



SILVER SPRING CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

Regularly Scheduled Monthly Meeting

Monday March 11, 2013 7pm

Silver Spring Civic Building

LAST MEETING SUMMARY



SSCAB Meeting Summary
February 11, 2013

1. *Welcome, Introductions & Announcements:* Vice Chair Bernice North called the meeting to order at 7:05pm. Introduction of SSCAB members and community attendees.
2. *Acceptance of summary of prior meeting:* January 14, 2013 meeting minutes accepted.
3. *Introduction of Acting 3rd Police District Commander Michael Price: **Cancelled***
Added Item: Conversation with Ramona Bell Pearson (Assistant CAO for the County) Regarding Civic Building Community Access Pilot Program:
 - As of February 1, program has granted approximately \$60,000
 - All requests have received at least some form of assistance; average covers about 75% of building costs
 - Looking to program some of the funds for building repairs
 - Reporting soon to the Council, hopeful the program is continued next FY
4. *Update from the Transportation Management District (Jim Bunch & Phil Olivetti, SSCAB Representatives on the TMD):*
 - Speaking as part of effort to better integrate SSCAB and TMD tasks
 - Recent TMD items include: Transit Center (letter to County Executive), Walking Path @ Center to Ripley District (opening shortly/now open), Silver Spring Bike-Share Program Advocacy, Bus Rapid Transit Plan
 - Potential coordination with SSCAB on WMATA Master Plan
5. *A Conversation on the FY 14 Budget (Resource Staff: Brady Goldsmith, Office of Management and Budget):*
 - While FY14 items are still confidential, discussion can focus on process and topics of interest to SSCAB
 - Provided timeline summary of budget process through approval in late May
 - Discussed the school system budget (currently ~46% of total); school board this year has requested \$10M above M.O.E. requirement, which if provided would set the new bar for funding
 - Discussed debt level; decreasing, but with low rates is now the time to take on more debt?
 - Council hearings in April (9th, 10th & 11th)
 - Board letter re: priorities to focus on 4 areas: **police presence, maintain civic building access, increase affordable housing initiatives & increase positive youth development initiative.** Discussed possible addition of transportation; will follow-up with TMD representatives prior to letter issuance. Board voted in support of these four priorities, and possible addition of transportation.

6. *Councilmember(s)' Comments/Reports:* Rich Romer (Valerie Ervin): thanked the Board for attending the joint meeting in January with Murial Bowser; Forest Glen Passage (tunnel under Forest Glen) T&E committee; Long Branch Plan expected to reach Council ~ July 2013, White Oak sometime this fall
7. *Committee Reports:*
 - TREE Committee: January meeting notes in packet; focused on tree canopy bills. Discussed draft letter to County Executive that would support the goal of the bills (as details are still being worked out); motion to send letter passed
 - CED/Neighborhood Joint Meeting in January: summary in packet; discussion with Ernest Bland of the Silver Spring Urban District Advisory Committee, update on Taste the World, Fenton Village
8. *Chair's Report:* Discussed request to co-sponsor Safe Silver Spring meeting on February 19; attending Board members couldn't commit to the night, will follow-up through Evan. Board retreat to be held on Saturday, April 6th; location TBD. Two of the soon to be new Board members in attendance recognized: Jonathan Bernstein & Mary Ann Zimmerman
9. *Director's Report:* Upcoming meetings include Smart Growth @ 6pm on Wed. and The Blairs' redevelopment plan at 7:30pm. Other meetings relating to Silver Spring Library and WMATA are also scheduled; refer to E-Blast for dates/times. State of the County address to be on February 20th at Civic Building – free and open to the public
10. *New Business:* n/a
11. *Adjourn:* 8:50pm

COMMITTEE MTG SUMMARIES

NOTE: THIS WAS A JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING OF ALL THREE COMMITTEES

(Held Monday, February 25)

Submitted by Dan Morales

The Silver Spring Citizen's Advisory Board has heard from a lot of residents about their concerns for adequate open space to ensure a better quality of life for the CBD as we go through this current burst of development. To that end we have held a series of open meeting with various parties to prompt a public discussion on how best to advise the County Executive on this issue. Our final meeting of three was with Montgomery County's Silver Spring CBD planner Robert Kronenburg who summarized the history and current state of the County's vision through its master plan for the CBD.

