



# SOUTH FOUR CORNERS

## Citizens Association



*Building a stronger community, one neighbor at a time*

Mar/Apr 2020

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

|                      |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| Next SFCCA Meeting   | 1   |
| Mark Your Calendars  | 1   |
| New Members Listserv | 3   |
| Event Recap          |     |
| Chili Cook Off       | 3   |
| Advocacy             | 4-5 |
| Upcoming Events      |     |
| Community Yard Sale  | 7   |
| Thunderbolts         | 7-8 |
| Ice Cream Social     | 8   |

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

#### Mar 14 – 10 am

Adopt a Road, Forest Glen Rd  
(meet at Argyle Park tennis courts)

#### Mar 16 – 7 pm

SFCCA Community Meeting  
Schweinhaut Senior Center

#### Apr 25 – 8-11 am

Community Yard Sale  
(see page 7)

#### May 16 – 10 am

Adopt a Road, Forest Glen Rd  
(meet at Argyle Park tennis courts)

#### May 18 – 7 pm

SFCCA Community Meeting  
Schweinhaut Senior Center

#### June – date/time TBA

Ice Cream Social  
(see page 8)

## Next SFCCA Meeting

**Monday, March 16 at 7pm**

Schweinhaut Senior Center 1000 Forest Glen Road

Featured Guest Speaker:

**Tracy Rezvani**

**Montgomery County Office of Consumer Protection**

### *Recognizing and Avoiding Common Scams and Frauds*

If you have never been victimized by the scam artists and fraudsters who are becoming increasingly sophisticated while taking advantage of new technologies, it is probably not because you haven't been targeted. Whether it is online, over the phone, or door-to-door, scams succeed because they look or sound like the real thing and can catch even the savviest person off guard.



Please join us at our upcoming SFCCA meeting as we welcome **Tracy Rezvani, Investigative Program Administrator for the Montgomery County Office of Consumer Protection**. She will describe some of the scams we can expect in our email, over our phones, in our mailbox, and at our door, and what steps we can take to protect ourselves against those who are out to steal our identity and our money.



Ms. Rezvani is an attorney with over 20 years' experience in consumer protection law. She has authored numerous consumer protection publications, managed law firms specializing in consumer protection class action litigation, and advocated on behalf of individuals and non-profit clients. She also has extensive experience as a researcher, as well as in interpreting and applying consumer protection statutes.

It is our good fortune to have an outstanding advocate like Tracy Rezvani come to our neighborhood to share her insights and wise counsel with us. We hope to see many of you there.

SFCCA meetings are held bi-monthly on the third Monday of January, March, May, July, September, and November at Schweinhaut Senior Center, 1000 Forest Glen Rd. When the third Monday of the month falls on a federal holiday, the meeting is postponed, space permitting, to the following day.

Don't rely on



to sell your HOME...

Call Betty and Jen instead!



**Jennifer Eckel** Realtor®  
301.461.3073  
jennifer.eckel@compass.com



**Betty Batty** Realtor® | Vice President  
301.832.7609  
betty.batty@compass.com



4205 FRANKLIN AVE., KENSINGTON

SOLD \$1,399,000



10217 BIG ROCK RD., SILVER SPRING

SOLD \$815,000



405 MANSFIELD RD., SILVER SPRING

SOLD \$680,000



8525 WARDE TERRACE, POTOMAC

SOLD \$1,160,000



5471 Wisconsin Ave. Suite 300 • Chevy Chase, MD 20815 • 301.298.1001 • compass.com





The SFCCA listserv is a great way to stay connected to our community! We encourage everyone who lives in South Four Corners to sign up and hear the very latest on recommended service providers, community events, advocacy updates, crime reports, yard sales, and more.

We have recently migrated the SFCCA listserv to **Groups.io**, where you will find a continuation of neighborly communication that was hosted on Yahoo Groups for many years. Thank you for your support and patience as we all adjust to the new platform.

### Join Groups.io in four easy steps:

1. Go to <https://groups.io/g/SFCCAMembers>
2. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click the blue "Apply for Membership in this Group" button.
3. Confirm your account by following the directions in the first email you receive from Groups.io.
4. Respond to the Pending Member Question, which will arrive as a second email from Groups.io.

