



East Silver Spring Citizens' Association, Inc.

SEPTEMBER 2016

*Redevelopment Plans for the vacant service station at the corner of Thayer & Fenton
will be the main topic of our next meeting*

EAST SILVER SPRING CITIZENS ASSOCIATION (ESSCA) MEETING • MEETING DATE: MONDAY, September 19, 2016 at 7:00 PM
MEETING LOCATION IS THE HISTORIC B&O TRAIN STATION

8100 Georgia Avenue, just south of the Fire Station

NEW MEETING TIME: Third Monday of every other month (Sept - May) Doors open 6:45 PM, Meeting starts 7:00 PM

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

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

VISIT ESSCA'S NEW WEBSITE: www.eastsilverspring.org EMAIL CONTACT: esscaprez@gmail.com

LEARN MORE ABOUT NEW PROJECT PLANNED FOR 900 THAYER AVENUE AT OUR SEPTEMBER MEETING

John Benton with Concourse Management will be the speaker at our next meeting. Concourse is managing the project at 900 Thayer for the County Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC), the agency that manages and develops affordable housing. 900 Thayer is the site at the corner of Fenton and Thayer currently occupied by the vacant service station. A plan for the property was approved by the Planning Board in 2013, but the developer was not able to secure financing and the project has languished since then. HOC recently purchased the site and will be developing the project. The 6 story building will contain approximately 120 affordable rental apartment units, 5,000 sf of retail and about 60 covered parking spaces. This will be an opportunity to learn more about HOC's plans for the project, including changes from the originally approved project as well as schedule for construction.

UPDATE ON NEW FACILITY FOR PROGRESS PLACE

At our May meeting we heard from Department of General Services Project Manager Ms. Ronnie Warner and Shepherd's Table Director Jacki Coyle about the new facility currently under construction behind the Fire Station and adjacent to the B & O Station. In a public-private deal organized by the County, the facility is being constructed by developer Washington Property Company in exchange for the land at the current site of Progress Place 2 blocks north on Colonial

Lane. The developer will eventually build a high rise apartment building on the old Progress Place site. The new 4 story building will provide much the same programming as the existing one: meals, counseling and other support services for the local homeless, plus emergency shelter accommodations during cold weather. One significant addition will be 21 single occupancy residences to serve as transitional housing for those coming out of homelessness. Each 220 square foot room will have a bathroom and small kitchenette. This part of the facility will also include a communal kitchen, living and laundry facilities. The SRO will be staffed 24 hours, 7 days a week. Construction will be completed and the facility turned over to the County and operators in late 2016, with an opening expected in early 2017.

DEVELOPMENT UPDATE: STUDIO PLAZA SET TO BEGIN CONSTRUCTION NEXT MONTH

This is the mixed use multi-family residential project in Fenton Village on the site of Parking Lot 3 (in the middle of block bounded by Thayer and Silver Spring Avenues, Fenton Street and Mayor's Alley behind Georgia Avenue). The 11 story building will house 415 rental apartments and approximately 10,000 sf of street level retail. The project will feature a central public open space and below grade parking. The parking will include 152 public spaces, replacing the ones in the existing surface lot. This project received Planning Board approvals over three years ago and the developer has since been arranging joint venture capital and resolving some project-

related litigation. About half of Parking Lot 3 will be closed at the end of this month. With input from ESSCA and local businesses, the County is developing mitigation plans to address the shortfall of convenient parking for businesses. Plans will include signage directing patrons to other local parking areas, including Parking Lot & Garage IV (one block to the south), Parking Lot 29 (east of Fenton, between Bonifant and Easley) and the Garage west of Georgia Avenue that serves Metro.

REPORT FROM OUR SUMMER MEETING WITH COUNTY D.O.T. REPRESENTATIVES

ESSCA hosted a special meeting with D.O.T. representatives in late June to learn more about project updates, plans for a feasibility study regarding dedicated bike lanes on Fenton Street and major underground utility work planned by PEPCO for Fenton Street. Representatives included Area Engineer Khursheed Bilgrami (K.B.), Pedestrian Safety Coordinator Jeff Dunkel and Bicycle & Pedestrian Priority Area Program Manager Matt Johnson. Issues covered included:

Project Updates

- The traffic circle at the intersection of Gist, Ray & Takoma Avenue was nearly complete just prior to the meeting. Folks may recall the impetus for this was fatal single car accident last fall resulting in the death of a local teenage driver.
- At the community's request the stop lines at the intersection of Sligo & Fenton were relocated just prior to the meeting to allow more room for buses to make their

turns without conflicts with stopped cars in the oncoming lanes.