Downtown is currently working from of the 2000 Master Plan for the CBD. The previous one was last done in 1993. The impetus for the 2000 plan was the Theme Park planned for downtown Silver Spring which never happened, thankfully. It did spur the writing of a more pedestrian/mixed-use downtown which we currently have in the Ellsworth Drive plan. The 2000 CBD Master Plan broke down the CBD into districts like the Ripley District, Fenton Village, South Silver Spring etc. although it was mostly focused on the core where the Discovery Building and Ellsworth Drive plan happened. The plan anticipated more office and less residential that has happened. It's important to stress that the plan is intended to be a vision for growth rather than a mandate, as the market will do what it may. Another unaccounted feature is the size of the units being built are much smaller than anticipated. This is most likely due to the massive influx of young professionals into our region attracted by our relatively robust employment market

in this deep recession from which we are only just now emerging. Mr. Kronenburg still felt that the plan's vision has been fulfilled.

One of the major issues with the downtown build-out that has emerged is the lack of open space. While there were several public and semi/public spaces built, the concern is with the massive amount of new construction anticipated in the next decade, the CBD will still need more usefull open spaces both green and hardscaped. Currently the open space requirement in the CBD is that 10% (?) of the site be devoted to public space, meaning that while the landlord maintains and regulates the space, it is open to the public during daylight hours. Any new development must either comply with this requirement or donate a certain sum of money to an amenity fund which the county will then use on an alternate public space location in a manner it chooses. The problem with this approach is that the CBD ends up being littered with unused mini-public parks, depending on the size of the lot being developed, while the street scape looses it's urban coherence and quality. A better way of securing the kind and size public spaces that the community could make better use of would be to wave the requirement for open space (different from lot coverage maximums) in favor of larger and more thoughtfully located public spaces that would truly be public. This would also benefit the landowners as it's been shown that good public spaces increase the value of adjacent properties. The question of the nature of public space and whether it truly is public space arose. Is a space truly public if it's administration is regulated by a private landowner's security personel versus the local jurisdiction? While there's an economic incentive to having landowners responsible for the maintenance of a space, when a space is large enough like Veteran's plaza, there's the assumption from the public that they may use the space as a commuity gathering and all that implies. Another impediment to pulling together the public space plan is the multi jurisdictional nature of the CBD where by various regulating agencies aren't coordinating their mandates in a way that corresponds to the CBD, that being as one integrated community. This is especially problematic when one agency is tasked with moving as much traffic through the CBD while another is concerned with pedestrian safety and tying the spaces together.

The question becomes how should the County should incentivize this out-come? It seems that the first thing required is a good plan that looks at how the whole CBD works as a whole. This has already been achieved in the excellent and thorough [Silver Spring Central Business District Green Space Guidelines](#) of 2010 which identifies ideal locations and sizes of green open spaces through out the CBD designed to ensure the best quality of life for all residents. It also shows the economic benefits for the surrounding businesses.

Some of the possibilities to achieve this plan suggested are as follows:

- Get the County to make better use of the properties it already owns by either creating public spaces that are open to all.
- Get the County to trade their properties with owners in locations that would be better suited for open spaces.
- Improve landowner incentives to go with the existing amenity fund in exchange for the open space requirement through more density or lower costs.
- Require all CBD developers to go with the amenity fund in a way that's deemed equitable to all parties.
- Use the current ZTA process to create the outcomes that the planning department has identified beneficial to the CBD as a whole.
- Open up the current 2000 master plan for modifications.
- Call for a new Master plan that recognizes the new realities and provides for methods to achieve better outcomes.

- Ask that Montgomery County coordinate it's agencies to look at the community as a whole to both save money and produce desired results.

The SSCBD is looking for any suggestions that can create better quality of life for all members of society, from landowners to renters, from residents to visitors, from rich to poor and young to old. We are hoping to equipe the County Executive and the dedicated planning staff with advice and support in their efforts towards this end.