

## **Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board meeting**

**December 14, 2020**

### **Minutes**

#### **Attendees:**

Staff:

Reemberto Rodriguez

Shawn Morris

SSCAB:

Lysette House, Chair of board

Sofia Bushen, Vice Chair

John Seelke

Don Slater

Jay Elvove

Lene Tsegaye

Melanie Fonder Kaye, Parliamentarian

Michelle Foster

Debra Wylie

Ken Lemberg

Jeremy Dickey

Ed Levy

Vanesa Pinto

Patricia Germann

SSTMD:

Harriet Quinn

Guests

Commander Darren Francke, MCPD

Senator Will Smith

Delegate Lorig Charkoudian

Delegate David Moon

Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins

Senator Jeff Waldstreicher

Delegate Emily Shetty

Delete Jared Solomon

Delegate Al Carr

Sean Emerson obo Councilmember Evan Glass

Melanie Wenger, Montgomery County Office of Intergovernmental Relations

Julio Murillo obo Council President Tom Hucker

Deputy Commander Brent Kearney, MCPD 3rd District

Public attendees:

Mike English

Joseph House  
Judy Reed  
Stepahnie Maynor  
Gary Klauber  
Sarah H  
301-681-3591  
Bee Ditzler  
A.G.

1. Introductions

- a. Lysette opened the monthly SSCAB meeting
- b. SSCAB members introduced themselves
- c. The newly appointed SSCAB members were introduced
  - i. Jeremy Dickey
  - ii. Kenneth Lemberg
  - iii. Vanesa Pinto
  - iv. Lene Tsegaye

2. Minutes from November has been approved

3. Public Safety Report presented by Commander Darren Francke

Most of the below numbers are from silverspring

- a. Robbery has decreased by 22%
- b. Burglaries have decreased by 5%
- c. Two areas classified as COVID enhanced issues; auto theft and aggravated assaults. The auto theft remains high 31%. - 349 auto thefts. Domestic violence as eased by compared to beginning of COVID.

The commander always urged the group to lock their cars and not to leave their car running.

4. A conversation with the State Delegation from District 18 and 20

DISTRICT 18: Jeff Waldstreicher, Senator, Delegates Alfred Carr, Emily Shetty, Jared Solomon

DISTRICT 20, Will Smith, Senator; Delegates Lorig Charkoudian, David Moon, Jheanelle Wilkins.

Legislators from the districts introduced themselves and presented the upcoming legislative session and what their priorities are.

Senator Waldstreicher noted everyone on the SSCAB zoom meeting will have more access to legislators than they've ever had. This is because most of the work of the legislature gets done in committee and that committee work will now be accessible online via zoom. In addition, the Senator invited the public attendees and the SSCAB to advice, counsel and become an ear for the needs of silver spring residents. In the upcoming legislative session, the Senator will cover three things. These are;

1. **Health fall out:** the legislatures need to make sure citizens have all the tools necessary to protect themselves from COVID-19 and to care for those who are ill.
2. **Economic fall out:** although some of us are fortunate to work from home, there are people who are currently not working and people

who cannot stay at home because they are essential employees and have to put their lives at risk every day outside their homes. Thus, legislators need to ascertain the economic fall outs are being addressed which includes eviction protection and other benefits

3. **Police reforms:** It is imperative to have trust in the police department. Legislatures will put together a robust package that will increase accountability and transparency in local police and throughout the state.

Senator Will Smith stated COVID-19 is going to be legislator's top priority to ensure folks have the financial resources necessary to meet their needs. There are 37 bills (COVID-19 related relief) that the governor vetoed and 20 of them were Senate bills or originate in the Senate and only seven had cross files the rest of the House; these will be addressed in the first couple of weeks in session. The legislators also will be focusing on housing. Housing has been a significant issue which falls under the jurisdiction of district 20 committees. The second focus of Senator Smith is to identify ways to capture lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and apply those lessons to our policy making process. For instance, our courts in our jails are historical lows now for pretrial and prerelease we are innovating in the way of we are supervising folks in the way that we are selecting individuals to be released from judicial supervision or correctional supervision so if that is not the determinantal of public safety which has not been. These are some lessons learned that we can take and applying more possibly in the future. These are things that just eight or nine months ago were unheard of and now they're common practice so being able to capture some of those lessons learned is going to be top of mind. In addition, the D-20 and D18 focus on purple line and purple line relief for businesses. In the Senate the chairman of budget tax is going to have a hearing in the next couple weeks to talk about the purple line and the small business relief that'll be part of their hearings and develop findings and move forward with the session. Other top item that come out of judicial proceeding committee will be policing, exoneree bill, parole reform, expungement and shielding initiatives and immigration reform.

