



East Silver Spring Citizens' Association, Inc.

March 2013

EAST SILVER SPRING CITIZENS ASSOCIATION (ESSCA) MEETING

THERE WILL NOT BE A REGULAR MEETING IN APRIL

REGULAR MEETING PLACE--SLIGO URBAN RECREATION BUILDING

500 Sligo Avenue, at corner of Piney Branch Road; parking lot entrance is on Valley Street

REGULAR MEETING DATE: Third Monday of month (Sept.- May) Doors open 7:00 pm; Meeting starts 7:30 pm

JOIN ESSCA'S LIST-SERVE: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/eastsilverspringcivic>

(Include your name and street name when you send your "join request")

PROPOSED CONSTITUTION CHANGES At our March meeting we reviewed and discussed a handful of proposed changes to our Constitution. Below is an accounting of the changes, and where appropriate, the reasoning behind them. The Board has voted to recommend all of these changes be made and there will be an opportunity for members to vote on their adoption at the next ESSCA meeting in May. To clarify, underlined text represents a proposed addition and strike through text represents a proposed deletion.

Item 1/Article IV, Dues, Section B: Members who are still delinquent by the March meeting shall be notified by the Treasurer that they are in arrears. ~~The Treasurer shall, on or before the March meeting, furnish to the Executive Committee a list of members whose dues are in arrears. The Treasurer shall then promptly advise those members by mail prior to April 1st that they are in arrears, and that they will be ineligible to vote, if they do not pay their dues.~~

Reasoning behind proposed change: While we believe ESSCA needs to notify members they are in arrears for their dues, asking the Treasurer to do so in the manner prescribed places an undue burden on our Board members, who serve in a voluntary capacity.

Item 2/Article VI, Elections, Section A: The officers shall be nominated as follows: the President shall appoint by February 1 of each year a nominating committee of at least ~~three~~ one members.

Reasoning behind proposed changes: There is no recollection amongst a majority of the current board that we have ever had a nominating committee of three members. Furthermore, we believe doing so places an undue burden on the board and other members to find three people to do this.

Item 3/Article VII, Removal from Office, Section A: An officer or member of the Executive Committee may be removed from office after a fair hearing at a regular or special meeting of the Association by vote of a majority of members present. Notice of such a hearing must be included in the meeting notice ~~mailed~~ sent to the membership at least seven days prior to the meeting.

Reasoning behind proposed changes: We think it only fair that those compelled to vote one way or the other on the removal of a board member from office do so in person at the meeting at which this is scheduled to take place. Also, we do not "mail" newsletters, but rather hand-deliver them to households.

Item 4/Article VIII, Duties of Offices, Section C: ~~The Treasurer is authorized to keep on hand a petty cash fund up to an amount determined by the Executive Committee.~~ The Treasurer shall be responsible for the timely filing ~~before April~~ of all tax returns required by Federal and State law.

Reasoning behind the proposed changes: There is no recollection amongst a majority of the current board that we have ever maintained a petty cash fund, nor, given our limited expenses, do we see any reason to do so. Also, the change regarding timely filing of returns is a reflection of the actual due dates of those items, some of which are not due in April.

Item 5/Article X, Meetings, Section A: The Association shall hold regular bi-monthly meetings except in June, July and August, unless otherwise determined by the Executive Committee.

Reasoning behind the proposed changes: Regular monthly meetings were historically a major factor in how members got information about relevant events, issues, county government programs and other concerns. With the proliferation of email, the internet and the ESSCA list serve, the need for meetings of such frequency is now obsolete. While we can still call a special meeting whenever needed with appropriate notice to members, monthly meetings do not appear to be necessary. Furthermore, this change would more closely match the behavior of other nearby active civic groups. Also, we have never met in June.

Item 6/Article XI, Amendments, Section A: A motion to make simple amendments to the Constitution shall be submitted ~~in writing~~ at a regular meeting.

Reasoning behind the proposed change: Submitting proposed amendments in writing places an undue burden on our members.

Item 7/By-Laws/Article 1, Dues: ~~Non-members who wish to receive the Advocate shall pay \$1 per year.~~

Reasoning behind the proposed change: Non-members have historically received the Advocate free of charge.

Item 8/By-Laws/Article 2, Standing Committees: HISTORIC RESEARCH COMMITTEE This committee researches and provides information on the historic resources present within the Citizen's Association boundaries. This committee shall serve as the interface between the Citizen's Association and staff, elected and appointed officials involved in the nomination, preservation and maintenance of said resources.

Reasoning behind the proposed change: While currently inactive, adding this committee on which members voted to create over three years ago only seems appropriate.

DEVELOPMENT UPDATE/STUDIO PLAZA received Planning Board approval at their February 21st meeting. The 11-story 415 residential rental unit project in the block bounded by Thayer, Silver Spring and Georgia Avenues and Fenton Street will move forward in the permitting process, and according to the owner, Fairfield Development, will likely break ground later this year.

ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT CONSIDERATION. We are concerned about the lack of definition in the mandated step-down height of new construction west of Fenton Street. Currently, most of the blocks between Fenton St. and Georgia Avenue allow for a maximum height of 110' while buildings fronting Fenton Street are only allowed a maximum height of 60'. Our concern is that there is no defined depth for the transition between the two heights. In other words, based on the current Master and Sector Plans for our neighborhood, a developer would be allowed to construct a new 110' tall building with only a minimal 5' ledge at the 60' height fronting Fenton Street. We believe addressing this issue with further definition via a simple zoning text amendment, rather than the more complicated re-opening of the Master and Sector Plans, which would likely not be heard for at least another 2 years according to planning staff, is probably the appropriate route for further consideration of this issue. We are only just starting to consider this, so please stay tuned for an update on this in the next *Advocate* and at our next meeting. In the mean time, feel free to contact our Chair of Planning, Zoning & Public Works Committee, Karen Roper, if you have questions or if you want to learn more about this issue.

BATTLE OF THE BANDS/ESSCA PARTY COMING SOON! We have several volunteer musicians in the neighborhood who have agreed to provide free entertainment for the community. We are still in the planning stages, so date and location are both TBD, but this will likely happen on a weekend in late May/early June. Time, place and other important details will be finalized in the next newsletter, so stay tuned. Nancy Gurganus is our entertainment coordinator, so if you have any questions or thoughts, feel free to contact her at 301-585-3726.

ELECTIONS/NOMINATIONS: Members interested in running for one of the board offices must have their names submitted for nomination. Nominations should be submitted to the Chair of the Nominating Committee, Betsy Taylor, by April 15th, for inclusion in the next newsletter as per the constitution, to be sent prior to the May meeting, when we will hold elections. Betsy can be reached at 301-589-4868. Nominations cannot be made at the May meeting.

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR ESSCA DUES? If not or if you are unsure if you are up to date, please contact our Treasurer, Steve Knight. Dues are \$10 per household per membership year, which runs from September through the summer. Payment can be mailed to 808 Violet Place, Silver Spring, MD 20910.