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## East Silver Spring Citizens' Association, Inc.

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November 2013

**Evan Glass, Nighttime Economy Task Force Representative  
will speak at our next**

**EAST SILVER SPRING CITIZENS ASSOCIATION (ESSCA) MEETING**

**MEETING DATE: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2013**

**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")

**EVAN GLASS WILL BE THE FEATURED SPEAKER AT OUR NEXT MEETING** in November. Evan will give us a presentation on the findings of the Nighttime Economy Task Force. Created in 2013, the Task Force's vision is "To develop creative place making opportunities and sensible policies that encourage an increased nighttime social life for residents, employees and visitors of all ages and cultural backgrounds".

**AGENDA FOR NOV. 18 MEETING:** 7:30-7:45: introductions/news items; 7:45-8:30: Evan Glass, Nighttime Economy Task Force Presentation, followed by questions/answers; 8:30-8:45: new business/issues; 8:45: adjournment.

### **PLEASE CONSIDER JOINING ESSCA!**

**WE ARE YOUR CIVIC ASSOCIATION.** Membership dues allow us to: Print this newsletter, beautify our neighborhood and our parks, work on other issues beneficial to the community, including working with local developers for better projects, parking permits and monitoring neighborhood crime.

**WITH YOUR MEMBERSHIP WE COULD IMPROVE ON THESE EFFORTS AND DO A LOT MORE.** Annual ESSCA dues are \$10/family. Dues cover each meeting season, from September to May. Please pay at our next meeting, or send a check (payable to ESSCA) to Steve Knight, ESSCA Treasurer, 808 Violet Place, Silver Spring MD 20910. Thank you!

### **SEPTEMBER MEETING REPORT**

At our last meeting we heard from Greg Ossont, Deputy Director with Montgomery County General Services, who told us about plans for Progress Place, the county-owned facility that provides meals, clothing, counseling and emergency shelter services to the area's homeless population. The county intends to relocate Progress Place to a site behind the Georgia Avenue Fire and Police Station. This site was selected two years ago and a redevelopment plan is being negotiated where a private developer will gain ownership and development rights for the existing structure housing Progress Place and the adjacent parking lot on Colonial Lane in exchange for building a new structure on the narrow strip of land behind the Station. Washington Properties, the developer of the Solaire apartment building on Ripley Street, was selected for the project. While plans have not been finalized they will likely build a twin to the current Solaire building on the current Progress Place site. Mr. Ossant stated the existing Progress Place structure is at the end of its useful life and in need of extensive refurbishment. The preliminary plan is for the new Progress Place to be a 3-story 25,000 square foot facility that would provide the same services as the current facility.

Since the initial development arrangement was defined the county enacted a Property Disposition Bill, which gives the Council oversight and approval authority over the county executive for the conversion and redevelopment of county-owned property. After this enactment the council requested the investigation of adding personal living quarter (PLQ) units to the program for Progress Place. Mr. Ossont explained a PLQ is basically like a hotel room, providing individual living, bathroom and sleeping facilities for individuals transitioning out of homelessness. The initial Council request made this past spring was to add approximately 42 PLQ's and he stated a preliminary examination showed this added significantly to the project cost. The council has since requested alternatives be investigated where some PLQ's could be added at a lower overall project cost. Mr. Ossont said he and his staff believe this can be achieved by streamlining the space requirements for Progress Place by about 20 percent, which were admittedly

a bit generous, and by reducing the number of PLQ's to about half the initial request. He added that any increased cost due to the addition of PLQ's might be covered by the county's Housing Initiatives Fund, which was established in part for these types of uses.

Mr. Ossont said the anticipated schedule is to have the program finalized by November/December of this year, so that the County can finalize its deal with the private developer by the beginning of the New Year. Mr. Ossont said he and his office would then arrange a series of meetings with stakeholders for them to provide input, and that this would include ESSCA, Montgomery Preservation Inc. (MPI) which owns the adjacent B&O Railroad Museum, staff with the adjacent Fire and Police Station and others.