Delegate Jared Solomon (D-18) serves on appropriation Committee in the House and vice chair of the Education and Economic Development subcommittee. Solomon's top priorities is the veto overrides. Last year two historic bills were passed. These are "Built to Learn Act" and "Blueprint Maryland for Future".<sup>1</sup> D-18 Solomon will be working on a bill that prescribe high quality affordable childcare. On the transportation side one of the bills that was vetoed was a bill that Solomon introduced last year around expanding mark service creating run through service in Virginia connecting Harford County with Delaware connecting the Camden line in Baltimore City. The bill has gotten an overwhelming vote in the House and Senate. In addition, Solomon is going to bring back a bill that he has introduced last two sessions that would create a tremendous amount of oversight and transparency in the P3 process specifically regarding the 495, 270 widening projects. Finally, the other sets of bills Solomon will be working on is environment to get University system to go carbon neutral. Maryland would be the second University system in the country to reach that goal. The Appropriation Committee is going to be spending a lot of time on the budget to protect individuals who really need it and allocating the investments where they need to be.

---

<sup>1</sup> [Explainer: Built to Learn Act - Maryland State Education Association \(marylandeducators.org\)](https://marylandeducators.org/): "Built to Learn Act" and "Blueprint Maryland Future" explained.

Delegate Shetty (D-18) is personally working on a couple of different areas. These areas primarily fall in three buckets. First, protecting vulnerable communities from exploitation. Delegate Shetty serves on the House Judiciary Committee. One is a bill that eliminate the name change publication requirement. Under Maryland law, a notice of request to change a name must published in a newspaper of general circulation in the county where a person lives.<sup>2</sup> This law disproportionately harms LGBT individuals as well as domestic violence survivors who now by the virtue of sort of having this live forever on the internet. Couple decades ago, name change publication circulates for brief period and then it would go away now it exists forever on the internet. This bill would remove name change publication requirement which is something that several different states have done. D. Shetty working with Senator Waldstreicher that redefines undue influence which is a way to the codify how somebody can be taken advantage of under current law financially. This is an idea that came to us by way of the constituent whose uncle before passing away had nearly his entire estate stolen from him by a financial advisor who had just trusted relationship with him and was able to convince him to will over his entire estate.

Another bill that is focused on providing free trainings on preventing identifying and reporting child abuse. This training is available to anybody who is interested to take it. Unfortunately, one of the things that we've seen through the pandemic is significant uptake in domestic violence cases and in child abuse cases as well. Teachers, preschool teachers and other folks who are mandatory reporters who have that daily interaction with kids typically in person are usually on the frontlines of being able to respond and report these types of incidents. Now we increase in remote schooling, it is difficult to report. Thus, having this type of training available, accessible and free to anybody who wants to take it will help reduce some of the issues that are seen across the state.

The second bucket is a bill on lowering the out of pocket costs for healthcare. The House pass this bill unanimously. The bill will allow pharmacists to do a substitution at the pharmacy counter if there is a lower cost therapeutic available to patients.

The last bucket of issues is on moving Maryland towards Zero Waste Future. D. Shetty is working with delegate Charkoudian and number of others from across the General Assembly on a package of legislation that will help move Maryland towards zero waste. Delegate Shetty has two bills in that package one is a bill that will expand and create a green business certification program that is modeled on Montgomery county. This program seeks to engage and bring businesses to the table that would like to opt into a program like this to be able to market to consumers of their engagements and types of practices. Then, the second bill is a bill that would prohibit common ownership communities like HOA from preventing homeowners from engaging in composting. The bill promotes engaging in green practices and removing common ownership communities' restrictions.

