

# Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board FY 2017 Annual Report

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### 1. Elected Officials

In February we were joined by *At Large Councilmember* Hans Reimer. Hans serves on the Planning, Housing and Economic Development (PHED) Committee and the Government Operations and Fiscal Policy (GO) Committee.

*Councilmember* Reimer briefed us on the programs he is currently working on such as, expanding Pre-K for low income children estimated at \$20M cost, STEM Summit which is scheduled for the end of the month, Bike Summit on increasing protected bike lane network, and working with FCC's advisory council to look at internet service, rates and performance broadening. Hans would also like to review how playing fields are managed and maintained in the county.

In April *At Large Councilmember* Nancy Floreen, who serves on the PHED Committee, updated us on the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). She stated the BRT will run on the shoulder, which saves cost of acquiring right of way. BRT may be seen as "fancy or extended bus service". *Councilmember* Floreen also speculated the Purple Line won't happen soon, but hopefully in our lifetime. It was also noted that Governor Hogan has not attended, when invited, to events in Montgomery County.

In September *Councilmember* Tom Hucker recognized the board's efforts and provided updates on his work. Restaurant Week and Silver Screens have been a good boost to business and built stronger sense of community.

In November Debbie Spielberg of *Councilmember* Marc Elrich's staff provided an update on Renter Protection Legislation being approved by the PHED Committee and was going to full Council on 11/29/16.

### 2. Plans and Initiatives

Pete Cadence, CEO, and Eugene Monroe, former NFL player and advocate for marijuana gave a presentation on medical marijuana dispensary. GTI of Chicago is one of two companies

awarded dispensary licenses for District 20 by the state. *Delegates* David Moon and Will Smith are proposing legislation to allow recreational use in 'adult clubs'.

In November Matt Losak, *Chair*, Neighborhoods Committee introduced a panel of Silver Spring Regional Area public school principals who were in attendance. Karen Bryant-Silver Spring International Middle School, Alicia Deeny - Takoma Park Middle School, Casey Crouse - Eastern Middle School, Bob Geiger - New Hampshire Estates Elementary School and Jeff Kline - Oakview Elementary School.

Many challenges were noted by the principals including families being 'English language learners'. Language skills are lacking in the home, and poverty means minimal resources and limited mental health resources in the schools. Montgomery County Public Schools have one counselor per grade level, usually one per 250 students and a school psychologist on site one day a week.

*Linkages to Learning*, a program which supports student learning and families, is in partnership with MCPS and Community Based Organizations (CBOs). CBOs like Community Bridges and YMCA provide targeted assistance in the form of meals, clothing and mental health services while MCPS provides space at schools.

### 3. Agencies and Non Profits

In January John Kinsley, *Operations Chief MCRS*, shared tips on safe disposal of fireplace ashes.

Elizabeth Ortega gave us a preview of summer camps and a variety of programs the county is offering.

In April Lt. Jennifer McNeil noted that theft from vehicles was the number one crime in Silver Spring and throughout Montgomery County.

In September ESSCA's Bob Colvin reported that digital parking permit system was not working at all. *Councilmember* Tom Hucker is scheduled to meet with DOT in response to this specific complaint.

*Historian* David Rotenstein put forth his plan to lead a Black History tour of Silver Spring on 10/22/16.

Officer Joy Patil, *Community Services Officer*, Montgomery County Police, 3<sup>rd</sup> District reported on Nextdoor.com. It is a residential listserve app the police are using to communicate with residents and facilitate virtual neighborhood watch.

Richard Bingham, *Chief of Operations* for Urban District, summarized the services they provide to ensure that downtown Silver Spring is maintained as a clean, safe and attractive environment. Richard Bingham made certain to us that the *32 Red Shirts* are the 'eyes and ears'

of Downtown Silver Spring. He added Urban District covers 391 acres and is responsible for maintenance of all curbs, trees, crosswalks and turfs. It has also recycled 3 tons of material in 2014. It is also facing challenges with the impact of the newly located Progress Place.

Eric Rasch, *Operations Manager* of the Silver Spring Civic Building at Veterans Plaza reported on the center's growth and policies. Number of events has multiplied every year since opening in 2010.

In October *Battalion Chief* Mark Davis stated that 1<sup>st</sup> District is the busiest station in Silver Spring and week of 10/9 is Fire Prevention Week. They are doing a lot of public outreach this month.

Gilbert Zelaya *Outreach and Early Voting Coordinator*, described the voting process and demonstrated use of new optical scanners.

#### 4. SSCAB Committees and Director's Report

We officially welcomed our new board members, Mary Anderson, a resident in the county for 23 years, Vineda Myers of Takoma Park, Mulugeta Habteselassie of Silver Spring, and Donald Coffey a resident of Sligo Grandview.

In February the board will be drafting a letter on funding recommendations for Silver Spring programs.

September meetings were a joint session on Master Planning Process. County Council's PHED committee is holding its fifth work session to review the Renter Protection Bill. CED and TREE are planning to meet with Dan Hoffman head of *County's Innovation Program*.

*Regional Director* Reemberto Rodriguez and Ilana Branda of *Montgomery Housing Partnership* briefed us on Flower Branch fire. 58 households lost everything. \$750K were collected in donations from the community.

Purple Line is on schedule notwithstanding current lawsuits.

All things considered, we had a very productive year and look forward to continuing our work.