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## East Silver Spring Citizens' Association, Inc.

NOVEMBER 2016

*How our neighborhood gets news with local journalists as our guests  
will be the focus of our next*

EAST SILVER SPRING CITIZENS ASSOCIATION (ESSCA) MEETING • MEETING DATE: MONDAY, November 14, 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](http://www.eastsilverspring.org) EMAIL CONTACT: [esscaprez@gmail.com](mailto:esscaprez@gmail.com)

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### LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW OUR NEIGHBORHOOD GETS NEWS AT OUR NOVEMBER MEETING

With the demise of the Gazette newspaper and reduced coverage by the Washington Post and while the Voice still exists online, we have experienced quite a reduction in news coverage for our area over the last couple of years. To fill the void, *Bethesda Beat* / *Bethesda Magazine* has been providing some coverage of the area, despite its name. Last week, local Silver Spring residents Mike Diegel and Mike Mowery have just started a new online newspaper, [www.sourceofthespring.com](http://www.sourceofthespring.com). Its coverage will include the area south of the Beltway, Four Corners, east to the Prince George's County line, south to the Washington D.C. line and west to Rock Creek Park. Mr. Diegel and Mr. Mowery will be at our meeting and will be joined by Lou Peck of *Bethesda Magazine* / *Bethesda Beat* and Josh Kurtz of Center Maryland, who are also partnering to create a new, more local news organization. We look forward to having a great discussion with local news reporters to highlight the important issues of our community on which we think better coverage is needed, including government, business, development and entertainment news plus stories about local residents.

*Note about the timing of our next meeting:  
while ESSCA meetings normally occur*

*the 3rd Monday of the month, we are making an exception this time because it would have had us meeting just a few days before the Thanksgiving holiday. So, we look forward to seeing everyone the second Monday of November on the 14th at 7:00 PM at the B&O Station!*

### PLANS FOR THE VACANT LOT AT 900 THAYER AVENUE

During our September meeting we heard from Mr. John Benton of The Concourse Group and Mr. Hyunsuk Choi with the County Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC), the representatives from the two entities redeveloping the site currently occupied by a vacant gas station at the southwest corner of Fenton Street and Thayer Avenue. Started in 2001, Concourse is a national developer operating in 37 states with over 12,000 residential units and 1 million square feet of retail space in its portfolio. HOC is the county agency responsible for developing and maintaining affordable housing. 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. Concourse and HOC recently purchased the site and will be developing the project, a 6 story building with approximately 124 rental apartment units (with the majority being set aside as affordable for senior citizens), 5,000

sf of street level retail and about 65 covered parking spaces.

Mr. Benton and Mr. Choi informed the group of changes they intend to make to the already-approved project, which we understand are largely relegated to the interior. These mainly include changes to the residential unit mix and configuration in an effort to support larger units intended primarily for senior citizen moderate income residents. Many in the community are familiar with the primary exterior design features of the project from the previously-submitted Site Plan, which includes a mixed material palette of brick, rough-faced concrete block, cementitious board and metal panel siding. Some individuals have repeatedly shared their concerns about the lack of quality in materials and thoughtfulness of design for the exterior and during the meeting some of these individuals questioned whether or not the exterior design could be improved. Mr. Benton and Mr. Choi responded that it could not, as to do so would be a major effort involving a Site Plan Amendment, which would put the project schedule at serious risk.

The schedule calls for construction to start sometime in 2017 and it will take about 21 months to build. Clark Construction will be the builder. They are the same contractor that just started building Studio Plaza to the west in the same

block. Concourse and HOC think this will provide advantages for coordinating construction traffic and parking. ESSCA member Karen Roper will be working with project representatives to do what we can to mitigate the negative impacts from the concurrent construction activity of this project, Studio Plaza and the impending underground utility work planned by PEPCO on Fenton Street in the coming months (see the September Advocate on our website to learn more about that: [www.eastsilverspring.org](http://www.eastsilverspring.org)). Please contact Karen with any questions or concerns: [karroper@gmail.com](mailto:karroper@gmail.com)

### KOINER FARM

During our September meeting we also heard from Lynn Koiner, daughter of Charlie Koiner, who operates the small farm at the corner of Grove and Easley Streets. Mr. Koiner has faithfully operated a working farm on the property for some time despite his 90+ years, which has been in the same family for over 100 years. Most in the neighborhood know and appreciate Charlie and Lynn and we can buy their produce by visiting the farm or going to the Silver Spring Farmers Market on Ellsworth Street on Saturday mornings.

Neither Lynn nor Charlie has any heirs and she would like the farm to continue in some form on the property. Getting the Farm Property Tax Credit would be a big help, as the current property tax burden is over \$20,000 annually. To qualify, farms must meet some of a few basic requirements, including farming by the owner, selling of produce and providing educational programs. While the property is relatively large for our area, it is too small to qualify for the Tax Credit, which currently has a minimum size requirement of 2 acres.

A bill has been introduced by Councilmember Tom Hucker that would create an Urban Farm classification that would be eligible for the Credit. After Lynn's presentation ESSCA voted

unanimously to support this legislation and a letter was sent to the Council. We will keep you posted on the status of this important bill that will help support the continuity of this local treasure.

### BEST OF FENTON VILLAGE IV!

Show your support for the small and independently owned businesses close to home. Fenton Village is our local commercial district south of downtown, bounded by Wayne and Georgia Avenues to the north and west and Fenton Street and Burlington Avenue to the east and south. Fenton Village is home to over 200 businesses, including over 35 restaurants and cafes, 20 auto repair shops and many professional offices and service providers. Vote for your favorite businesses in each of several categories from Shop Local Day on Saturday November 26th to December 31st 2016. Winners will be announced in early 2017. In addition to ESSCA, co-sponsors include the Silver Spring Regional Center, Fenton Village, Inc. and Buy Local Silver Spring. Thanks to Karen Burditt for her efforts in coordinating Best of Fenton. You can vote online after November 26th at [www.bestof.fentonvillage.org](http://www.bestof.fentonvillage.org).

### SILVER SPRING THANKSGIVING PARADE 2016

Don't forget about the annual parade in downtown Silver Spring! Saturday November 19th at 10 AM. The parade begins at Ellsworth Drive and Veterans Place and proceeds South on Georgia Avenue, ending at Silver Spring Ave. To learn more visit: <http://dc.about.com/od/thanksgiving/a/SilverSprngThan.htm>

### PARKING LOT III OPEN DURING STUDIO PLAZA CONSTRUCTION

While construction of this high rise residential project is now underway, County Public Parking Lot 3, on Fenton Street between Silver Spring and Thayer Avenues, is still open and is free

weekends and after 5pm on weekdays. On weekdays the cost is \$8 to park from 8am to 5pm, but there are currently no hourly rates. This has had a very negative effect on the small businesses in Fenton Village and we are working with the County and the developer to establish a system for an hourly option on weekdays between 8AM and 5PM.

### 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](http://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!