



Green Space Advisor

Volume 18 No.1

March, 2016

President's message

Bobby Berg

Dear Reader,

You are cordially invited to our annual meeting on March 22. Our speaker this year will be **Rebecca Culler** of the Wildlife Habitat Council, which partners with corporations, government agencies, community members, and other conservation organizations to recognize and encourage wildlife habitat projects for conservation, education and recreation. The meeting will be open to non-members as well as members of Greater Sandy Spring Green Space.

An unusual example of the organization's work is in Maiden Rock, Wisconsin, where sand mining created large, abandoned tunnels that became home for thousands of hibernating bats of multiple species. Since 2005, the Wildlife Habitat Council has worked with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to enhance bat habitat across the site's 650 acres, protecting bats in the tunnels from predators and human disturbance with special gates, bat counts, and monitoring the tunnels for white-nose syndrome.

WHAT	Greater Sandy Spring Green Space annual meeting
WHEN	Tuesday, March 22, 7:30 to 8:30 pm
WHERE	Sandy Spring Friends House 17340 Quaker Lane, Sandy Spring, MD 20860
WHO	Rebecca Culler, Wildlife Habitat Council

Trotters Glen

Bobby Berg

Greater Sandy Spring Green Space now holds a large conservation easement at Trotters Glen, a new residential development on Batchellors Forest Road in Olney. Last year the developer, Toll Brothers, began construction on the former golf course, and so far it has sold 10 of the planned 69 houses. The job for GSSGS will be to periodically monitor the 115 acres that were set aside as rural open space. The property includes rolling uplands, and stream valley lowlands, and about 14 acres of forest.

The plans include the construction of two groups of houses on the north part of the property, conversion

of the large pond to wetlands, and the planting of forest trees on 26 acres of open fields.

Greater Sandy Spring Green Space co-holds the easement with Montgomery County. The involvement of GSSGS (and not just the county) brings three advantages. First, it assures that the easement will survive future turnovers of the county council and the planning board. Second, it will bring periodic monitoring for compliance with the terms of the easement. Third, it gives GSSGS standing in court to contest any violation in the event that our monitoring finds a violation and discussions with the violator fail to resolve the matter.

Pesticide Bill passed in October 2015

Sharon Dooley

Thanks to input from many community members and some negotiating among County Council members, a modified pesticide use bill passed in October. As with most compromises, no one got everything which was desired. Council member Berliner presented a substitute bill which would have significantly decreased strength of the proposal, but it was defeated. Council member Rice opposed the bill claiming it would hurt businesses. In the end the bill passed but implementation was delayed by another year. County golf courses are still exempt although county parks and playing fields are to be brought into coverage by 2020. The County parks department was not supportive of these restrictions and might attempt to further delay them. Many community members supported the measure, including several groups of students who created a group called Safe Grow Montgomery and successfully lobbied for these changes.

A press release from the Council stated:

“Today’s action is another step in the ongoing effort to make Montgomery County the healthiest, safest county in the country,” said Council President Leventhal. “Countless studies have linked pesticides to a wide range of health conditions in children and adults and, since the bill was introduced one year ago, I have received hundreds of reports from constituents of children and pets experiencing adverse effects from the application of pesticides.”

Councilmember Elrich said: “This legislation is an important step toward protecting our public health and environment. We have an obligation to let the public know that our regulatory agencies’ actions do not keep pace with the multiple recent scientific

findings. In 2015 alone, we have seen important news: glyphosate, the active ingredient in RoundUp, is classified as a probable carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer; a study links pesticides to antibiotic resistance, and, perhaps most important, a study of daughters whose mothers were exposed to DDT 54 years ago shows an almost four-fold increase in breast cancer risk in their daughters.

Councilmember Navarro said: “I’m proud of the work that Montgomery County has done today in passing this groundbreaking pesticide legislation to restrict the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes. I have stood behind this bill from the beginning because I believe that it is the Council’s responsibility to work to protect Montgomery County’s public health.

“As this bill is implemented, the education campaign will be key. Educating the public on the intent to reduce major health risks and the effects of these chemicals will be a critical piece of enforcement. This bill will set the national standard for reducing pesticide use and creating a safer and cleaner environment for our communities.”

