



SOUTH FOUR CORNERS

Citizens Association



Building a stronger community, one neighbor at a time.

Sept/Oct 2016

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Next SFCCA Meeting	1
Mark Your Calendars	1
Upcoming Events	4
Advocacy Issues	5-10
Events Recap	10-11
Membership	12
Meeting Minutes	12

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Sept 19, 2016 – 7pm
SFCCA Community Meeting
Schweinhaut Senior Center

Sept 24, 2016 – 10am
Clean-up of Forest Glen Rd
(meet at Argyle Park tennis courts)

Oct 2, 2016 – 3-6pm
SFCCA Annual Community Day!
Schweinhaut Senior Center

Oct 23, 2016 – 4-6pm
Halloween Parade
South Four Corners Park
912 Forest Glen Road

Nov 21, 2016 – 7pm
SFCCA Community Meeting
Schweinhaut Senior Center

Nov 26, 2016 – 10am
Clean-up of Forest Glen Rd
(meet at Argyle Park tennis courts)

Dec 3, 2016 – 5pm
Tree Lighting Celebration

Next SFCCA Meeting

Monday, September 19 at 7pm
Schweinhaut Senior Center
1000 Forest Glen Rd

Featured Guest Speaker, Howard Ross, on Unconscious Bias



We are honored to feature Howard Ross, one of the world's seminal thought leaders on identifying and addressing unconscious bias, as our guest speaker at the SFCCA meeting on September 19. A native Silver Springer, Howard Ross and his family once lived within the borders of South Four Corners on Forest Glen Service Road near Godwin Drive.

Over the past ten years the study of unconscious bias has exploded into the diversity and inclusion field, built on breakthroughs in the neurocognitive sciences and hundreds of new studies that provide insight into how we think and how that thinking shapes our workplace behavior. However, these insights are often being misunderstood and misused in a way that actually perpetuates some of the challenges that organizations face. This presentation will reveal new research on these very factors that calls us to rethink some of the beliefs and strategies that we have become all too comfortable with. Only by recognizing that we all have biases, and that they serve an important role in helping us manage our lives, can we begin the



journey toward self-discovery that is at the heart of inclusion. Howard Ross is the Founding Partner of Cook Ross, Inc., based in Silver Spring, MD, and an organizational development consultant and educator, experienced in developing corporate and community programs.

He is the author of *ReInventing Diversity: Transforming Organizational Community to Strengthen People, Purpose and Performance*, and his Washington Post best seller, *Everyday Bias: Identifying and Navigating Unconscious Judgments in Our Daily Lives*.

Cook Ross has successfully implemented large-scale organizational culture change efforts in the area of managing diversity and cultural integration in academic institutions, professional services corporations, Fortune 500 companies, and retail, health care, media, and governmental institutions in 47 of the United States and over 40 countries worldwide.

SFCCA Officers and Chairpersons

Officers of the South Four Corners Citizens Association:

Carolyn Stanek Lucy, President
Marie Girardot, Recording Secretary

Larry Dickter, Vice President
Richard Messalle, Treasurer

Chairpersons of the South Four Corners Citizens Association:

Eileen Broderick, Membership
Jane Jannotta, Newsletter Editor
Dave West, Listserv Manager
Dave Meininger, Welcome Bags
Michael Lucy, Public Works
Vacant, Safeway Liaison

Nick Nguyen, Neighborhood Safety
Dave Nettleton, Newsletter Distribution
Betty Batty, Website/Social Med
Jenny Cannon, Social Events
Erin Caporellie, Community Day
Jeanne Berman, Gardening

SFCCA Addresses and Social Media *Like our page on Facebook!*

Mailing Address: SFCCA PO Box 792, Silver Spring, MD 20918-0792

Website: www.southfourcorners.com

Editor: SFCCAeditor@gmail.com

SFCCA Yahoo Group Listserv: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SFCCAMembers>

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DONATE, DUMP & SHRED! Saturday, October 15th



9am – Noon • Argyle Park on Forest Glen Road

Time for your fall clean up! We're bringing A Wider Circle for your donated goods (receipts provided), Patriot Shredding for your documents, and a dumpster for the rest. Stay and enjoy a donut from our local Woodmoor Bakery, and a cup of joe from Starbucks! Visit www.Tamara4Homes.com for more details.



