



SOUTH FOUR CORNERS

Citizens Association



September/October 2012 Newsletter

Next SFCCA Meeting: Monday, September 10th - 7:00 p.m.
at the Schweinhaut Senior Center, 1000 Forest Glen Road

September Meeting—Our Roads, Our Community and Our Neighbors

The guest speaker for our September 10th meeting is State legislator and Silver Spring resident Tom Hucker, who is serving his second term in the Maryland House of Delegates.

Mr. Hucker will review for us this year's legislative activity in Annapolis and discuss what he sees as the state's priorities going forward. Among his many legislative interests are: strong environmental and consumer protections, sustainable energy policy, living wage jobs, universal pre-kindergarten, and tougher regulation of PEPCO. He is looking forward to hearing your thoughts and answering any questions you may have on these or other state level matters.



Child Care Center Update

Glen Richardson



On July 11, 2012 the Board of Appeals voted to deny Special Exception S-2781-Child Care Facility. The meeting was very well attended by neighbors from South Four Corners, Northwood-Four Corners and Woodmoor-Pinecrest. We were represented by our neighbor and attorney, Louis Leibowitz.

At this time, three public votes (5-0, 4-0, and 3-2) and two of four written reports have determined the developer's application is unacceptable.

The Planning Board told the developer several times he could build a child day care center on his lot if it was the right size. They provided guidance that 2,600 sq. ft. would be the right size, yet each of the four proposals were considerably larger than that. The developer can appeal this latest decision to a Circuit Court, and he still has the right to build five houses on the lot if he chooses. We will keep you informed of developments.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

September 10, 2012, 7 p.m.: SFCCA Meeting, Schweinhaut Senior Center, 1000 Forest Glen Rd.

September 15, 2012, 10 a.m.—Clean-up of Forest Glen Rd (meet at Argyle Park tennis courts).

October 7, 2012, 4 p.m.—Ice Cream Social & Community Plant Swap, Tenbrook & Godwin Drives

October 28, 2012, 4 p.m.—Halloween Parade, South Four Corners Park

Proposed Zoning Changes for Accessory Apartments

On September 11, 2012, the Montgomery County Council will consider zoning text amendments that relax current standards for accessory apartments, and permit a large category of new apartments to be approved "by right" **without** either notice to or participation by adjoining property owners. The proposed zoning amendments make no changes in the current system for enforcing the rules for accessory apartments. The Montgomery County Planning Department has articulated no reason or justification for the zoning amendments other than the current process takes too long.

Several of the proposed changes could affect **every homeowner** in South Four Corners. Among these are:

"By right", new accessory apartments less than 801 square feet could be created without notification to the neighbors and with no opportunity for neighbors to address concerns. Currently all licensed accessory apartments go through the special exception process, which requires neighbors to be notified and provided an opportunity to participate in the process.

Even though an accessory apartment can have up to three adults, the proposed amendments relax the requirement for two off-street parking spaces per accessory apartment. The proposed requirement is for one off-street parking space per accessory apartment and that could be waived.

The proposed amendments allow accessory apartments to be created every 300 feet.. Within South Four Corners, this means an accessory apartment could be created every 5 or 6 houses.

My Advisory Committee has informed me there is no compelling reason or need for the proposed zoning amendments and the possible consequences are serious enough that SFCCA members should have the opportunity to vote on them. At our September 10 meeting, members will be asked to vote on the following motion:

"Since there is no compelling reason or need to revise the present standards for accessory apartments, and due to the potentially adverse impact and unintended consequences of the proposed revisions on neighborhoods like South Four Corners, the County should retain those standards for accessory apartments currently in effect. The County should instead focus on providing the resources needed to enforce those rules currently in place and possibly streamlining the special exception process, while preserving public notice and participation."



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Proposed Zoning Changes for Accessory Apartments (cont.)

At the September 10 meeting, I would like the discussion to stay focused on the motion as presented. I would ask that you consider whether our community would be better off with the existing zoning standards or the proposed zoning amendments?

This motion is not a referendum on whether you like or do not like accessory apartments. Either way, they will still be allowed. Nor is it about enforcement issues you may be concerned about. All SFCCA neighbors are encouraged to make their individual opinions known to the Montgomery County Council.

For neighbors interested in additional information, I refer you to two documents posted on our website www.southfourcorners.com under the 'CURRENT ISSUES' tab.