Council members Floreen, Hucker and Riemer also released statements about their votes in support of this bill.

Others who were opposed to the bill stated that they would bring it to a referendum in the next general election. Whether or not this will happen remains to be seen. As with all issues involving change, time is often the best measure of effectiveness. Thanks to each of you who weighed in with support for this bill.

We have an exciting new opportunity! Your Board has voted to allow a Guest Columnist to contribute to our newsletters. The topics shall be pertinent to our mission of promoting the protection of open space and natural resources. Submissions are subject to editorial review & acceptance. Articles can be up to 300 words. Please email the editor at: bnewton@ashcomp.com

Making Sustainable and Safe Pedestrian Connections in Olney

Janice Snee

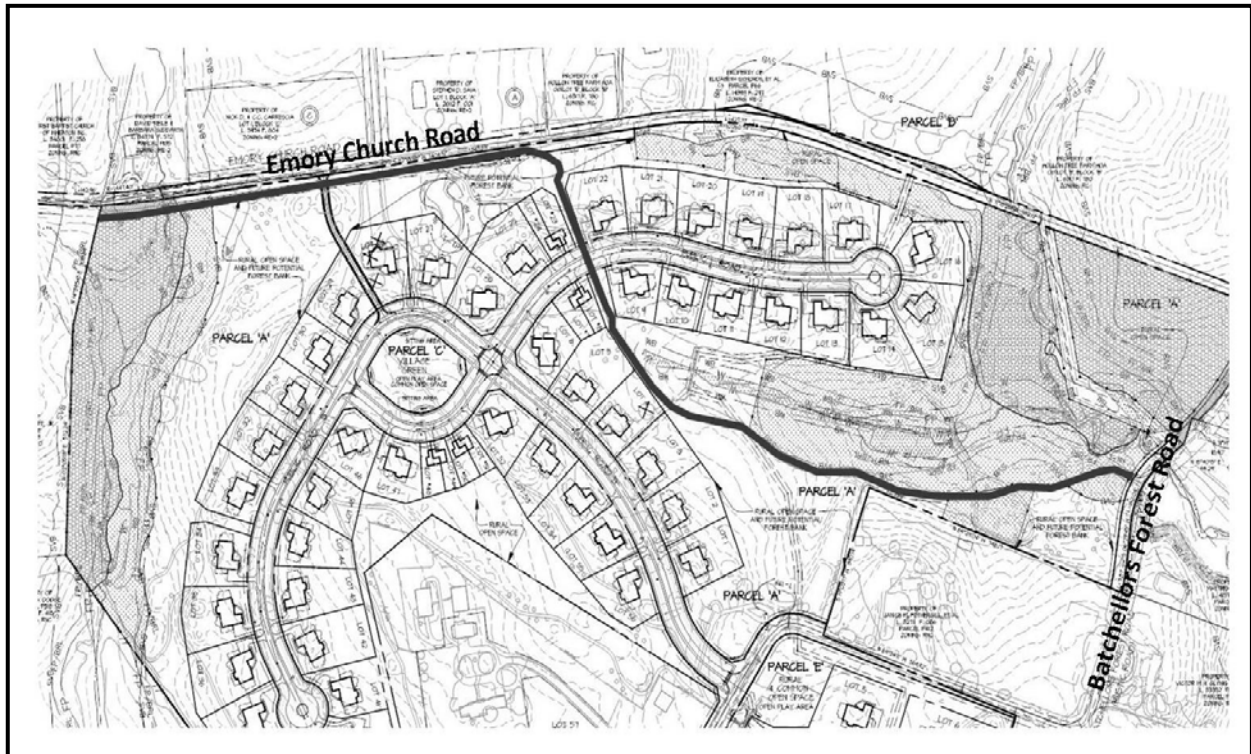
This past Fall, South East Rural Olney Civic Association (SEROCA) met with members of its community, Montgomery County Planning, Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), Rustic Roads Advisory Committee, Toll Brothers and Greater Sandy Spring Green Space, and proposed an extension of a designated hiker-biker path that is approved to run through the Trotters Glen subdivision.

