

SILVER SPRING CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

Monday, December 9th, 7pm
Silver Spring Civic Center, Veterans Plaza
Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

- Don Slater
- Melanie Fonder Kayes
- Nahom Tekle
- Shawn Morris
- Katherine McKay
- Ken Lemberg
- Michelle Foster
- Jacob Feit
- Jacob Newman
- Jason Cokinos 2346
- Tanisha Bailey
- Kelly Velazquez Umana
- Kisha Davis
- Carson E Henry
- Diana Carrillo
- Jonathan Bernstein
- Ken Curl
- Lene Tsegaye
- Portia Scott
- Sarah Wagner
- Chavaleta Foster-Wells
- Lynn Hughes
- Robin Riley
- Tania Laden
- Brian Thai
- Rachel Teter

1. Introductions
 - a. Melanie brought the meeting to order, seconded by Tania.
 - b. SSCAB members and members of the public introduced selves.
2. District 3 Police and Public Safety Update
 - a. Commander Cokinos presented updates.
 - b. Holiday task force.
 - c. Have taken a number of illegal firearms off the street.
 - d. One robbery: juveniles robbed another juvenile of a jacket near the movie theatre.
 - e. Still suffering retail theft issues, especially CVS and Walgreens, detergents, shampoos, and paper towels. Taking them to DC and re-selling at laundromats and other places.
 - f. Biggest issue right now is cars getting broken into. Some covert officers have been deployed. Caught a stolen vehicle at Cameron St garage there to steal others, a gun was present, and other examples.
 - g. We're definitely still fighting crime. So far a pretty safe holiday time experience.
 - h. A detail on Friday and Saturday night downtown with extra officers visible to ensure safety.
 - i. Officer Brandon McCloud on positive youth engagement.
3. Youth Safety Initiative
 - a. Dr. Davis presented via Zoom.
 - b. While violent crime victimization is down in 2024, opioid overdoses and suicide attempts rose.
 - c. Opioid overdose emergency room visits age distribution getting younger.
 - d. Getting people off of fentanyl is expensive and takes more than detox alone.
 - e. Self-harm emergency department visits for patients under 25 years old were stable from 2018-2023.
 - f. In 2023, a 14% increase in violent crime for victims under age 25 years, with a notable rise in 15-17 age group.
 - g. Dramatic increase in motor thefts by individuals under age 25 years from 2019 through 2023.

- h. 74% of motor thefts in 2023 done by people under age 25 years.
 - i. <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rec/activitiesandprograms/youthdevelopment/>
 - j. kisha.davis@montgomerycountymd.gov
4. Councilmember(s) Report
- a. Council Member Stewart's Office (Diana Carrillo)
 - i. Kate Stewart was elected Council President last week
 - ii. Plans to make mental health a focal point of her agenda
 - iii. Councilmember.Stewart@montgomerycountymd.gov
 - b. Councilmember Glass (Valeria Carranza)
 - i. Update provided via email, copied below:
 - ii. Online Portal - Hate-Bias Incidents
 - 1. Last year, when Councilmember Evan Glass was Council President, he created the Anti-Hate Task Force which was made up of six cohorts representing the Muslim, Jewish, LGBTQ+, Black/African American, Latino/Hispanic and Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders communities.
 - a. One of their recommendations was for the county to develop a more accessible system for reporting hate bias incidents.
 - b. Just last week MCPD launched an [anonymous online portal](#) to report non-emergency hate-bias incidents.
 - c. This is a great tool that will help keep our community a safe and welcoming place for all. Please help us spread the word.
 - iii. ICYMI: Montgomery County: Most Religiously Diverse in the U.S.
 - 1. [NPR recently reported](#) that Montgomery County is the most religiously diverse county in the United States.
 - 2. They had a great piece about New Hampshire Avenue in Silver Spring, Maryland being packed with houses of worship, and that it was nicknamed the "Embassy Row of Religions" and the "Highway to Heaven".
 - 3. As we enter the holiday season, we thought this was a nice piece and a reminder about the diversity in our county being our strength.
 - iv. New Year's Resolutions - Rec Assist
 - 1. And finally, as you start making New Year's Resolutions Goals – applications are now open for Rec Assist. Each year, the Montgomery County Department of Recreation provides eligible residents with up to \$400 in funds to use toward most Recreation classes, activities and memberships that have a cost associated with them.
 - 2. You can learn more and see if you are eligible on the [program's website](#).
 - 3. Funds are available on a first come, first serve basis.
5. Regional Director's Report (Jacob Newman)
- a. Update on Residential Parking Permit (RPP) Program:
 - <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT-Parking/RPP.html>
 - b. Update on Georgia Avenue bus lanes, public opinion invited:
 - i. <https://www.mymcmmedia.org/mdot-to-host-public-meeting-on-bus-only-lane-pilot-project/>
 - c. Update on the many holiday-time activities and events in the town, including Small Business Saturday.
 - i. [Prime](#), newest café in downtown Silver Spring (930 Thayer Ave). Has clearly-labeled vegan and gluten-free items on menu.
 - d. Silver Spring was on five national "best" lists this year:
 - i. Best places for families

- ii. Nicest places in America
 - iii. Diverse places in America
 - iv. Population growth
 - v. Most generous communities
 - e. A steep rent hike for refugee families led to [mass evictions](#) despite attempts by the county and state to prevent and to remedy the situation.
- 6. November 2024 Meeting Minutes Approval
 - a. Motion to approve November Committee Meeting Minutes as amended made by Michelle, seconded by Katherine.
- 7. Open discussion
 - a. Rachel asked what is being done locally to combat the climate crisis. Michelle and others answered:
 - i. Building codes to mandate energy and water efficiency.
 - ii. Residential buildings need a green certification.
 - iii. Many of our buildings are emerald level, which is super high performing.
 - iv. Tree planting programs.
 - v. Walkability programs and bicycle plans.
 - vi. Purple line work to provide cross-county transit opportunities.
 - vii. Recycling program.
 - viii. We have one of the most active green banks in the entire country.
 - ix. Electric buses and county vehicles.
 - x. Last month we had a presentation from the Department of Environmental Protection – County Energy Goals Presentation (Larissa Johnson)
 - 1. <https://montgomeryenergyconnection.org/>
- 8. Adjourned at 8:24pm
 - a. Motion to adjourn made by Tania, seconded by Ken.

Sarah Ruth Hoffman, Secretary