For troubleshooting help, please email **Emma Bennett** at [emelbenn.io@gmail.com](mailto:emelbenn.io@gmail.com).

## Event Recap

### A CHILI EVENING ON MARKHAM STREET

By Laurence Dickter

Gathered around the warmth of three fire pits, dozens of upper Markham Street (10000 block) neighbors of all ages took to the street January 25 for their **first annual Chili Cook Off and Tasting**. The weather cleared just in time, morphing into a beautiful, starry winter night.

Special kudos must go to expert organizer **Klare Ehrenberg**, who conceived of the idea and flawlessly executed it. Additional kudos go to everyone who entered the chili competition and/or otherwise contributed.

Congratulations also go out to neighborhood pit master **Steve Ricketson**, whose **Texas-style chili**, prepared with smoked beef ribs and a paste of ancho, guajillo and arbol peppers, was voted the best.



Lining up for the tasting



Crock pots in a row



And the winner is.....

And finally, special thanks should go to Montgomery County Government for permitting this street closure and all the others it has allowed in our neighborhood over the years, making this specially-themed block party and many others possible. □

# KICKING THE CAN DOWN THE ROAD

By Laurence Dickter

Since the last full update in this newsletter, there have been a number of important developments related to Maryland Governor Lawrence Hogan's controversial \$11 billion plus "traffic relief" plan. A key component of that plan is still to widen the Capital Beltway by adding four toll lanes, two in each direction, that would be designed, built, operated and maintained by a for-profit contractor (sometimes called a "vendor") in exchange for the toll revenue it collects from motorists. This would be accomplished through what is known as a public-private partnership (P3).

The most significant development began late last year when the Governor sought to renege on commitments he made last June, when the powerful, three-member Maryland Board of Public Works (BPW) (composed of Hogan, State Comptroller Peter Franchot, and State Treasurer Nancy Kopp) voted 2-1, over Kopp's objections, to start the process of soliciting bids from contractors interested in developing the first phase of toll lane construction.

In the absence of any fiscal feasibility study or any environmental impact analysis, Kopp felt it was premature to move forward at that time. Making a decades-long commitment to unknown, irreversible costs and impacts made no sense to her. As she saw it, the Board vote was a classic example of opaque, backward-looking decision-making that put the conclusion before the facts.

Around Thanksgiving, Hogan suddenly and unexpectedly proposed a series of amendments to the plan that he and Franchot voted to approve only months earlier. The changes he sought would have substantially accelerated and broadened that agreement and required a



"re-vote" by the Board. Not only did he want the State to be able to make a final deal with a vendor before all of the environmental impact statements were completed, but in another "one-eighty," he wanted to continue to keep hidden key details on projected financing, costs, and tolls.

This all did not sit well with Franchot, who has otherwise been a reliable Hogan ally on the BPW for the past five years. Unwilling to risk casting a politically unpopular vote that could come back to bite him when he runs for governor (Hogan is term-limited and unable to run again in 2022), Franchot refused to go along with Hogan's "revisions". By the time the BPW met on January 8, a "compromise" was hammered out between Franchot and Hogan (without Kopp's approval or vote) that substantially "re-ordered" the project.

The new plan now calls for starting with



American Legion Bridge

a "fix" (details to be determined) for the critical chokepoint across the American Legion Bridge. It also includes widening the west side of the Beltway on the Maryland side until it meets the I-270 spur, then continuing north up I-270 to I-370. **For the time being at least, this means that all the parkland and affected neighborhoods (including ours) east of where I-270 and I-495 merge will be spared the most destructive impact of the project.**

While the 3,717 home owners (80% of whom live near the Beltway) who received letters last year from the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) informing them that surveyors may need access to their property in connection with the highway widening project may be breathing a sigh of relief, the reprieve may only be temporary. Once SHA turns its attention to future phases of the widening project, the same property owners (whom the State refused to identify for public officials) may be threatened anew. In that event, it is estimated that dozens of homes would be demolished and hundreds of backyards may be at least partially taken through eminent domain.

