

**Park Hills Civic Association and SOECA Joint General Meeting
May 22, 2017 @ Silver Spring Civic Building – Veterans Plaza
Minutes for Park Hills Civic Association**

56 people attended the meeting from both associations.

Friends of Sligo Creek mentioned the upcoming bike ride on June 4
(see [http://www.fosc.org/PDF/FOSC_Bike_Ride_June_2017_\(english\).pdf](http://www.fosc.org/PDF/FOSC_Bike_Ride_June_2017_(english).pdf))

Seven Oaks-Evanswood Citizens' Association:

Discussion on the Queen Anne/Bonifant junction to have the layout changed to a one way system and have a bigger sidewalk. The Queen Anne's association is the lead on this and asked SOECA for support.

In the Q&A discussion on this it was made clear this was a request to the county to do a traffic study, not a demand for such a change according to the organizers.

A vote by residents of the area in favor of the resolution 14 said yes, 6 against. Resolution passed.

Minutes were passed without discussion.

SOECA elected its officers.

Park Hills Civic Association had no major business to discuss and hence we went into the main part of the meeting.

Chris Richardson, President of PHCA then introduced our political representatives attending the meeting, including Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins (District 20), who gave a brief summary of what she achieved in the State Senate. Delegate Will Smith (District 20), Tom Hucker (Silver Spring District 5 representative to the Council), who brought up that the county council had sacked the trash collector as of 31 May (except for recycling which they will still carry out). Marc Elich (at-large councilmember) talked about the \$15 minimum wage bill that he will push in the autumn, and his efforts to reduce class size. Hans Riemer (at-large council member) described his push to expand Head Start to 5 hours a day instead of 2.5 hrs.

A comment from the floor brought up the repair/improvement of the playing fields at Sligo Creek Elementary School that was led by Chris Richardson, with strategic leadership from Lisa Seigel of Rolling Terrace Elementary and superlative support from parent counterparts at other "downcounty" elementary schools whose recess playfields are in similarly distressed condition. Thanks to county council for their support of this badly-needed MCPS pilot project that will improve the quality of school experience for all students at these schools.

The usual suspects from MTA/State/County transportation offices also attended. Mike Madden gave a brief history of the project again, along with the changes to the route around the Dale Station. Instead of five lanes there are now 6 lanes (2 lanes, the station platform [i.e., 1 lane], then go 1 straight/turn left, 1 go straight, and 1 turn-right lanes). The 13-foot retaining wall is either completely gone or will only be 3 feet high perhaps.

The contract that MTA has signed is for 36 years, 6 years to build, 30 years to operate.

Madden mentioned that the state is looking at its legal options on pushing the project forward.

Action item for MTA is to confirm that there are transmission lines for the train on the platform and not on the side of the road (according to the new artists impression of the area, they are there).

Q&A section

Q: Will the changes impact the travel times?

A: No, not really.

Q: Will this impact traffic flow?

A: According to our traffic studies, no.

Q: I'm worried about 6 lanes, can we make it smaller?

A: It's really 2 lanes, the platform [i.e., 1 lane], then 3 lanes, this is the best deal you're going to get.

Q: Ridership projections required metro (a high percentage of travelers will be current metro or bus users). What are the impact of metro declining on the passenger numbers?

A: I can't answer that due to legal issues.

Q: Will the speed cameras ever be turned back on?

A: Need to talk to law enforcement. It was also mentioned that trucks will be banned from Wayne Ave when the train goes through. Audience seemed skeptical that this could be pulled off.

Q: Traffic laws are not enforced, isn't this still going to be difficult for kids to cross?

A: County has already dropped the speed to 25 mph.

Q: County has defined it as a state road, but will speed limit be enforced?

A: County police say yes.

Q: How many trees won't be cut down because of these changes? Are you willing to work with the associations to limit the damage as much as possible?

A: Don't know as yet - it's too early in the project, and yes.

Q: Environmental issues: How are you going to protect the creek when construction work starts?

A: Will we do as practiced on other large projects (audience seemed skeptical)

Q: Wheel squeal, what are your plans for handling it?

A: Until we build the test track and put the trains on it, we're not sure what remedies might be needed as we won't know how much noise is produced. We do not expect it to go above 75 dB (which then led to a brief discussion about noise in the area and the counties ability (or lack of) in enforcing the rules).

Q: Will the trees be replaced along the route?

A: Landscaping is a state-wide issue. They plan to plant 13 acres of trees along the 16 mile route.

Q: Parking restrictions. Will there be any - or will people using the station park on our streets?

A: There is a permit system the county already runs. It might be tied into that.

Q: Manchester Road is 0.3 miles away, and the library is 0.4 miles away, why is there a station at Dale. It seems pointless?

A: It was asked for by the community (although there was no consensus and no survey done to see if the community wanted it) and its not just the distance but the geography. (Note from secretary. The Dale station is so low density that under FTA rules they can use a 0.5 radius catchment area instead of 0.25 mile catchment area, so under that logic people will walk from the library and get on from Dale. Even with this change Dale and the Library have the lowest ridership of any of the stations).

Q: The substation, do we have to have it?

A: Yes, because we need one every 2 miles.

Q: How long will construction take on this part of the track?

A: Not exactly clear although the goal is to finish by 7pm each day and outside school scheduled times. However, there may be occasions in which the contractors might have to break that.

Q: Have you adjusted your crossing times for five year old kids crossing to get to the school?

A: Yes, and there will be crossing guards in the morning to make sure they are safe.

At this point the meeting broke up into individual discussions for the next 15 minutes before the meeting was adjourned.