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Upcoming Events

COMMUNITY DAY – Oct 2, 3-6pm



The neighborhood South Four Corners Community Day is taking place on Sunday October 2 from 3-6pm at the **Schweinhaut Community Center**. This year's Community Day

promises lots of fun for the whole family. We have a variety of events planned for the afternoon including a magic show, cake walk, arts and crafts, face painting, a pet photo contest, the local police and fire fighters, food, drinks, and more! This is also a great time to renew your SFCCA membership for the year. We will have a membership table including raffle tickets for some great prizes donated by local vendors. Come out and join the fun on October 2! For more information visit <https://southfourcorners.com/community-day/>

HALLOWEEN PARADE – Oct 23, 4-6pm

Calling all Ghosts, Superheros and Princesses! Join us for the Annual SFCCA Halloween Parade on October 23 at 4pm. Kids and adults are invited to gather in costume at **South Four Corners Park** on Forest Glen. We'll parade through the neighborhood up Portland Place and back down Dallas Avenue to reconvene at the park for treats.



We are looking for donations of cookies, brownies or other treats. If you're able to help, please email Jenny Cannon (SFCCA's new Social Chair) through the SFCCA listserv.

Advocacy Issues

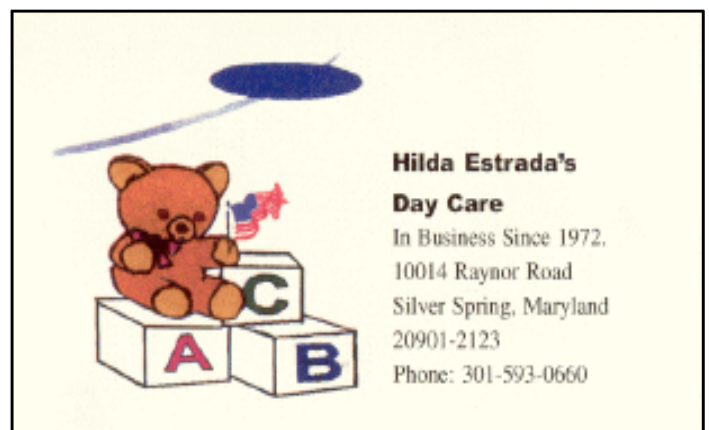
Neighborhood causes and policy on the local and county level

UPDATE ON ZTA 16-05

TELECOMMUNICATIONS TOWERS IN RESIDENTIAL ZONES

On Tuesday, July 19, the Montgomery County Council held a public hearing on Council member Floreen's Zoning Text Amendment, [ZTA 16-05, Telecommunications Towers](#). If passed, this zoning change would relax regulations AND remove public hearings for permitting 30-foot cell towers in residential zones. Currently cell tower applications go through the special exception/conditional use process with a public hearing. This proposal, introduced on June 10th when most civic organizations are recessed for the summer, would eliminate public hearings for placement of cell towers of 30 feet in the right of way. It would also reduce the setback from residential homes from 60 feet to 30 feet. The proposal would also allow the towers in zones where they are currently not allowed at all. Although the ZTA proposes to limit height at 30 feet, current federal law can override the height and width limit set by local zoning. For these reasons, the Montgomery County Civic Federation—of which SFCCA is a member—recommends opposition to this ZTA so that due process and public hearings are preserved. In fact, in the latest County Budget

for FY17, the County Council already allocated additional funding for the Office of Zoning and Administrative Hearings, specifically for the purpose of providing more resources for these cell tower hearings. Please contact Council members and urge them to vote against ZTA 16-05 so that access to the Special Exception/Conditional Use hearing process remains available to residents. A committee work session for ZTA 16-05 is scheduled for September 12th. To learn more about what happened at the hearing, please refer to <http://www.thesentinel.com/mont/newsx/local/item/3865-council-considers-removing-cell-tower-restrictions>.