The revised agreement that BPW approved in January still does not require SHA to share traffic and revenue projections, origination and destination data, likely toll rates, and other relevant data with public officials who need access to all that information in order to conduct their own due diligence and independent analysis. That being the case only underscores the need for the Maryland General Assembly to pass meaningful P3 reform legislation before it adjourns on April 6.

**HB1424**, the most comprehensive P3-related bill filed during the legislative session currently underway in



Annapolis, was introduced in the House of Delegates by Montgomery County Delegate Jared Solomon (District 18). A similar bill passed the House last year by a wide, veto-proof margin, but when it came time for the State Senate to act on it, Montgomery County Senator Nancy King (District 39) refused to allow the Committee which she chaired at the time to vote on it.

Among its features, HB1424 calls for greater taxpayer protections, transparency and accountability by requiring independent fiscal analyses and other reviews for transportation P3s exceeding \$500 million. Under the current system everything is decided by the three-member Board of Public Works, while the legislature is totally sidelined. The bill remedies that by providing for ways to involve the General Assembly in the P3 review process.

At the time this is being written, the prospects for any P3-related legislation passing both houses of the state legislature are uncertain. If anything does pass, both houses will then have to override an almost certain veto by Hogan before the vetoed bill can become law. It is questionable whether that can all happen before the State begins the process of soliciting bids from contractors interested in developing the first phase of construction, with SHA then selecting the winning bidder sometime next year.

A recent article in *Maryland Matters* reports that the State is backing off from its original procurement plan that would have encouraged competition between companies wishing to build phase one segments of the toll road over the American Legion Bridge, onto the Beltway and up I-270. It now appears that the State wants a single firm to do it all under a “sole source” contract.

The winning bidder is expected to be Transurban, the Australia-based, multinational toll road behemoth which already has the contract to expand its

I-495 Virginia tollways up to the American Legion Bridge. Coincidentally, this is the same firm that a close aide to Hogan just went to work for, as a “government affairs” specialist, after quitting her job on the Governor’s staff.

Transurban is known for negotiating “sweetheart” deals like the one they have with the Commonwealth (State) of Virginia, which obligates the State to pay the firm for any lost toll revenues that may result from the State making any improvements on its own to ease traffic congestion. And one day in January, Northern Virginia commuters had to pay Transurban \$60 for a one-way trip from Washington, DC to Springfield, Virginia in the toll lanes it owns and operates on I-395.

Also in January, the Trump administration announced radical, game-changing proposals to roll back much of the landmark 1970 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) by removing climate change considerations from the analysis of major infrastructure projects and their potential impact on the environment. Many other projects would no longer have to undergo **any** environmental review. For example, builders’ plans to discharge waste, clear cut trees or increase air pollution would no longer have to be disclosed, nor would the “cumulative” consequences of new infrastructure, such as sea level rise, have to be considered, putting new roads, bridges, and other infrastructure at greater risk.

While only Congress can repeal NEPA outright, Trump’s proposed changes to the way the law is implemented do not need Congressional approval to go into effect.

By severely weakening NEPA, these far-reaching changes, **if enacted**, may have profound implications for the approval process that will be used to determine if and/or how some, if not all, of Hogan’s toll lanes are built, rendering nearly everything else moot.

Depending on when you are reading

this, there may still be time to **email or call your representatives in Annapolis about the need for P3 reform.**

Although our entire District 20 delegation is already committed to voting for every P3-related bill, it is still important to thank them for their support. However, it is even more important to ask them to lobby their fellow legislators who may be tough “gets” to also lend their support to these bills. Contact information for our District 20 legislators are as follows:

**Will Smith**

will.smith@senate.state.md.us  
410-841-3634

**Lorig Charkoudian**

lorig.charkoudian@house.state.md.us  
410-841-3423

**Jheanelle Wilkens**

jheanelle.wilkins@house.state.md.us  
410-841-3493

**David Moon**

david.moon@house.state.md.us  
410-841-3474

Sometimes a phone call is more effective than an email, but both are logged by the offices of most legislators and are then aggregated and used as a barometer of public sentiment on a given issue.