The Community proposes to extend the path, after crossing Batchellors Run, to continue safely along Batchellors Forest Road to Farquhar Middle School. Having a path separate from the road is important because in many places, Batchellors Forest Road is only 1.5 car lanes wide, and it is currently a designated Shared Use road which allows bicyclists, pedestrians and horse riders to share the road with cars, trucks, and school buses (Originally the Olney Master Plan included an extension of Emory Church

Lane directly to Batchellors Forest Road; however, upon further review, the path would have traversed significant wetlands and vast areas of mature trees; consequently the path was relocated during the Trotter's Glen development review process).

Unfortunately, the current County-approved site-plan has the path ending at the bottom of the deep Batchellors Run stream valley where pedestrians and bicyclists would need to cross the Batchellors Forest Road. This section of the road has very limited sight distances from oncoming traffic in both directions, and would be a dangerous place for this path to terminate.

Moving the terminus of the hiker-biker path to a safer location and extending the path to Farquhar involves a number of issues that could impact the Rustic Road status of Batchellors Forest Road. SEROCA has received conditional support for
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Sandy Spring Friends School farm project

Joe Heathcock

This Spring, SSFS is excited to announce a major expansion of the school farm. The farmland around the historic Sandy Spring has been fallow for three years, but will return to productive use with the signing of a 20-year agricultural lease. Work will begin starting in March 2016.

Since 2012, the SSFS Farm has been a community-run educational and working farm that supplies the school's food services with fresh organically grown seasonal produce and provides members of the SSFS community with opportunities for hands on experience in sustainable food production.

In addition to producing food for our community, the Community Farm is a place where participants can develop a healthier relationship with each other, their food supply, and the land from which it grows. To this end, the farm doubles as an outdoor classroom where participants can

explore the concepts of environmental stewardship, sustainable agriculture, and the importance of community. The plan is to improve the soil and out-compete undesirable plants with cover crops in 2016, while transitioning to vegetable, nut and small fruit production in 2017. A wildlife fence will be built to protect the plot from the numerous deer in the neighborhood, although the remainder of the park and all trails will remain open to the public.

Starting in 2017, the project will include some annual vegetables like corn, beans and squash to supply to the school cafeteria, but the primary focus will be on establishing a perennial food production system using mixed trees, shrubs and perennial greens. For more information about the project, or if you are interested in volunteering, please contact the SSFS Community Farmer by e-mailing joe.heathcock@ssfs.org.



(Hiker/Biker)

the path-extension from the Rustic Roads Advisory Committee. Their 9/3/15 letter states:

“The committee agrees that safety is a priority. We are in support of a path but would need to see further details to be able to provide full support. We are requesting that you come back to the committee when the location and design of the path has been determined by MCDOT so we can provide further comments. The potential impacts to the rustic road is our interest and concern. We would want to confirm that the design/location of any path will be done in a manner that minimizes disturbance to the trees and topography, and retains the character of the road.”

At SEROCA’s request, MCDOT followed up by performing a field investigation to evaluate the sight distance and traffic safety of the potential alignment of a proposed path

connection adjacent to the bridge as well as a proposed path along Batchellors Forest Road to Farquhar Middle School. As of February 2016, MCDOT staff completed a preliminary assessment and field walk, has compiled their list of issues and potential safety and environmental impacts, and is in the process of preparing a cost estimate that will be completed prior to mid-April. Once this assessment is complete, MCDOT will meet with Planning and Permitting services to determine the next steps.

Batchellors Forest Road, a designated Rustic Road, is a testament to the residents’ efforts in promoting and maintaining the rural natural and historic setting unique to Olney. SEROCA continues to champion for the Batchellors Forest Road hiker-biker path extension to improve safety, accessibility, connectivity, and sustainable lifestyles while preserving our natural and historic heritage.

YES! I want to preserve open space in Montgomery County

MAKING GREEN SPACE A REALITY, NOT A MEMORY

_____ Individual Membership - \$35

_____ Family Membership - \$50

_____ Send my Advisor by Email to:

Additional Contributions

_____ \$500 _____ \$250 _____ \$100 _____ \$50 _____ Other

Please make your tax-deductible contribution payment to:

Greater Sandy Spring Green Space, Inc.

PO Box 92, Sandy Spring, MD 20860

or donate online at SandySpringGreenSpace.org/donate.htm

**Green Space Advisor
P. O. Box 92
Sandy Spring, MD 20860**



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