ADA-compliant ramps.
- Pavement markings
- Signs: 2 pedestrian crossing signs in advance of the intersection and 2 more at the crosswalk.

### **Q & A about Dale & Mansfield**

**Question:** Why not use a stop sign at this intersection?

**Answer:** Stop sign is used for assigning Right-of-Way of one traffic flow over another; stop signs are never used by the county for controlling traffic, per Federal Highway Administration’s Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways (web link: <http://www.iaff.org/hs/EVSP/MUTCD%20Manual%20r.1.pdf> )

**Question:** Why not use a traffic light at this intersection?

**Answer:** The number of accidents needs to reach a certain threshold that has not yet been met.

**Question:** Why not employ a flashing yellow light that is activated by pedestrian?

**Answer:** Among the lessons learned from a pilot project currently in place on Twinbrook Parkway in Rockville –

- Yellow is not a strong enough color to get drivers’ attention.
- Special light bulbs are a nightmare to maintain.

**Question:** Why not use rumble strips?

**Answer:** Rumble strips have the potential to be a noise nuisance, particularly for residents who live adjacent to the rumble strips.

**Question:** Why not use speed bumps?

**Answer:** Speed bumps are not installed on county arterial roads, per county policy.

**Question:** What about a crosswalk on Dale at Bonifant?

**Answer:** The county has not yet considered a crosswalk there but is willing to investigate.

\*Historical note: Dale & Mansfield used to have a crosswalk back when Dale was state-owned; once the road became county-owned (1992), however, the crosswalk was removed and no traffic-slowing measures or road sign markings were put in place to help facilitate safe pedestrian passage at Dale’s intersection with Mansfield.

### **Dale & Hartford Avenue**

- 25-foot long Pedestrian “refuge island” in the median of Dale.
- Striped crosswalk.
- Curb warning signs (chevrons)
- 2 pedestrian crossing signs in advance of the intersection and 2 more at the crosswalk.
- 2 “State Law: Stop for Peds in X-Walks” signs in advance of the intersection.

### **Time Frame & Approval Process**

- Conceptual drawings are part of the Capital Improvement Project.

- County has already completed other Dale improvements between Georgia and Colesville; bump outs and other calming measures have been completed at the intersections of Corwin Drive and Clement Road.
- Colesville to Piney Branch is the final leg of the Dale Drive improvement project.
- All Dale projects will be consolidated within the CIP budget.

**Guest Speaker, Rita Gale: Public Services Administrator, Montgomery County Public Libraries.**

Rita Gale, Public Services Administrator for Montgomery County Public Libraries, briefed Park Hills residents about plans for the new Silver Spring Public Library to be built at a new site in downtown Silver Spring at Wayne Avenue and Fenton Street. The project to design and build a new library facility began about two years ago. The new library will encompass 63,000 square feet of space and feature a disabilities resource collection duplicated from the Rockville Library. The library – three floors facing Fenton and Wayne – will be part of a 7-story multi-use building that includes retail on the ground level, as well as a residential component – facing Bonifant Street – that will be handled by a private developer. The library will be cantilevered over a Purple Line light rail station and occupy the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> floors of the building. Library visitors will be able to ride an escalator to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor entrance.

Public meetings for the new Silver Spring Public Library began in late 2008 and early 2009. With respect to the siting of the library, the decision to have the front facing Wayne, in close proximity to a county parking garage, versus Bonifant, with no direct link to a parking facility, became clear once the costs were calculated for underground parking – not a feasible option. The new library is expected to generate one million visits a year. There is concern, however, about the difficulty of access required to visit the new library for those with limited mobility due to challenges of crossing a 70-foot intersection amidst potentially high volumes of vehicle traffic including light rail. Library planners have been considering a pedestrian bridge above Wayne Avenue that connects to the county garage. The county’s Urban Renewal Plan, unfortunately, forbids pedestrian bridges; nevertheless, the Silver Spring Library Advisory Committee is trying to get approval for the bridge.

**Brief Overview of the New Library**

- 63,000 square feet—three times larger than the current library.
- Centrally located adjacent to the new Downtown Silver Spring and across from the Wayne Avenue Parking Garage.
- New library will include an expanded circulating collection, more computers, more study and meeting space, and an expanded children’s section and activity space.
- New library will also include a countywide disability resource center with expanded services for disabled county residents will be housed in the new library.
- More services for foreign language and immigrant residents, and more services for businesses will be available.

**What’s Happening Now?**

- The County has acquired the land at the site—the southwest corner of Fenton Street and Wayne Avenue and has started clearing the old buildings.
- Funds for the facility are in the current County Executive’s Capital Improvement Program budget.
- Groundbreaking for the new Library facility will be this summer.

### **Mixed-Use Concept**

The building housing the new library will face Wayne Avenue and Fenton Street. It will be a joint use project that includes:

- A Purple Line Station running through the site from Bonifant Street to the intersection of Wayne Avenue and Fenton Street;
- Ground floor retail space;
- An Arts Center on the ground and first floors;
- The Library occupying the third, fourth, and fifth floors;
- County office space on the sixth floor.

### **The Library Pedestrian Bridge: Pros & Cons**

#### **Pros**

- Easier access for those with limited mobility to utilize the Disabilities Resource Collection.
- Much more difficult for disabled to travel to library entrance at street level.
- Convenience for those who are running errands in downtown Silver Spring.
- Plans for new library have limited provisions for passenger drop-off.

#### **Cons**

- Pedestrian bridge could potentially take pedestrian traffic off the streets in Fenton Village.
- Bridges are not considered good urban design.
- Convenience of parking could encourage more folks to drive.

### **Construction Time Frame**

Construction of the new library will occur in two phases

Site preparation for utilities, stormwater, etc. for 9 months or so beginning July 2010. Beginning February/March 2011, construction itself will begin with a grand opening optimistically by Summer 2013.

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

Respectively submitted.

Chris Richardson, PHCA Secretary.