Remember, in lieu of P3 reform, the Board of Public Works will continue to call all the shots. With just two votes, BPW has the power to reverse any of its prior commitments any time it wants. Our elected legislators will continue having no role whatsoever in the decision-making process.

It is therefore essential for us to stay engaged and to keep informed. Citizens Against Beltway Expansion ([www.CABE495.com](http://www.CABE495.com)), a grass roots advocacy group, tracks the latest developments having to do with this project as comprehensively as any other group or media outlet. And, FYI, the website for the Maryland State Highway Administration is [www.roads.maryland.gov](http://www.roads.maryland.gov). □



# Happy Beginnings Start Here



## 10007 Portland Rd

Multiple offers

Under Contract after one weekend

Sold for list price- \$500,000



## Buyer in search of

Is your home the one our buyer has been looking for?

- ✓ Close in to Silver Spring
- ✓ Minimum of 2 bedrooms
- ✓ Minimum of 1 bathroom

For more info, visit

<https://www.tamara4homes.com/our-homebuyers>

Ranked Among "America's Best Real Estate Agents 2019" by Real Trends and the Wall Street Journal.

#1 in Silver Spring since 2008.

[www.tamara4homes.com](http://www.tamara4homes.com)





## Upcoming Events

# SFCCA COMMUNITY YARD SALE

**SATURDAY, APRIL 25 8–11 AM**

(RAIN DATE: SUNDAY, APRIL 26 8–11 AM)



**Please read ALL the information below, as some things have changed.**

**LOCATION:** Your own yard! Joint yard sales with neighbors are also encouraged.

**ADVERTISING:** The Association will advertise online and in local newspapers.

**SALE GUIDE:** A Sale Guide will be created and distributed prior to the event, to help shoppers navigate the sale. This guide will include a list of participating addresses, as well as the optional inclusion of specific items for sale at each location. If you would like to be listed in the Sale Guide, please submit your address—alongside any specific items you will be selling (optional)—no later than Saturday, April 18.

**TIPS:** Is this your first Yard Sale? Do you need advice on how to organize yourself? Check out the South Four Corners website for a list of helpful tips -

<https://southfourcorners.com/annual-community-yard-sale/yard-sale-tips/>

**SIGNS:** Each street is encouraged to create and post a sign at the end of their block, directing traffic to its various sales. For example, a sign posted at the bottom of Portland Road might read, “*Community Yard Sale Ahead! Participating addresses: 101, 110, 151, etc.*” The Association will also post signs at the entrances to the community and at major intersections throughout the community.

**VOLUNTEERS FOR SIGNS:** Are you able to create and hang a sign ahead of the sale? The Association will supply you with poster board and markers!

**CONTACT:** Please email **Social Chair Emma Bennett** at [em.el.bennett@gmail.com](mailto:em.el.bennett@gmail.com) with Sale Guide submissions or to volunteer to create signs.

**We look forward to a great Community Yard Sale!**

## THUNDERBOLTS BASEBALL IS BACK!

By Dave Nettleton

Summer is coming and with it our great American sport, Baseball!! Come out and support the 2020 season of our Silver Spring-Takoma Thunderbolts (the TBolts).



for less than half the cost.

All home games Monday thru Saturday start at 7 pm, with gates open at 6 pm. Sunday home games start at 6 pm, gates open at 5 pm. Adults \$6, children under 18 \$2, youth baseball and softball players in uniform, and children under the age of 5 are FREE. Concession stand sells dogs/burgers/chips/drinks and, of course, peanuts and Cracker Jacks.

Additionally, the TBolts seek host families to house players during June and July. This is a great opportunity for families in our area to get to know college baseball players from all around the United States. In addition to supporting these fine young athletes, host families are eligible to receive:

- A free family season pass to all Thunderbolt home games
- Invitations to attend special events sponsored by the Thunderbolts during the season

Players provide their own lunch and dinner. Host families are not required to provide the player with transportation. If interested in hosting a player, please contact **David Nettleton**, Thunderbolts Host Family Coordinator at [tboltshostfamily@gmail.com](mailto:tboltshostfamily@gmail.com); or contact [Tboltsbaseball@gmail.com](mailto:Tboltsbaseball@gmail.com).

