

Minutes

Sandy Spring Civic Association
Ross Body Community Center, Sandy Spring, MD 20860
(Meeting Virtually by Zoom during Covid-19 Pandemic)

July 21, 2021 (by Zoom, for 15th month in a row)

Attendance: Board Members – Dr. Daryl Thorne, President; Basile “Whit” Whitaker, Vice President; Christine Hill Wilson, Treasurer; Audrey Dutton, Parliamentarian (absent); Douglas Farquhar, Recording and Correspondence Secretary

Attendance: General body – Approximately 15

Guest: Judy Hruz, Greater Olney Community News

Attendance Total (approximate): 18

Meeting called to order: 6:35 p.m. by Daryl

Agenda

Minutes of the June 2021 were not yet available and will be presented for approval at a later meeting.

The Treasurer’s Report was read and accepted.

Marie Slater presented the transportation committee report. In response to a question about Route 108 and Brooke Road, Marie said that the County is supposed to do some major utility work and redesign the intersection.

Robin Ziek spoke about voting rights in Montgomery County. After noting her opinion that felons should always be entitled to vote, she noted that she, Andrea Guy McFarland, and Nadine Mort are going to be working to increase voter participation in our area, since our area is one of ten “voting deserts” in the County. She said she has contacted the League of Women Voters to figure out how to increase voting in our area, and is hoping to begin efforts to encourage voter registration before the primary in June 2022.

Basile Whitaker noted that a Board of Elections employee had given a presentation at his church about increasing voter participation, and maybe we should look into seeing whether a similar presentation could be given to the Civic Association. Numerous members also talked about further outreach to homeowners associations and other community groups to encourage registration and voting.

Dr. Daryl Thorne noted that most people think of elections as being once every four years, during presidential elections. But elections are really every two years. Christine Hill Wilson noted that part of the mission of the SSCSA is to educate the community about local politics and issues.

Kathleen Wheeler noted that this would be a particularly good time to work on increasing voter participation in local elections, because there is a “lot of frustration” with the County Council and the Planning Commission over the approval of the Ashton Rural Village Sector Plan.

Daryl announced that the membership would not meet again till September, but that the Executive Committee of the SSCA will be working on candidate forums the third Monday of each month till June.

Hearings will be held on attainable housing in Montgomery County on July 22. Apparently, there is a proposal being sponsored by Planning Commission Chairman Casey Anderson to permit duplexes to be built by right in any area zoned for single-family housing, which would result in a massive increase in density, especially in rural areas. The proposal is reportedly moving at “lightning speed,” and only one current Planning Board member, Gerald Cichy, is concerned about transportation effects, although Natali Fani-Gonzalez has also said that the proposal should only be adopted for areas served by mass transit.

A motion was approved to authorize the Executive Committee to invite those standing for election to local offices to candidate forums sponsored by SSCA.