ALLIANCE ADVOCATES ALTERNATIVE TO BRT ROUTE ALONG ROUTE 29

By Jim Zepp and Larry Dickter

While there are several alternatives for improving transit services and addressing traffic along Route 29, Montgomery County Government's sole focus is currently on building a \$77 million "Bus Rapid Transit" (BRT) system along a 14-mile stretch of the highway. Disregarding findings by the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP) that the County's roads do not have sufficient ridership to justify a BRT system, the County appears headed towards spending millions of dollars on an underutilized transit service, leading to a potential public backlash against spending on other, more worthy transit improvements.

The Greater Four Corners Alliance, a coalition of area civic leaders and businesses, is proposing a far more affordable, immediate, and less disruptive alternative. Based on a recent study, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) concluded that the addition of a "MetroExtra" limited stop, express bus

service on Route 29 traveling from White Oak to the Silver Spring Transit Center could be implemented in nine months (as opposed to a minimum of 4 years for BRT) at a cost of \$700,000.

This MetroExtra service is similar to the highly successful K9 Route on New Hampshire Avenue, as well as the services planned for Rockville Pike and Veirs Mill Road.

Since none of the planning work that is considered the professional norm for projects such as BRT has been completed, the Alliance is also promoting MetroExtra as a more moderate approach to any BRT implementation that would be more consistent with the County-Wide Transitway Functional Master Plan and may be more appropriate for the expected demand (even with projected future development), especially when the growth in telecommuting and regional declining trends in transit ridership are factored in.

Important Phone Numbers:

Montgomery County General Information & Service: 311
Outside of Montgomery County: 240-777-0311
TTY (for hearing impaired): 240-773-3556

Police & fire emergency: 911
Fire non-emergency: 240-776-4700 Police non-emergency: 301-279-8000
24-Hour Emergency Preparedness Hotline: 240-777-4200

Electric power outages and/or downed wires:
Pepco 877-737-2662 <http://www.pepco.com/outage-center/>

ZONING CHANGES BEING CONSIDERED FOR RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

By Larry Dickter

Local zoning laws divide areas of land into zones within which various uses are permitted and regulated. In the case of Montgomery County, as elsewhere, its Zoning Ordinance specifies which areas can be used for commercial purposes and which areas are reserved specifically for residential use. Our neighborhood is zoned exclusively for single family, residential use – a designation that was reinforced for many of us several years ago when we successfully opposed a developer’s application for a “special exception” that would have allowed him to build a large commercial facility in our midst.

After a comprehensive, “basement-to-attic” review and public process that took four years to complete, the entire Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance was completely rewritten and put into effect October 30, 2014. Some of you may recall that at least two of our community-wide meetings were devoted largely to the re-write during the time that it was in progress.

Unfortunately, some County officials and special interests are now seeking to overturn what was decided less than two years ago with regard to where nightly rentals (aka “transient lodging”) are allowed. As it stands now, transient lodging (generally Bed & Breakfast operations) is only permitted in residential zones with larger lots than ours, and then only if the applicant meets certain standards and obtains licensing.

Two measures that were introduced earlier this year in the Montgomery County Council, Zoning

Text Amendment (ZTA) 16-03 and Bill 2-16, would apply far beyond the areas where transient lodging is currently allowed, extending its availability to **all** residential zones, including neighborhoods such as ours (not to mention town houses and apartment buildings outside our neighborhood). Clearly, these two measures are no longer designed for licensing traditional Bed & Breakfast operations. Rather they are aimed at legalizing **all** current and future nightly (as well as hourly) rentals in homes almost anywhere in the County that are not bound by the rules and responsibilities of a Homeowners Association (HOA).

In so doing, the two proposed measures would eliminate the current review process and many of the regulations for transient lodging that are currently on the books for Bed & Breakfast. Among the standards that would be eliminated are those concerning lot size, off-street parking, inspections, number of guests, proximity to other similar uses and owner occupancy.

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Since homeowners who wish to provide hourly/nightly rentals in their homes would be allowed to “**self-certify**” before receiving permission to operate, there would be no independent, on-site inspection for safe egress, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, or bedroom size, not to mention any food safety inspection or any requirement for obtaining a food handling license.

