

Sandy Spring Civic Association
Ross Body Community Center, Sandy Spring, MD 20860
(Meeting Virtually by Zoom)

February 12, 2024, and February 19 Special Meeting

February 12, 2024 Regular Meeting

Attendance:

Board Members – Dr. Daryl Thorne, President; Basile “Whit” Whitaker, Vice President; Christine Hill Wilson, Treasurer; Douglas Farquhar, Recording and Correspondence Secretary; Bill Thomas, Parliamentarian

Other SSCA members – approximately 14

Guests: Judy Hruz, Greater Olney Community News; Aaron Kraut, Chief Of Staff for Councilmember Dawn Luedtke

Attendance Total (approximate): 21

Meeting called to order: 6:37 PM

John Henderson of Bailey Wealth Advisors, our invited speaker, gave a presentation about the Social Security system, with advice about when people should begin drawing their benefits, and what information they should check, and how they can do so.

We then turned to our business meeting. The minutes from the January 2024 meeting were approved.

Committee reports: the Treasurer’s report as of Jan. 31, 2024, was provided by Christine Hill-Wilson. A motion to accept her report was approved. Christine then gave the report for the scholarship committee. She said that the applications for the scholarships were sent out to the schools, and to the Sherwood High School Guidance Counselor.

Committee Transportation Report: Provided by Kristen Slater: the dead tree on Brooke Road was removed on February 6, something that had been anticipated for a long time. There are still two trees along Brooke Road that need pruning.

We then had a discussion about the proposed “Faith Zoning Text Amendment,” which will permit the construction of apartment buildings and townhouses on properties owned by religious organizations and private schools in certain areas. It was noted that there was a public hearing on the ZTA on February 27. Concerns were expressed about increases in traffic, destruction of open space, buildings as high as 60’ to the center roofline, and impact on school enrollments. Doug Farquhar offered a motion to express opposition to the ZTA, which he then withdrew after further discussion, inasmuch as there were a number of questions that no one knew the answer to. The action item was to schedule a Special Meeting on February 19, by Zoom, to gather information and further discuss the impact of the ZTA.

The meeting adjourned at 8:05.

February 19, 2024 Special Meeting

Attendance:

Board Members – Dr. Daryl Thorne, President; Basile “Whit” Whitaker, Vice President; Christine Hill Wilson, Treasurer; Douglas Farquhar, Recording and Correspondence Secretary; Bill Thomas, Parliamentarian

Other SSCA members – approximately 10

Guests: Judy Hruz, Greater Olney Community News; Aaron Kraut, Chief Of Staff for

Councilmember Dawn Luedtke

Attendance Total (approximate): 17

Doug Farquhar gave a presentation on the ZTA, which is attached. Questions and concerns were raised with Aaron Kraut, some of which he answered, and some of which he responded to later.

Basically, it was agreed that the ZTA will be approved, since it is co-sponsored by 10 of the 11 Council Members. It is also unlikely to have much effect on the immediate Ashton/Sandy Spring area, since most of the undeveloped land is zoned either RC or RNC, land which is unaffected, and most of the parcels that are zoned RE-2 are either already fully developed or have development plans approved. But the concerns raised by our group were heard by Aaron, and he agreed to pass them along to Council Member Luedtke. The SSCA agreed unanimously to express the concerns in an email, which was sent to Aaron a couple of days later. The motion stated:

The Sandy Spring Civic Association requests that the Montgomery County, Maryland, Council amend the proposed text of Zoning Text Amendment 24-01 so that:

1. The requirements for townhouses and multi-unit living buildings that “Height, density, coverage and parking standards must be compatible with surrounding uses” be defined more carefully, and specifically that height of approved townhouses and apartment buildings be limited to the height of surrounding single-family homes in the RE-2 zone.
2. The requirement of a “minimum of 35% common open space” be defined more specifically to require a “minimum of 35% usable, visible common open space.”

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas Farquhar
Recording and Correspondence Secretary