



## East Silver Spring Citizens' Association, Inc.

MAY 2017

*Representatives from Montgomery College  
will come talk to us at our next*

EAST SILVER SPRING CITIZENS ASSOCIATION (ESSCA) MEETING • MEETING DATE: MONDAY, May 15, 2017

MEETING LOCATION IS THE HISTORIC B&O TRAIN STATION

8100 Georgia Avenue, just south of the Fire Station

NEW REGULAR 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)

### HEAR ABOUT RENOVATION & CONSTRUCTION PLANS FOR MONTGOMERY COLLEGE AT OUR MAY 15TH MEETING

This will be an informational meeting to learn more about the College's future construction plans for the Takoma Park-Silver Spring campus of Montgomery College. College representatives will be on hand to discuss the impacts of plans on Jessup Blair Park as well as traffic and parking impacts on the neighborhood.

### ALSO AT OUR MAY MEETING: ESSCA BOARD ELECTIONS

Darian Unger (current Acting President) has been nominated for President, Tim Haverland (currently serving as Corresponding Secretary) has been nominated for Vice President. Nancy Gurganus, Recording Secretary, and Steve Knight, Treasurer, are both running unopposed. Tracy Vandenbroek has been nominated to serve as Corresponding Secretary.

### REPORT FROM OUR MARCH MEETING: MEDICAL MARIJUANA DISPENSARY TO OPEN IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Jason Divelbiss with Green Thumb Industries (GTI: [www.GTIgrows.com](http://www.GTIgrows.com)) was present to tell us more about his company's plans to open a medical marijuana dispensary in East Silver Spring. Based in Chicago, GTI is a privately-held nationwide operator of cannabis cultivation and dispensary facilities with a presence in Illinois, Nevada, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and now Maryland, where they were successful in their bid for one of two licenses made available by the State in Congressional

Senate District 20 to dispense the substance. The second dispensary will be in Takoma Park.

Jason noted that medical marijuana is highly regulated in Maryland. It is available only to patients with one of twelve qualifying conditions, which are chronic and debilitating in nature. The substance can be made available in smokeless alternatives, including edible, topical and vaporized forms, though Maryland will not allow the edible form because of concerns about monitoring of dosing and consumption.

GTI has put in a bid to purchase the property at 7900 Fenton Street (the former Banner Glass building at the corner of Fenton and Gist) for their facility. There is no firm opening date as yet planned. Because cultivation is regulated separately from dispensing by the state and GTI is not authorized to do the former, they need to wait until a relationship with one of the 15 state-registered cultivators can be established. Jason said they intend to open as soon as they can make that happen.

It was noted that marijuana was available in this country for medicinal purposes from roughly 1840 to 1940 when it was put on the list of federally banned substances. There is currently legislation pending in congress for it to be removed from the list. Because the federal government does not recognize marijuana as a legal substance, patients must obtain a recommendation from a physician who has been registered to do so by the state. Maryland has currently opened enrollment for physicians to register. Also because of federal control, the sale of medical marijuana is restricted to being a cash transaction business. Several individuals present at the meeting noted the natural security concerns about this. Jason responded that the building

they intend to operate in is ideal in addressing these concerns: Banner Glass appears to originally have been a bank, as it has a vault which they intend to use and the existing drive through garage bays in the back will provide enclosed secure loading for both the marijuana and cash. He added that GTI has a well-established security plan: they will have security cameras, on-site guards and patients will be required to register upon entering. GTI will stay in touch with ESSCA and will keep us posted as their plans to open progress. We will in turn keep the community posted on what we learn as well.

### ALSO FROM OUR MARCH MEETING: COMMUNITY SOLAR COMING TO EAST SILVER SPRING

Gary Skulnik with Neighborhood Sun spoke with us about the community solar concept now allowed in Maryland due to enabling legislation passed in 2015. This will allow for the solar generation of up to 215 megawatts of electrical power state-wide as part of a pilot program starting in the spring of 2017. Community solar allows neighbors to share the power generated from a solar farm or rooftop – as if the solar panels were on their own roof. This is intriguing in our older, more dense neighborhood, as many residents' homes do not have the area, sunlight, or proper orientation for solar panels. For a sense of scale, it was noted that about 2 megawatts of power can be generated with about 10 acres of solar panels, which would be sufficient to power about 350 single family homes. Community Solar will be subscription-based: individual households will have to sign on to become part of the program. Gary stated there is no cost to sign up and that participants can expect to actually see their power bills

lower by about 10%. Neighborhood Sun is currently looking for a site for the installation of solar panels, which has to reside in our Pepco service area. If you want more information or are interested in becoming a part of this, please visit their website: <https://www.neighborhoodsun.solar>.