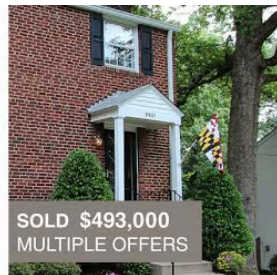
The result of these proposals would make it far easier to obtain approval for a house to become an hourly/nightly rental motel than it would be to obtain approval for an accessory apartment designed for long term tenancy. Accessory apartment approvals, which would not be affected by either of these proposals, require

public notice and have a hearing examiner process. They also must comply with set standards for off-street parking and pass independent inspections for health and safety, among other requirements.

Moreover, the proposed removal of current standards for transient lodging provides a greater monetary incentive for homeowners to rent out accessory apartments for short-term occupancy, on an hourly or nightly basis, instead of continuing to rent to tenants long term. This runs the risk of exacerbating Montgomery County’s severe affordable housing shortage and driving up rental costs that are already beyond the reach of many County wage earners.



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(According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, someone would have to earn an hourly wage of \$31.21 to afford a modest two bedroom apartment in Montgomery County.)

Under the proposed legislation, neighbors would have no say in the creation of lodging businesses nearby. In effect, the changes currently under consideration by Montgomery County would permit the virtually unregulated operation of motel style establishments in residential neighborhoods, going against the intent of residential zones to the considerable detriment of those who live there.

While no doubt many, if not most “hosts” are responsible homeowners, some are simply investors who become absentee “super hosts” who buy up properties they have no intention of occupying, instead advertising them for nightly rentals, party houses, or other uses.

Many of the adverse consequences (traffic and parking problems, a never-ending parade of noisy visitors, the removal of affordable housing from the marketplace, and tax evasion, to name but a few) of the *laissez faire* (minimalist) approach to the regulation of transient lodging are completely predictable, as they have already been proven problematic in Montgomery County and elsewhere.

Some real estate agents have become concerned that properties in close proximity to one or more nightly rentals will take longer to sell and bring in lower offers, ultimately causing property values to decline in entire neighborhoods. These agents also believe they could open themselves up to a lawsuit by unhappy clients if the agent fails to disclose upfront nearby nightly rentals.

With the rapid proliferation of web-based short-term rental sites, practically every major U. S. jurisdiction is grappling with how best to regulate this type of business. The Washington D. C. City Council, for instance, has been considering limiting hosts to one listing at a time and requiring them to live on-site during guests’ stays. All rental units would have to be inspected by the city, and hosts would have to notify neighbors of their rental plans. None of these common sense provisions are in the proposals, which are among the most permissive in the entire country, currently before the Montgomery County Council.

The Montgomery County Civic Federation, an umbrella organization representing scores of neighborhood Associations including our own, has taken a position against what it views as “efforts to overturn decisions that were already made by the full (Montgomery County) Council with regard to short term lodging in residential neighborhoods”. After careful deliberation, the Federation voted unanimously to oppose ZTA 16-03 and Bill 2-16.

Following a public hearing this past March in which numerous County residents (including yours truly) testified as individuals against these measures **as initially presented**, the Council sent both of them back to the Montgomery County



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Planning Board for further review, which is where the matter now stands. After completing its analysis, the Planning Board is expected to send its recommendations back to the Council sometime this fall.

Whatever action the Council eventually takes, a good start might be to acknowledge that homes offering transient lodging are in fact being operated as businesses and should be treated as such. And since home-based businesses are generally considered a commercial use of property, putting short-term rentals into this category and requiring them to obtain a County-issued business license would be a logical first step towards regulation.

In addition, since most homeowners insurance policies do not cover commercial activity in the house, transient lodging “hosts” should be required to purchase a primary liability policy that would cover any claims related to their business.

Just like the rest of the lodging industry (hotels, motels, etc.), these businesses should also be

required to pay taxes, abide by basic safety and health regulations and to provide off street parking, particularly in neighborhoods such as ours where many of us live on narrow streets with no driveways.