Delegate Al Carr (District 18) serves on the Health and Government Operations Committee in the House. Things that will be covered in this upcoming legislative session is education that's a carryover from the last session which is the "Blueprint" and "Built to Learn Act" to move MD school system towards a world class. But, in the pandemic big part of education is broadband. As kids zooming into elementary school, middle school, high school and college; it has become very apparent the digital divide, the haves and the have nots places within Maryland, Montgomery County not just rural areas but also suburban areas in urban areas where broadband is not available or there's limited choices. So, the focus will be on broadband and how can access to broadband will be expanded especially for students. Delegate Al Carr highlighted one bill that he is personally

---

<sup>2</sup> Current Maryland name change law. [Name Change | Maryland Courts \(mdcourts.gov\)](https://mdcourts.gov)

championing and working on. This is a safety net program that helps vulnerable homeowners. This program provides a break on property tax credit for individuals who make less than \$60,000. There is also additional benefit for seniors in addition to the income requirement. This program has been around for a long time it benefits a lot of Marylander. It was discovered in a state audit this year the state agency that administers this program had been shortchanging applicants. This affects Montgomery County. It is a statewide issue, Montgomery County owners are specially hit, Baltimore City homeowners as well. They've been incorrectly subtracting other unrelated tax credits. For instance, so a homeowner who was owed \$1000 for this tax credit they applied for County was applying some separate tax credit or subtracting that in a way that they should not have. The state agency had stop doing that in 2020 they started calculating tax credit correctly. However, the agency is not willing to go back into the past to make it right. As a result, D. Al Carr has introduced legislation that will clarify that tax credits can be calculated correctly and that would allow to go back three years to make people whole who were shortchanged.

Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins represents District 20 along with Senator Will Smith, Delegates Charkoudian and Delegate David Moon. She serves on the Ways and Means Committee. Ways and Means Committee in the House deals with issues related to elections, education issues, and taxes that are some core issues in terms of any bills on these topics that come through the House the Committee consider them first. Delegate Wilkins has a role in the House of delegates of being the parliamentarian. She is focused in on the rules that the House will have and ensuring that they are able to enforce them and work efficiently as we're in this new climate. Delegate Wilkins stated that the Ways Committee have been working hard to advocate for businesses along the purple line route. During the 2020 legislative session, the District 20 team and another colleagues, District 18 and Prince Georges County members worked diligently to ensure that we got \$2,000,000 in the budget to support grants to businesses impacted by the purple line construction that are along the route in Prince Georges and in Montgomery County. However, budget works at the discretion of the governor to spend those funds have been available at \$2,000,000 that's available to help businesses who are struggling first from the purple line and now due to COVID-19 have been available to the governor to distribute since July 1<sup>st</sup>. She reported they have not heard from the governor in terms of if and how he's going to allocate those funds. There is going to be a hearing on this issue and appreciate the continued support of the Citizens Advisory Board. She also added SSCAB is always been a great champion of renters in the community. Delegate Wilkins' number one priority in the upcoming session is housing and eviction relief for renters. The current pandemic has had a major impact on renters in our community. The committee is planning to bring back the Montgomery County Stable Home Act to the House to get it passed this year.<sup>3</sup> Delegate Wilkins will have legislation related to direct relief. The bill will prohibit late fees, rent increases for renters. It will also include the just cause provision. The direct relief offer break in terms of providing funds to local jurisdictions to help supplement programs that provide financial relief for landlords and tenants. The bill also codifies the current state protections against evictions and the federal CDC order.

Delegate Wilkins has a legislation dealing with tax policy looking at lowest earners and helping to expand the earned income tax credit so that low income workers can keep more money in their pocket. She also has a bill that looks at wealthiest Marylanders and ensure that when it comes to passing down wealth that the state is getting a fair share when it comes to taxes. School legislation banning discrimination that bill passed the House last year Senator Smith is committing to helping to make sure that it passes in the Senate this year. She has legislation that will stop state from

---

<sup>3</sup> [HB821 | Maryland 2020 | Montgomery County Stable Homes Act MC 12-20 | TrackBill](#)

funding \$10,000,000 in school resource officers to help supplements and resource officers all around the state and instead use those funds for much needed school counselors, mental health for restorative justice and other critical services that are needed in our schools.