The document titled 'Notes On Accessory Apartment Hearings' is a report of two earlier hearings by the Planning Board. The document titled 'Accessory Apartment Q&A' answers more questions than we can address in this newsletter.

I hope to see you on September 10!

David Meininger
President



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The Gardening Guru: Jeanne Berman

Lawn Care and Fall Crops

Lawn Care

In our area, mid August-Sept is the best time to transform your lawn—beat up from the summer drought or years of neglect-into something nice.

If you do the work now it will give you great satisfaction next season.

1. Cut your lawn at a height of 3"
2. Rake it to scratch the bare spots of soil and to take out the dead green matter, then add a light layer of compost to your lawn.
3. Re-seed with quality seed and follow the directions for coverage.
4. Water gently twice a day until the grass sprouts. **DO NOT COVER THE SEED WITH STRAW!**
5. Feed it with compost in spring and fall (not chemicals).
6. When watering your lawn, water it deeply for several hours, but less often than a daily short watering.

Fall Crops to Plant

Leafy greens, root crops, and members of the cabbage family (beets, carrots, peas, endive, lettuces, chard, turnips, radishes, spinach, cabbage, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, and cauliflower) are all good vegetables to grow this fall, but you need to get them into the ground soon.

When choosing fall crops to plant, select cultivars for harvesting in cooler temperatures and shorter days. Look for words like "cold hardiness and quick maturity" on the descriptions of the plants you select.

Most of these plants can survive a light frost but keep yourself informed about the night time temperatures...and be prepared for the possibility that you may have to offer some extra protection when frost is in the forecast. Use easy to find household items such as; blankets, newspaper or cardboard, old towels, or sheets to cover them.


If you are fortunate and Mother Nature cooperates—you just may have fresh garden veggies on your table with your Thanksgiving Day turkey.



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Edited Notes from the July 9, 2012 SFCCA Meeting Provided by Jim Janssen

President **David Meininger** chaired the meeting, which was attended by 31 people.

Attendees discussed their experiences with the power outage following the June 29 storm. Then guest speaker **M. Randall Paugh** of the MCDOT took the floor to discuss the road resurfacing plan for South Four Corners. Paugh explained that our roads were given a fair to poor grade and would be rebuilt and resurfaced, including ThermoPlastic with glass beads to make the lane marking much more visible.

John Holden was recognized by a round of applause for his seven years of service to the community and **Glen Richardson** provided an update on the child care center (see article on page 1).

Marty Maher explained the process of accessory apartments in Montgomery County, and the advisory board will discuss whether SFCCA will take a position on the matter.

Some results from the SFCCA survey were shared by **David Meininger**, including that most respondents have lived in the area for more than 10 years, find the List Serv and Newsletter the best benefits of SFCCA membership (more detailed results are available on the website).

Glen Richardson then described the success of the ice cream social and motioned to approve funds for a second ice cream social (motion passed).

Other topics discussed included a local talent music show (two attendees expressed interest); SFCCA decals (majority not interested); the possibility of another community yard sale; the need for a Community Day leader and the introduction of new Neighborhood Watch Chair Marie Girardot.

Full minutes are available on the website at www.southfourcorners.com.



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Be Prepared

Jim Janssen

In the last two newsletters, we have reviewed the first seven items on the Plan 9 list. Let's review the final two items.

Hygiene Items

This section includes toilet paper, soap (hand/dish), paper towels/napkins, toothpaste, toothbrush and floss, and feminine hygiene products (can be used to supplement the first aid kit).

First Aid Kit

A kit should be based on the family's size and skill. It is not a bad idea to get the family trained in first aid.

When pulling together a Plan 9 kit, do not overlook your pets.

I also would like to suggest a few other items to add to you Plan 9 emergency kit: Cash in a variety of denominations; disposable dishes and utensils (saves water); a box of large (20 gal+) plastic trash bags for waste disposal, protecting valuables from water damage and more; lighter

or matches in waterproof container.

Twice each year you should inspect your new "Emergency Kit" to see that all items are still working or in good condition and complete. The food should be changed each year. Place the old item into normal use. Water-if kept in a cool, dark area-can be potable for years.

A good time to check the kit is the weekend that Daylight Saving Time begins or ends—the same time you are checking your smoke detectors' batteries.

You may have noticed after reviewing the Plan 9 list that you probably have many if not all of the items. The only thing that may be lacking is organizing the items so that they are accessible in an emergency situation. Today is the time to start gathering and organizing your emergency kit.



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