- The speed limit on Wayne Avenue has been reduced from 30 to 25 MPH.
- Meeting attendees noted concerns with the crosswalk at Sligo & Grove: enhancement is needed to get cars to actually stop as the signs direct. This was raised at a meeting with DOT last fall and KB said D.O.T. would look into this further.
- K.B. noted that the planned FY 2017 repaving of Thayer & Silver Spring Avenues is at risk because of a 50% cut to the relevant portion of the county budget.

Bicycle, Pedestrian Priority Planning Area (aka BiPPPA)

Matt Johnson started this portion of the meeting by explaining this relatively new concept established by County Planning. Planning has classified in total 29 priority areas in the County with higher concentrations of people and they are eligible for increased scrutiny and projects for enhanced pedestrian and bicycle circulation accommodations. Downtown Silver Spring is one such area and it has a number of recent, ongoing and soon-to-be started projects of note, including:

- The new crosswalk at Fenwick Lane & Georgia
- Dedicated bike travel lanes on 2nd & Wayne Avenues between Spring & Cedar Streets
- A dedicated bike-protected intersection at Spring & 2nd Streets
- Bike lanes on Cameron and Dixon
- Continuation of the Metropolitan Branch Trail (MBT) between Montgomery College & the Metro Station, with work on King Street, Selim Road, a new bridge over Georgia Avenue planned for FY '19 or '20. This leg of the MBT also includes a route for the trail across B&O Station property, the alignment of which has just been finalized after a period of study and compromise with Montgomery Preservation Inc, the organization that owns and operates the B&O (the original route proposed by D.O.T. under the Station canopy proved unfeasible).

The County is also interested in studying the feasibility of dedicated bicycle travel lanes along Fenton Street, a topic of discussion at the June meeting. While there is already

a parallel route that includes Grove Street, some concerns leading to the study are that this existing route is not particularly clear and continuous, with bike and car traffic being comingled for at certain points. Mr. Johnson stressed that only a study is being called for at this time to better assess bike lanes' feasibility in the area. Elements of the study will include impact on pedestrian and vehicular traffic patterns and impacts on local businesses, including existing on street parking and loading. The scope of the study would include the length of Fenton Street from Montgomery College/King Street to Cameron Street. The study will commence in late 2016 and we will look to hear more from Mr. Johnson in the coming year.

Underground Utility Work Planned for Fenton Street

We also learned about plans to add high voltage transmission lines on Fenton Street. PEPCO states the added capacity is necessary because of increased demand in southern Montgomery County as well as the District. These are basically through lines that carry power to substations where it is then stepped down to a lower voltage and distributed via more traditional power lines, normally seen overhead in our area but now more commonly located underground. Because of the increased capacity and space required in our already-established neighborhood, the lines are planned to go underground in vaulted duct banks. The scope of the project will run from Cameron Street downtown and south into the District. Work will start at the north end very soon and PEPCO intends to complete it in segments of about 2 blocks in length each. The project will take approximately 2 years to complete. Many are concerned about disruption to travel patterns as well as the business along Fenton Street. It was noted that traffic management and mitigation typically happens via Permitting Services, however several folks pointed out that oversight of PEPCO's construction and maintenance is not particularly strong. ESSCA will be working with our Council Representatives to come up with some clear and enforceable plans to soften the disruptions as much as possible. Vehicular travel will presumably need to be maintained, with temporary lane shifts and the loss of on street parking being employed to allow room for digging trenches and constructing duct banks. Some asked if it would be

possible to underground the existing power lines along Fenton Street. D.O.T. responded the answer is no, as these are local service lines and a different part of the system. The County, however, has mandated that these lines be placed underground by developers of adjacent new construction projects, as we will see with Studio Plaza & 900 Thayer Avenue.

From Reemberto Rodriguez, Silver Spring Regional Area Director for Montgomery County:

If you are interested in what is going on in our broader Silver Spring Regional Area (including Takoma Park) you are invited to subscribe to the Regional Area's eNewsletter from the link at www.MontgomeryCountyMD.gov/SilverSpring

PLEASE JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP WITH ESSCA!

We Are Your Civic Association. Membership dues allow us to print and deliver 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 and safety issues.



NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS CAN NOW PAY THEIR DUES ONLINE THROUGH PAYPAL!

Visit the ESSCA Website:
<http://eastsilverspring.org/Membership.html>



WITH YOUR MEMBERSHIP WE COULD IMPROVE ON THESE EFFORTS & 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. Please note that ESSCA is a 501(c)(4) non-profit corporation and that member dues are not tax-deductable. Thank you!