### HELPING TO MITIGATE NEGATIVE IMPACTS ON LOCAL BUSINESSES

We want to thank County Council members Marc Elrich and Tom Hucker for their recent efforts to assist the local business community in Fenton Village which have been adversely affected by construction activity in the neighborhood. Many of these establishments have seen severe drops in business with the current construction activity of two large projects multi-family residential mixed-use projects: Studio Plaza in the block bounded by Fenton Street, Georgia, Silver Spring and Thayer Avenues and Central fronting Fenton Street between Bonifant and Wayne. Both have had major impacts on the neighborhood's traffic and parking. Marc Elrich has sponsored legislation to reimburse businesses for some of their revenue losses, which have been significant in many cases, threatening the livelihood of many of our local businesses. Tom Hucker is also seeking funding for a major positive marketing campaign for the area. Efforts are also underway to install improved directional signage to available public parking. We thank the County for stepping up on behalf of our local small business community. *We hope you will too by patronizing the many shops and restaurants of Fenton Village!*

### NOTES ON AREA CONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT

- The abandoned high rise office building at 850 Sligo Avenue (at the southeast corner of the intersection at Fenton) has, after many complaints about lack of maintenance, littering, squatters and most recently an emergency situation involving both county police and fire and rescue, been condemned by the county. The property now appears to have been properly secured and the owners have 30 days to rectify other deficiencies. We understand several parties have each tried to purchase the property, but that the asking price thus far has made doing so cost-prohibitive.

- The Central, facing Fenton Street between Bonifant Street and Wayne Avenue, is nearing completion. The 100+ rental unit building with ground level retail and below grade parking is slated to come on line this summer. Work on the retail tenant areas and replacement of the First Baptist Church on the adjacent site will continue.
- Plans and approvals continue to move forward for Artspace on the site of the former Sligo Avenue police station. We are told work will likely start on the site next year.
- Work on the 400+ rental unit project known as Studio Plaza on the site of the former county Parking Lot Number 3 in the block bounded by Fenton Street, Georgia, Silver Spring and Thayer Avenues continues. Below grade work on the large two story parking structure, which included daytime blasting to remove rock, is currently underway.
- The long-awaited, on-again-off-again project to repave Thayer Avenue has finally begun!

### TASTE THE WORLD OF FENTON VILLAGE V

The successful neighborhood restaurant crawl celebrating the many independent restaurants of Fenton Village will be back for the seventh year on **Sunday May 21st from 1 to 5 PM**. The event will again feature live music, a raffle at 5:30 and other entertainment. Over 30 local restaurants in our commercial core defined by Fenton Street, Georgia, Wayne and Sligo Avenues will be participating, providing small tasting plates for purchase for under \$5 each. More information is available at [www.tastetheworld.fentonvillage.org](http://www.tastetheworld.fentonvillage.org) and will follow soon on the ESSCA Listserve.

### THE FARM BILL PASSED!

A bill has been introduced by Councilmember Tom Hucker creating an Urban Farm classification that would be eligible for the Credit. This is most meaningful in our community because of Koiner Farm, operated by Charlie Koiner and his daughter Lynn at the corner of Easley and Grove Streets. Charlie 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 allowed now because of the passage of this bill will 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 was too small to qualify for the Tax Credit, which previously had a minimum size requirement of 2 acres.

East Silver Spring Citizens' Association Proudly Presents the Fifth Annual



# ESSCA FEST

**Silver Spring Avenue**  
Between Grove St. & Carroll Ln. **FREE!**

## Saturday, May 6

Rain or Shine!

**Live Bands 1-6 PM**  
"Open Mic" between sets for  
acoustic singer/songwriters

Family Activities! Bring your lawn chair & relax!

Snacks and soft beverages provided! BYOB!

Open to all neighbors in the ESSCA community

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

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

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**WITH YOUR MEMBERSHIP WE COULD IMPROVE ON THESE EFFORTS & DO 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!