The County Council will be facing increasing pressure in the coming months from well-heeled lobbyists and others to set up the weakest regulatory structure possible for nightly rentals in residential zones. However, Council members who place the public interest over commercial interests and who believe they should “first do no harm” will make it their highest priority to protect our neighborhoods and their quality of life, including the sense of community and feeling of security that attracted many of us to places like South Four Corners in the first place.

The question all Council members should be asking themselves before advancing any regulatory framework for transient lodging is: How does this improve, maintain, or diminish the integrity and character of residential neighborhoods in Montgomery County?

Events Recap

SFCCA BASEBALL NIGHT – JULY 20



Scores of neighbors enjoyed FREE admission to SFCCA Baseball Night at Blair Baseball Stadium on July 20. While the Thunderbolts lost the game, we still had a great time at the ball park and we hope to make this an annual event.

POLYCHROME HISTORIC DISTRICT SIGN – JULY 30



Many neighbors and friends joined Eagle Scout, Ben Doggett, as he unveiled his

Eagle Project sign to commemorate the Polychrome Historic District located right here in South Four Corners. Ben and members of his troop helped design the sign which was unveiled in the front yard of one of the historic homes located at 9919 Sutherland Road.

The District is comprised of 5 unique Art Deco-style houses, made of pre-cast concrete panels and built by John Joseph Earley in 1934 and 1935. Earley wanted to show it was possible to mass produce quality affordable housing.

37TH ANNUAL SFCCA NATIONAL NIGHT OUT – AUGUST 2

On Tuesday, August 2, SFCCA celebrated the 37th Annual National Night Out event at South Four Corners Park on Forest Glen Road. National Night Out is an annual event designed to promote neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships across the nation. Learn more at <https://natw.org>. Over 100 neighbors came out for the event to mingle with each other, talk, and snap lots of photos with our police officers, firefighters, and emergency medical responders.

We want to thank Officer Joy Patil and our Neighborhood Watch Person, Nghi Nguyen, for organizing and putting

together this event! Please come and join us next year!



View more photos from National Night Out here:
<http://sfccacrimereports.blogspot.com/2016/08/national-night-out-photos.html>

Membership

Support your community and become a member of the South Four Corners Citizens Association! SFCCA is the voice of our residential community. Its vigorous advocacy and events make South Four Corners safer, more beautiful, and more connected. Only \$15 per year. There are several easy ways to pay:

- By cash or check at the upcoming SFCCA meeting on September 19
- By check made payable to SFCCA, and send to:
SFC Membership, PO Box 792
Silver Spring, MD 20918-0792
- Online using credit card or PayPal at <https://southfourcorners.com/membership/>



Being a Member Means...

- Taking part in the greater SFC community
 - Feeling more connected to neighbors and families
 - Making new and lasting friendships
 - Unleashing your creativity by getting involved with events
- Learning about key neighborhood news & improvements when they arise
- Getting directly involved in the safety and wellbeing of our neighborhood

For more information contact **Eileen Broderick**, membership, at eileen@starpower.net

Highlights from the July 18, 2016 SFCCA Meeting

Eric Friedman, director of Montgomery County's Office of Consumer Protection (OCP), was the guest speaker at our July meeting. His presence was a direct result of a neighbor who has been scammed for a great deal of money. Mr. Friedman provided information regarding the latest deceptive trade practices in the marketplace, and current scams specifically targeting homeowners and the elderly.

Mr. Friedman emphasized that homeowners must protect themselves. Do your research. A great resource for services is Checkbook Magazine, a non-profit organization. Angie's List, by comparison, is a "pay to play" system, and the vetting system is not as stringent as Checkbook.

Mr. Friedman recommended two rules to keep in mind for homeowners: do not conduct business over the telephone; be wary of door to door solicitors.

Remember these tips to stay safe:

- All charities are registered with the state. Check GuideStar.org for charity ratings.
- Always call to verify contractors license. Business license is not the same as a contractor's license.
- Homeowners insurance does not cover contract work.

For full meeting minutes, please refer to <https://southfourcorners.com/minutes>