Delegate Lorig Charkoudian (D-20) has a comprehensive bill on unemployment insurance. On a food security side, she has a bill related to maximizing SNAP benefits for people who pay their utilities to rent in some sort of technical fix, but it could bring in another 23 million in SNAP benefits to the states. She has several pieces of legislation related to clean energy and climate issues. She emphasized equity needs to be placed at the front and center of these bills in that we know, and we've seen more and more through the pandemic how every issue that affects everybody disproportionately affects communities of color and low-income communities. As a result, she has a bill related to low income energy efficiency, geothermal and prioritizing geothermal especially for folks who struggle most to pay their bills. She also has a bill related to community choice energy to support Montgomery County to get to the 100% clean energy with lower prices for after repairs bill to require the Public Service Commission, to consider labor and climate in all of their decision making, and a bill to build out the compost infrastructure statewide by banning search generators from disposing their waste in landfill and incinerators.

She has a bill that protects people from medical debt collection processes by hospitals predatory collection processes because nobody should be bankrupt or homeless because they got sick

After flower branch explosion there was an NTSB report with a number of recommendations, and she has a bill that is named after the flower branch victims and survivors and implement some of the recommendations of the NTSB report for the state of Maryland. Last year several members of the flower branch community testified on that bill it passed the House, but it didn't get out of the Senate because the session ended early, so they are be bringing that back.

In terms of mobile crisis, there were two men who were killed by police in the last few years in our area, both suffered from mental health issues. Delegate Charkoudian urged to respond to mental health crises with mental health professionals rather than law enforcement. She has a bill to increase the states spending on mental on mobile crisis units, and to strengthen the definition of the structures of mobile crisis units. This bill also proposes to authorize 911 to dispatch mobile crisis units to mental health crises even without police participating.

Finally, she has a bill requires MDOT to coordinate the efforts to get trees back into the communities that had trees cut down in the in the process of the construction. The communities thought that the trees were going to get replaced along the purple line route instead they were placed a couple hours away. These routes are heat island areas where there's a great deal of the trees was crucial and cooling the area in the summertime. Thus, it is imperative we get the trees back in those areas. These require coordinating efforts on private, public, MCPS County and state land. Delegate Charkoudain's bill puts the Department of Transportation and the Department of the Environment responsible for coordinating the effort and collaborate with local government and private landowners.

Delegate David Moon (District 20) serves on the House Judiciary Committee and now chair of the Criminal Law Subcommittee. The bulk of his work next year is going to be continuing a multiyear effort to repeal jail as a penalty for a range of nonviolent offenses and instances of criminalization of poverty. A number of district 18 and 20 delegates and senators on the call have put in cases of bills like this which resulted Maryland to have the most rapid declines in its prison population. Delegate Moon is going to continue that questions about what equity in restorative justice looks like in light of these bills.

## 5. Committee Reports

**CED Committee:** discussed the impact of purple line on commercial hubs.  
**Tree Committee:** drafted advice letter on shared street initiatives. The advice letter has been approved during this meeting.

**Neighborhood Committee:** had a discussion with local nonprofits in the social services sector and the arts sector. The discussion focused on how these local organizations have been impacted by the pandemic, how they have shifted their work during the pandemic, and their specific needs and support. The committee heard from a couple of members in the arts community and how they're trying to get creative during this pandemic and trying to get funding.

6. **CRAG Update:** planning to create different groups that specialize in different topics such as education, housing, food security, and vaccination. Melanin is working on social media toolkit.
7. **Urban District Update:** discussed about bringing in new businesses, and concerns about individuals being robbed in the daylight and ways to get better control of downtown Silver Spring.
8. **Silver Spring Transportation Management Division Recruitment:** Chris and have already been appointed by SSCAB and looking for one candidate.
9. **Councilmember(s) report:** Metro proposed major budget cuts and has announced plans to terminate weekend Metro service, cut bus routes and close some rail stations if they do not get a federal relief by next July. Unions, council members and advocacy groups have collaborated to pushed back on the proposal. Other core issue the council member(s) focused on is Fair Housing Act.<sup>4</sup>
10. **Chair Report:** No report. Lysette reminded SSCAB board members to join the January monthly and committee meetings. There is no Committee meetings in December.
11. **Regional Area Director's Report:** Reemberto reminded board members to read the regional area director's reports and reach out should the board members have questions. He also encouraged board members to connect with Delegate and Senators if they have question and chime in as a Montgomery county resident.

---

<sup>4</sup> Public Hearing for Fair Housing Act ; [DownloadFilePage \(montgomerycountymd.gov\)](#)