The Group Raised and Discussed the Following Concerns:

- One person asked why it was decided this site was chosen for Progress Place. Mr. Ossont responded its being on county-owned property and very close to the current facility were determinants for the new location. Also, it appears to have the least impact on the residential community to the east.
- When asked about facility access and provisions for parking on what appears to be a tightly-packed site, Mr. Ossont responded that access would be from the drive and sidewalk on the south side of the station, which is shared with MPI. Also, the Progress Place program will include parking for staff and volunteers (the typical PLQ resident does not own a car) as well as spaces for MPI, to offset those they will likely lose when the Metropolitan Branch Trail is constructed on a portion of their site. He added there will be some need for off-site parking. When questioned about where this would occur he suggested space in the county-owned Garage #4 located behind the Daycare and Pacci's Restaurant on the opposite side of Georgia Avenue. Members responded that space in this garage is very limited, as all but the ground level are not useable because of disrepair. Mr. Ossont responded this will need further study.
- Others asked what will Progress Place clients do between meals and after hours, as there is concern that they will use B&O for hangout space, making it less viable as an event space for which B&O depends for income for facility maintenance. Mr. Ossont responded the new facility will be managed by staff 24/7, but added these issues need to be looked into further with stakeholders and facility operators.
- Attendees also expressed concern about loitering and a possible safety perception for nearby pedestrians, especially those using the sidewalk that goes under CSX/Metro tracks, which is increasingly important connect between downtown and residents in South Silver Spring. Mr. Ossont said a combination of 24/7 staff plus increased police presence when in the adjacent building when they move fully out of the Sligo Avenue station would help with this and that they would look to additional input from the community and dialog with Progress Place staff to find a solution to these issues.

#### **OTHER NEWS ITEMS**

**THE GATEWAY PARK SCULPTURE** located near the intersection of Fenton St. and Burlington Ave. will be sold by the county to a private individual, as reported in our last newsletter. This is largely because of the high cost of much-needed refurbishment. The county intends to use funds from the sale to put towards replacing the sculpture and they furthermore intend to include the community in the artwork replacement selection process. Nancy Gurganus will be taking the lead for a group from ESSCA on this. If you are interested in being a part of this, feel free to contact Nancy at [nancy.gurganus@gmail.com](mailto:nancy.gurganus@gmail.com).

**PURPLE LINE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STUDY** review comments were sent by the ESSCA Board to Maryland Transit Authority (MTA) last week. The focus of these comments was to get MTA to do more to mitigate negative impacts of the portion of the Purple Line to be constructed on Bonifant Street between Fenton Street and Georgia Avenue, which will affect over twenty small businesses. Issues addressed include noise, vibration and more careful design consideration for power poles and other related details for the rail line in this area.

**FENTON VILLAGE ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT (ZTA) WAS APPROVED** unanimously by the council in September. This ZTA clarifies requirements for new construction buildings fronting Fenton Street which are limited to 60 feet in height, such that the taller 110' height limit allowed further west in the center of the blocks between Fenton and Georgia cannot encroach within a few feet of Fenton Street. This ZTA will help to ensure the vision of Fenton Village as a transitional area between the commercial core of downtown Silver Spring and the historic single family residential community to the east while allowing for some measure of increased density with new development. Thanks to Councilmember Marc Elrich for his sponsorship and to Karen Roper and Karen Burditt for their advocacy on this issue. If you want to learn more, you can look up ZTA No. 13-06, Fenton Village Overlay.

**FENTON STREET MARKET** is over for the season, but will be running 2 special Holiday Markets - November 30th & December 21st – from 10AM to 4PM in the Civic Center Plaza. More information is available at [www.fentonstreetmarket.com](http://www.fentonstreetmarket.com). While you're there, consider a spin around the ice skating rink, which is open again for business as of mid-October and will be running through the winter.

**A LITTLE FREE LIBRARY** has opened on Chesapeake Avenue. Sponsored by Karen and Jeff Kenton, this is part of a growing worldwide effort to promote literacy and the love of reading through free book exchanges. The library is located at 714 Chesapeake Avenue. You can learn more about the Little Free Library Story at [www.littlefreelibrary.org](http://www.littlefreelibrary.org).