

Minutes

Sandy Spring Civic Association
Ross Body Community Center*, Sandy Spring, MD 20860
(Meeting Virtually During Covid-19 Pandemic) *

December 14, 2020

Attendance: Board Members – William “Bim” Schaufler, President; Basile “Whit” Whitaker, Vice President; Christine Wilson, Treasurer; Audrey Dutton, Parliamentarian (Absent); Douglas Farquhar, Corresponding Secretary; Dr. Daryl Thorne, Recording Secretary

Attendance: General body – Approximately 13 **Guest(s):** Fred Nichols, Ashton Market Developer; Eduardo Barcelo, Hampshire Green HOA Board of Directors

Attendance Total (approximate): 18

Meeting called to order: 6:33 p.m. by Bim

Agenda

Election of Officers for 2021:

Because Bim had to leave early, he asked that the election of officers be moved to the top of the agenda. There was no objection to doing so, and the following officers were elected unanimously for 2021:

Dr. Daryl Thorne, President

Basile Whittaker, Vice President

Christine Hill Wilson, Treasurer

Audrey Dutton, Parliamentarian

Doug Farquhar, Recording Secretary, with Elizabeth Thornton substituting as necessary

Doug Farquhar, Correspondence Secretary

Old Business:

November 2020 Minutes approved without amendments (motion to approve by Doug Farquhar and seconded by Christine Wilson)

Ongoing Business/Committee Reports (Standing items):

Treasurer's Report – (Report provided by Christine Wilson*, moved to be accepted by D. Farquhar)

- Membership Checking - \$225.59
- Scholarship Checking - \$189.29

- Scholarship Savings - \$2,281.12
- Scholarship CD - \$2,575.85

Transportation – (Report provided by Marie Slater)

- The intersection of Brooke Road & Rt. 108: Marie talked to the Maryland Dept. of Transportation, which told her that they have received funding for the design phase, so the design process should start this winter.
- Bike pathway along Route 108 and sidewalks: The Montgomery County Dept. of Transportation reported that the project is in the very preliminary design stages, and that the county will reach out soon to neighboring property owners to discuss the process.

Bim had to leave, so Vice President Basile Whitaker presided for the remainder of the meeting.

Ashton Village Center Sector Plan update – (Reports provided by Doug, Kathleen Wheeler, Fred Nichols)

- The Montgomery County Planning Board approved the plan conceptually at its meeting on December 3.
- Although the SSCSA advocated for a FAR (Floor to Area Ratio) of .5 for the parcels on the Southeast Corner that were located close to the Ashton intersection, and .25 for the parcels closer to the edges, the planning staff recommended a FAR of .5 for the entire property. The developer had advocated for a higher FAR, but ended up not opposing the .5 FAR, and that is what the Planning Board approved.
- In terms of the height of the buildings, the Planning Board approved a “monument building” as high as 45’ to the midpoint of the roofline to be located right at the intersection, but 40’ for other buildings close to the intersection along the major roads, 45’ for the buildings on the interior, and 35’ for the buildings located along the roads at the southern corner and eastern corner of the property. Doug said that the buildings will be duplex apartments, small apartments, residential over commercial, and a small amount of commercial property.
- The Planning Board will finalize the language of the recommendation that will go to the County Council PHED committee (Planning, Housing, and Economic Development) in January.
- Doug recommended, and there was no objection, that the SSCA await the final wording in the plan as approved by the Planning Board, and then determine whether to take a position on the proposal that will be sent to County Council members.
- Fred Nichols, the developer for the Southeast Corner, said that he has been asked to provide schematic diagrams showing the designs planned for the buildings. Fred noted that the grade of the site descends from the main roads back to the stream buffer area, an elevation change of 13 feet. That could lead to half of the first floor of the buildings along the roads being underground, so planning is not simple. He was asked how one measures the height of a building when the grade slopes so dramatically, and Fred responded that it is the average of the front and the back of the building.

- Asked about the design of the townhouses in the Ashton Market subdivision along Route 108 and Porter Road, Fred said that the design is being tweaked, but that two of the townhouses have already been sold, and the construction is starting. He said he is in final negotiations with a tenant for some of the commercial space (he did not want to identify the tenant other than to say it is a service provider) and that the other end of the commercial project would be a restaurant, and he is negotiating with prospective tenants. He said that each of the townhouses would be erected within about 60 days after construction starts on that townhouse. There were some comments about porches being uniform in the design for the block along Porter Road that was shown during the meeting, and about the lack of shutters. Fred noted that windows are being carefully planned and positioned on the end units and that the porches for units along Route 108 will be varied in orientation and number of stairs.
- As to the community Implementation Advisory Committee, the Planning Board did approve that, and Fred added that he did not view it as a “bad thing,” and that he hopes there will be widespread community involvement.

Norwood House (Redly Investment): Report provided by Basile

- OZAH approved occupancy increase from 8 to 16; proper notification and owner contact information to be provided to specific community members (closest neighbors to property) and Associations; no other community requested restrictions were acknowledged in OZAH decision.
- SSFS will not renew lease after August 2021;
- Zoned for a “group home or facility”, broadly termed.
- Community continues to express concerns about the maintenance of the property
 - Basile will make inquiries with regards to: how the owner’s contact information will be provided to SSCA, and the 10 day appeal process to overturn OZAH decision
 - Doug will write letter to Redly asking who the new tenants might be

General Community Engagement:

- Request made to invite a Thrive 50 representative to speak to the SSCA membership about the County’s Strategic Planning Vision
- Concerns expressed about vandalism of BLM signs in the community; an arrest of an Olney resident was made in connection with stealing a BLM flag, as reported in the Olney News.
- Montgomery County Police Chief Jones speaking with the community via GOCA on re-imagining the police → a few SSCA members watched the recorded event; Basile/Whit is on the Re-imagining Task Force sub-committee Police Culture Training and Improvement; he will keep the SSCA up to date regarding changes in police policy and practices.

Correspondence sent to the SSCA:

- Letter sent by Miller, Miller, and Canby regarding notification of Remembrance Lights, Inc., a green burial cemetery, on New Hampshire Avenue in Silver Spring (near the Hampshire Green community); virtual meeting to be held on 12/15/2020 @ 7 p.m.
 - Visitor to the SSCA meeting and member of the Hampshire Green* HOA Board of Directors, Eduardo Barcelo, shared his concerns about the possibility of increased traffic and congestion on NH Avenue with Remembrance's plans to host burials once a month; No further engagement with the community from Remembrance Lights, Inc. (Contact info: Eduardo.Barcelo@gmail.com)
 - Suggestions made to support Eduardo Barcelo and the Hampshire Green community: 1) Find out who the Staff Planner is for this project through the Montgomery County Planning Board (from Whit/Basile to Eduardo), and 2) encouraged SSCA membership and surrounding community to attend the virtual meeting and express community interest in the project (link to meeting requested to be shared).

Motion to adjourn: 7:33 p.m. by Doug Farquhar and seconded by Kathleen Wheeler

*(outside of the SSCA area)