

**SSDT/AC Testimony by Marcie Stickle, Silver Spring Historical Society, Advocacy Chair
County Council, Th., 2/17/2022**

Restoration of our historic Jesup Blair House [The 1850 Moorings], must swiftly be brought to fruition, and immediately re-entered into the CIP process! Our historic 15-acre Green Oasis of a Park is already active:

The CIP process noted on the Parks chart for J.B. Park needs immediately to be switched to the House Restoration as its top priority, or a co-equal House Restoration CIP Category be immediately created! In fact, SSDT/AC **P. 80** specifically refers to The Moorings: "Inside the contemplative zone consider going beyond the traditional passive uses by introducing active programs such as yoga, tai-chi, **and other activities that can benefit of [from] the natural settings of this zone including its beautiful restored historic building.**"

SSHS is poised to testify as always we have as requested by Parks Dept. in the previously active CIP process!

The Pandemic, as elsewhere in Parks, temporarily brought our House Restoration to a severe pause, a standstill, now is the time immediately to get back on track! Our House calls out now for re-activation! Our treasure, now a tight & dry shell, eagerly anticipates Restoration completion and vibrant use:
An Artful, Diverse, Multi-Cultural, Inter-Generational, Socially Just, Joyful Destination!

SSHS enthusiastically endorses the stewardship of Carpe Diem Arts, Busy Graham, Founder & Executive Director, and her superb Board, and Team, as the lead tenant, guiding light, and organizing principle enlivening the Mansion's design, activities and mission visions.

Jesup Blair House will again become Jesup Blair COMMUNITY House as it was referred to between 1934 & 1957 when it served as the S.S. Library! With Carpe Diem Arts' superb visionary Leadership, embracing, engaging all of the vibrant Arts & Humanities groups' creativities & abilities, J.B. House & its Green Oasis of Land will be a "Hub," a pro-active magnet drawing us all in to express, enjoy, share our pro-active creativity with each other & others! Carpe Diem's visionary Busy Graham, Board, Team, & Advisory Council are experienced, pro-active, nurturing leaders in their fields. <https://www.carpediemarts.org> <https://JesupBlairHouse.org>

Arts Advocate Busy Graham was bestowed the Mo Co Executive's Lifetime Impact Award 2013:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PeXOE7oN4gM>

"Graham echoed the celebratory sentiments of the evening while accepting her award for Lifetime Impact. 'Time and time again,' she stated, 'the arts and humanities have proven to be the most accessible and affordable way to celebrate what is right in the world and to give people of all ages the means to imagine and then create a better world for themselves. I believe we can rest assured that the arts and humanities will continue to thrive in Montgomery County.' "

"Arts Angel" Busy Graham receiving 2017 **Sue Hess Maryland Arts Advocate of the Year Award:**

<https://www.culturespotmc.com/stories/getting-to-know-you/arts-angel/>

<https://carpediemarts.org/blogs/busy-s-blog/posts/busy-graham-receives-2017-sue-hess-maryland-arts-advocate-of-the-year-award>

SSHS will serve as the historic roots of the House & the Park, sharing The Moorings and Downtown Silver Spring's sweeping history!

Jesup Blair House & Park, "The Moorings," "The Anchor," is "The Peoples' Park," the Community's. All will be served through visiting the SSHS Archives, sharing in a variety of historical events we will hold in the Park & in

the House, e.g., Tours of the Trees, Re-enactments, “meet Lincoln’s Postmaster General Montgomery Blair,” who also represented the free formerly enslaved Dred Scott before the Supreme Court 1857; FREED, Female Re-enactors of Distinction, presentations, book signings, musical performances, celebrations!

SSHS has been promoting, extolling the virtues of the historic J.B. House & Park, "The Moorings," since the 1990s, significant at national, state, county, local levels, on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, National Register-eligible, a “public park in perpetuity,” an Underground R.R. site, pre-Civil War, Civil War site, last remaining House & its surrounding Land, green oasis of 15 acres, of S.S.'s founding Blair family.

Around 2009, Parks Dept. asked us to join them in the House renovation, rehabilitation, restoration. Our vision as a partner is that the lowest level will house SSHS Archives & artifacts, once the House is restored. Upon request by Parks Cultural Division, SSHS annually testified before the County Council to assure that CIP Funding was to be provided for the historic House and other historical structures in the Parks System.

We project at least 1 Weekend Day a Month to hold an Open House for the Community. We are a completely Volunteer 501(c)3. We will also hold appointments for researchers & community members to enjoy & "imbibe" our Archives stories.

Our seeing the need for Park Grove interpretation and protection, we were honored to be asked to assist Parks in the creation of 3 "History in the Parks" Heritage Signs along the Park's walking path!

Celebrating Earth Day at The Moorings in its idyllic setting is a joy! Violet Blair Janin who bequeathed our “public park in perpetuity,” wrote an eloquent Poem praising her beloved Oak Trees!

“I think of the joyous e’enings, Under our old oak trees, With the moonlight shadows moving, When Stirred by the gentle breeze.”

SSHS is very excited and honored to be joining with Carpe Diem Arts & other vital Partners in the Restoration, Revitalization, Re-Activation of our Jesup Blair Community House!!

J.B. Park Discussion:

Retain Regulation Soccer Field, including retaining its moveable goal posts: Diverse, Multi-Cultural Adult Teams & Children’s Teams play regularly on the Field, with their family & friends cheering them on from Park picnic tables & stone wall. Happening right now while I’m composing this Testimony! Sun. 11/28/21! When not in use for Soccer matches, Soccer practice, folks fly kites on windy days, throw Frisbees, throw balls & play baseball, do Yoga & Zumba!