Whether you get yourself and the kids out for some fresh air and support college players from across our great country, or extend your family by hosting for two months, we guarantee that you'll be better for it.

(Continued next page)

Additionally, registration now open for:

### **THUNDERBOLTS BASEBALL CAMPS FOR BOYS**

**AND GIRLS:** Five weeks of camps, June 22-July 24 (ages 7-14); and, an expanded Three Day specialty camp, June 17-19 (ages 11-16).

**FUN DAY, Free Youth Baseball Clinics:** Sunday, June 7

2-5 pm. Hitting, catching, fielding and special pitching clinics for boys and girls aged 5-15. Thunderbolts and KoaSports training staff, coaches and Thunderbolts players will conduct sessions. Parents and kids who attend clinic can meet players and receive free tickets to the Thunderbolts game starting at 6 pm. Location: Blair Baseball Stadium. For more information, click on <https://tbolts.org/our-camps>

## ICE CREAM SOCIAL

### COMING THIS JUNE!!

**Get the scoop!** Exact date and time, TBA. More info in the next newsletter, so stay tuned!



### Important Phone Numbers:

Montgomery County General Info & Service: 311  
Outside of Montgomery County: 240-777-0311  
TTY (for hearing impaired): 240-773-3556  
Police & fire emergency: 911 Police non-emergency: 301-279-8000  
Fire non-emergency: 240-776-4700  
24-Hour Emergency Preparedness Hotline: 240-777-4200  
Power outages, downed wires: Pepco 877-737-2662  
Website: <http://www.pepco.com/outage-center/>



**Innovative  
Landscapes for  
Outdoor Living**

**MARK WILLCHER & CO. INC**

[www.MarkWillcherCo.com](http://www.MarkWillcherCo.com)  
301-320-2040

[Mark@MarkWillcherCo.com](mailto:Mark@MarkWillcherCo.com)

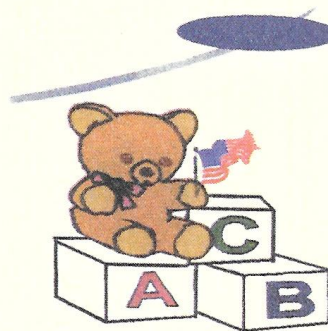
*Building sustainable gardens for birds,  
wildlife and people since 1980*

**WASHINGTONIAN AWARD WINNER**

### Law Offices of Robert Coyne

400 University Blvd. West  
Silver Spring, MD  
301-681-5013  
[www.rcoyne-law.com](http://www.rcoyne-law.com)

**Bring this ad in to receive  
a free consultation**



### Hilda Estrada's Day Care

10014 Raynor Road  
Silver Spring, Maryland  
20901-2123  
Phone: 301-593-0660

## SFCCA Officers & Chairpersons

### Officers:

Karen Michels, President • Laurence Dickter, Vice President •  
Secretary **VACANT** • Richard Messalle, Treasurer

### Chairpersons:

Emma Bennett, Social Media / Social Events Chair / Groups.io Listserv  
Manager / Website • Eileen Broderick, Membership • John Holden, Welcome  
Bags • Jane Jannotta, Newsletter Editor / Website • Michael Lucy, Public  
Works • Dave Nettleton, Newsletter Distribution • Nghi Nguyen,  
Neighborhood Safety • Dave West, Yahoo Groups Listserv Manager

## SFCCA Addresses & Social Media

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

**Website:** [www.southfourcorners.com](http://www.southfourcorners.com)

**Editor:** [SFCCAeditor@gmail.com](mailto:SFCCAeditor@gmail.com)

**SFCCA Groups.io Listserv:**  
<https://groups.io/g/SFCCAMembers>

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/southfourcorners/](https://www.facebook.com/southfourcorners/)

**Like our page on Facebook!**