

Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board FY 2018 Annual Report

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1. Elected Officials

In September 2017 *County Executive* Isiah Leggett, joined us and complimented the board for its work in the community and keeping residents engaged and informed. He noted that the pros and cons of growth in Silver Spring manifested in inconveniences and disruptions. He added while crime activity is declining, there is a rise in homelessness due to organizations like Progress Place where it was attracting displaced people from other areas of the county.

Mr. Leggett also shared his concerns about the county's budget for the 2018 incoming County Executive and council members. He cautioned they will have their hands tied financially in the foreseeable future.

On a brighter note, Mr. Leggett added that the new Police Public Safety Training Program proved very successful. Body cameras are now worn by county officers as a result of a large and important investment. He reported on the recent public information campaign to promote renters' rights but at the same time rents are increasing.

In November 2017 *Legislative Aide* for Tom Hucker, reported on minimum wage bill passed by council that requires a \$15.00 per hour minimum wage starting in 2021 for businesses with at least 51 employees, and giving smaller businesses until 2024.

In December 2017 *Councilmember* Tom Hucker stated he is meeting with State Highway Administration (SHA) on December 15 to review lighting and safety concerns in the wake of two pedestrian fatalities along Route 29. In the same meeting Councilmember Hucker reminded the board that Georgia Avenue modifications were a big part of the Forest Glen and Montgomery Hills sector plans.

Ana Sol Guitierrez (D18) stated her concern for managing the buildup of development in Silver Spring.

Jheanelle Wilkins (D20) is looking forward to bringing Earned Sick Leave and Banning the Box issues back to Annapolis discussions. Gov. Hogan had vetoes both in this year's session.

Senator Will Smith (D20) is working on ideas to support small businesses that will be impacted by Purple Line construction. Senator Smith is also looking at ways to create tuition free higher education starting with community college transfers.

In March 2018 Julio Ceron, *Legislative Aide* for Tom Hucker, reported the council has approved funding for the restoration of sports fields at several local schools but cautions \$750,000 will not go very far.

In February 2018 Mr. Ceron provided a council update. The County Executive is expected to release his FY 2018 operating budget recommendation by March 15.

2. Plans and Initiatives

We had a community dialogue with representatives of PEPCO, WSSC, DOT and Silver Spring Urban District Operations per street disruptions in Silver Spring.

Former MCPS PTA Paul Geller and Melissa McKenna offered insight into school funding. They have proposed that a full 45% of Maryland Gaming monies go to education as initially intended when gambling came to the state. Currently only 15% is earmarked for schools.

3. Agencies and Non Profits

Lt. Commander Jennifer McNeil and Sergeant Ian Clark reported on the activities within 3rd District Police. There is an increase to the homeless population due to services offered by Progress Place. Robberies are down in downtown 3rd District.

Division *Chief of Operations* John Kinsley provided an update on a recent FEMA grant which will add new staff and allow every engine to have a paramedic travel with the four firefighter to incidents.

The Dept. of Permitting Services, is seeking better coordination and transparency. They are developing an ambitious online portal that would offer residents a one stop source for information on construction projects and related permits.

4. SSCAB Committees and Director's Report

CED is talking to small business owners outside the Downtown Silver Spring area. It will also feature Visit Montgomery, the official Conference and Visitors Bureau of Montgomery County. *Small Business Navigator* Judy Stephenson affirmed that "Businesses are residents too!" The county sees that there is a gap in communication with small businesses. The committee featured the Summer Rise Program, a 3-week youth employment program which is expanding.

TREE is looking into pedestrian safety with meetings scheduled with DOT and SHA. TREE is also focused on county's EPA work. The committee joined the MCDOT public meeting on the Dockless Bike Pilot Program. MCDOT recognized that the program was not well communicated to the public.

Neighborhoods committee met in October with the Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) and reviewed the "Renters Have Rights" campaign. Upcoming meeting will consider how to best engage new immigrants to the community.

Regional Director Reemberto Rodriguez noted that boundaries were not clear cut in the regional area. It was also announced that the Civic Center's Great Hall was to be named in honor of the Buffalo Soldiers as a tribute to their contributions to the nation. The June 9th bus tour of the Silver Spring neighborhoods represented by SSCAB was a huge hit. It promises to be an annual event.

To sum up, it was a very productive year and we look forward to another dynamic year.