Do not widen the Pedestrian Bridge into the Park, no more impermeable surfaces in the Park, No impacting the trees’ critical root zones! Protecting the Trees are intrinsic to Violet’s 1933 Will!

Strolling paths in the Park need to remain as such: Individuals & families stroll comfortably, some with strollers, baby buggies; runners run gently by.

Park paths do not need widening, and are not to become speeding extensions of the Metropolitan Branch Bike Trail, completely changing the nature of the Park. No more hardscape, no Skate Board Park! No Bridge widening. No Zip Line. No Dog Park! No Trenching. Without changing the footprint of the Children’s Playground, adding some swings, And especially the new modern see-saws the kids love, would be so used and enjoyed! Socializing can take its natural place in a Garden in the Park. Jesup Blair Park is also an arboretum!

4.9 “Historic Preservation Resources”

We applaud the HP “Historic Preservation Resources” Diverse Analyses, especially:

4.9.3. New Sites or Districts to be Studied as future Historic Preservation Master Plan Amendment(s), PPs 133. SSHS endorses and requests that Weller’s Dry Cleaners receive Master Plan designation!

4.9.4. National Register of Historic Places, PPs 134-137.

We endorse and request these unique Heritage structures receive National Register of Historic Places Designation:

- * Medical Office Building (1111 Spring Street)**
- Metropolitan Building (8720 Georgia Avenue)**
- Montgomery Center (8630 Fenton Street)**
- Operations Research, Inc., Building (1400 Spring Street)**
- Perpetual Bank Building (8700 Georgia Avenue)**
- U.S. Industries Building (949 Bonifant Street)**
- American National Bank Building (8701 Georgia Avenue)**
- Garden and Mid-Rise Apartment District**

We respectfully request that the **Falkland North Parcel be included** within the **Garden Apartment District: Falkland North represents authentic Middle-Missing Housing** since architect Justement’s Falkland Apts’ New Deal inception in 1936, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt cutting the Blue Ribbon opening day. The North Parcel, many apartments with porches, is abundant with fragrant flowering & other significant trees, set in its green terrain with dramatic gorge, providing a natural Park setting with children’s playground & picnic tables for Falkland North residents. At that time, William Blair’s Land of the founding Blair family.

4.9.6. Cultural and Heritage Resources, especially 4.9.6 A, PPs. 137-138.

- Establish a legacy business registry to recognize the economic, cultural, and social contributions of long-standing businesses to the fabric of Silver Spring.**
- Study potential incentives to preserve local, independently owned businesses.**

In synchronicity with the Art Deco Society, we respectfully request that the historic 1938 Silver Spring Shopping Center’s parking lot and its function be preserved: It’s a legal part of the historic resource and the historic context of the Center, its existence allows a clear view of the art deco architecture of the Center from all vantage points. It reverberates with the 1930’s Park & Shop theme, serving its customers. Importantly, from a human caring perspective, the parking’s proximity to the Center makes the Center and the AFI Silver Theater more accessible to older residents, and those with disabilities than the further off parking garages on Wayne and Ellsworth.

We ask that the Adjacent Communities Plan be removed from the Downtown Silver Spring Plan.

Working Together, Equity & Reparations are best served through the Guidance and Protections of our 1967 Montgomery County Fair Housing Law, our “Open Housing Law,” signed into law 1 year before the U.S. government’s 1968 Fair Housing Law.

These results are NOT achieved through the proposed Adjacent Communities Plan.

See https://www2.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcgpportalapps/Press_Detail.aspx?Item_ID=22322

Mo Co's Open Housing Law, 7/20/1967, was proclaimed "nearly a full year before President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the federal Fair Housing Act into law on April 11, 1968."

Montgomery County Proclaims Open Housing Day For Immediate Release: Tuesday, July 31, 2018

[history of the Montgomery County Office of Human rights](#)

https://montgomerycountymd.gov/humanrights/Resources/Files/civil_right_progress.pdf

See 1965-1971, "Years of Activism" "Mo Co Open Housing Law" Passed by Mo Co Council July 20, 1967



Equity & Reparations can best be achieved rather through Already Existing Opportunities & Avenues, Including Adaptive Reuse! One golden Opportunity is the elegant mid-century modern Guardian Bank Building of glass panels and brick at Ga. & Cameron, by noted Mo Co architect Fon J. Montgomery, originally advertised to be developed for Millennials, however, nothing has happened there for years; what a wonderful superb spot for authentic Equitable, Equity Condos or Apt. Homes, for Missing Middle, for the Work Force, what a terrific vital location in DTSS!

Also, PB's 8787 Ga. Ave! Including saving many of its wonderful trees, could have been the perfect Appropriate Model Spot for Equity, Equitable "housing, homes" of many different types, single-family homes, townhouses, condos, duplexes, small apt buildings! A great location also in DTSS! **Let's put on our thinking caps to arrive at other existing Equitable solutions! Let's Work Together!**

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SSHS MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the all volunteer 501(c)(3) Silver Spring Historical Society is to create and promote awareness and appreciation of downtown Silver Spring's heritage through sponsorship of educational activities and the preservation and protection of historical sites, structures, artifacts and archives.

See also Statements by Mo Co Taxpayers League, Mo Co Civic Federation, & Responsible Growth for Montgomery County, emphasizing Working Together to achieve "inclusiveness, diversity, prosperity."