



East Silver Spring Citizens' Association, Inc.

JANUARY 2018

Sidewalks and Greenways on Grove Street & an Open Forum will be the main topics of discussion at the next:

**EAST SILVER SPRING CITIZENS ASSOCIATION (ESSCA) MEETING • MEETING DATE: MONDAY, January 22, 2018 at 7:00 PM
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")

JOIN ESSCA'S Facebook Group: East Silver Spring Citizens' Association

VISIT ESSCA'S NEW WEBSITE: <https://eastsilverspring.org/> EMAIL CONTACT: esscaprez@gmail.com

Please note we've shifted our January meeting by one week so as not to conflict with the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday.

We look forward to seeing you the fourth Monday of this month: January 22nd.

AT OUR JANUARY MEETING: CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION ON GROVE STREET SIDEWALKS AND GREENWAYS

We learned a great deal about neighbors' needs, views and concerns regarding Grove Street at our last meeting (see report below). However, the discussion was largely conceptual in nature and there were no clear conclusions. We would like to continue the dialog before the issue gets cold. County DOT representative Chris Conklin (who was present at the last meeting) will be on hand again to help answer questions and provide perspective on standards, rules and regulations regarding the County's approach to sidewalks, bikeways, and greenways. We would like to carry the conversation forward with a greater level of detail on what is feasible and achievable in each of the four blocks comprising Grove Street.

ALSO AT THE JANUARY MEETING: AN OPEN FORUM

We want to hear from you! What neighborhood and community issues and topics are important to you and which ones would you like to discuss and have

ESSCA focus on in the future? This is your opportunity to let us know.

REPORT FROM OUR NOVEMBER 2017 MEETING

We had a very full agenda when we met on November 20th. Items included a wide-ranging discussion regarding pedestrian, bike, and vehicular accommodations on Grove Street, a development update on plans for the vacant office building site at 850 Sligo Avenue. We concluded with a tour of the Police Substation and Firehouse at 8110 Georgia Avenue and many were surprised to learn that the Police Substation does not mean an active full time police presence at the facility.

We were joined by county DOT representatives Chris Conklin and Matt Johnson for the discussion of Grove Street. The current street arrangement is comprised of two way traffic plus parallel on-street parking on the east side. There have been a lot of comments on the ESSCA list serve over the past few months about this subject, and the majority of these have expressed concern that the current lack of sidewalks is a problem. Furthermore, other concerns raised on the list serve and during the

meeting included the on-street parking that is there needs to be kept, the restrictions on truck and bus traffic are not enforced, and that conditions on Grove Street are likely to deteriorate further with the construction activity from new development and PEPCO utility upgrades on nearby Fenton Street, both current and forthcoming.

Ideas discussed at the meeting for what to do included:

- Adding speed bumps to slow vehicular traffic
- Creating dedicated bike lanes
- Making portions or all of the street one-way traffic
- Reducing the amount of or removing on-street parking altogether
- Lowering the speed limit below 25 MPH
- Adding flexible posts to create physical separation between vehicles and pedestrians
- Adding traffic diverters at intersections to shift traffic off of the street
- Restricting vehicular access to Grove Street and Twin Holly Lane residents only

Also mentioned was turning Grove

Street into a Greenway, which basically means introducing a variety of measures to improve the safety of what would be a shared use street (for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians). Mr. Conklin noted that the County may be willing to try a few interventions through some amount of experimentation.

There are fundamental space constraints with Grove Street making it difficult to add much of anything in the space available, however. The street measures only 24 to 24 ½ wide from curb to curb along its length, and this is pretty much the entire public right of way available. Utility poles and retaining walls are some of the existing obstructions that would prevent building sidewalks. Mr. Conklin noted that County does not make it a practice to buy additional property to construct sidewalks on residential streets. The minimum required width for sidewalks is 3' with wider areas to allow for wheelchairs to pass; however the county's minimum width requirement for sidewalk width is 5'. It was also noted that the County has a minimum requirement of 17' of undisturbed vehicular travel width for one or two way traffic. This is primarily for fire truck access and staging during fire emergencies.

Mr. Conklin stated that the county has a process for adding sidewalks to streets. This starts with a petition signed by immediate affected households in favor of sidewalks. The county will then do a feasibility study. He added that the program has a backlog and that it typically takes about three years from the time of petitioning for a sidewalk to get built.

DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

850 Sligo Avenue: The development team for the 8-story building at the corner of Fenton and Sligo earlier this week submitted their Sketch Plan, the first step of the entitlement process for mixed use projects of this type and

scale. ESSCA has organized a meeting between the developer and immediate neighbors to the project to hear their concerns and the developer also gave a mandatory community presentation on project plans back in the fall. At our November meeting we heard from Gist Avenue residents Dan Meijer and Dale Barnhardt, who voiced concerns about the accuracy of the zoning classification the county planning staff has applied to the site, specifically citing that it allows for more density than they believe is allowed. Everything ESSCA has learned so far suggests there is nothing incorrect about the zoning, but meeting attendees voted to give the ESSCA executive committee discretion in researching and pursuing this further. We understand the corresponding Planning Board hearing for Sketch Plan is scheduled for April 5th and expect to report back with updates after that. by this spring. The development team is targeting 2020 to start construction on this 75 apartment unit project that will remodel and add onto the existing vacant 8 story office building.

715-719 Sligo Avenue: Developers of these vacant lots on the north side of Sligo Avenue are still exploring design options for multi-family housing. They are working neighbors and Planning staff to seek input. They are not expecting to file anything official for several weeks. We will keep you posted as we learn more.

NANCY GURGANUS STEPPING DOWN FROM ESSCA BOARD

It is with a mixture of sadness and sincere appreciation that we share this news. Nancy has served ESSCA faithfully for many years as Recording Secretary. She intends to serve for the remainder of this year before moving on to other pursuits. A Silver Spring native, she and husband Mike bought (& are still living in) their starter home since 1976. Please join us in thanking Nancy for her service and wishing her the best!

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

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PLEASE JOIN OR RENEW YOUR
MEMBERSHIP WITH ESSCA!

**How much is community
worth to you?**

ESSCA has calculated community can be improved with just \$10 per household per year. Seriously that's it! Your \$10 enables ESSCA to print and distribute The Advocate newsletter, maintain a website, and host 5 public meetings a year. And don't forget ESSCA Fest, our annual block party with free music and refreshments! If everyone chips in, we can do even more together! We have an amazing community and if you invest in it, together we can become even more effective!!!

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**Give to ESSCA in any of these
three ways:**

1. Give at the ESSCA Meeting
2. Go to the website at: <https://eastsilverspring.org/> and pay via PayPal
3. Write a check payable to ESSCA and send it to:
Steve Knight
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!