



## Winter 2017-2018

*The mission of Greater Sandy Spring Green Space, Inc., is to promote, for the benefit of the general public: the preservation, protection and balanced use of open space and natural resources within eastern Montgomery County and the Patuxent River Watershed.*

### **Update on Montgomery County Streetlights Bobby Berg**

Most of us take streetlights for granted. They make our neighborhood feel safe and the county pays the electric bill, so what's not to like? In a word, it's "uplight", the portion of light that goes unnecessarily up to the sky. Uplight makes no one safer, and it wastes electricity, which of course is paid by We the Taxpayers. Uplight also robs us of an ancient part of our heritage, the star-filled sky. In 2015 Greater Sandy Spring Green Space raised the issue of uplight when we received a conservation easement on Trotters Glen. The "Colonial Post-top" streetlights planned for that new development were fully compliant with the county's standard at the time.

That standard included details such as appearance, lifetime, and maintenance, but it said nothing about uplight. The standard needed improvement. Getting a meeting with the county staff in charge of streetlight specifications involved some luck. First, Bruce Salan, a friend of mine who happened to work in Traffic Engineering, made me aware of the appropriate engineer. Then, Dale Tibbitts, chief of staff for Councilman Marc Elrich, took interest and made sure that a meeting was set up. The outcome was a promise that the county's next standard would address uplight.

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### **New Planning Board Member Chosen Sharon Dooley**

Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board may serve 2 four-year terms. The applicants can come from members of the main political parties - Democrats, Independents and Republicans, but no more than 3 members may belong to any one political party. The Chair is usually chosen by the dominant party in the county - which currently is controlled by Democrats, so the current chair - Casey Anderson is a Democrat and board members are comprised of 2 Democratic members and 2

Republicans. The vacancy this year comes from the retirement of a Democratic member.

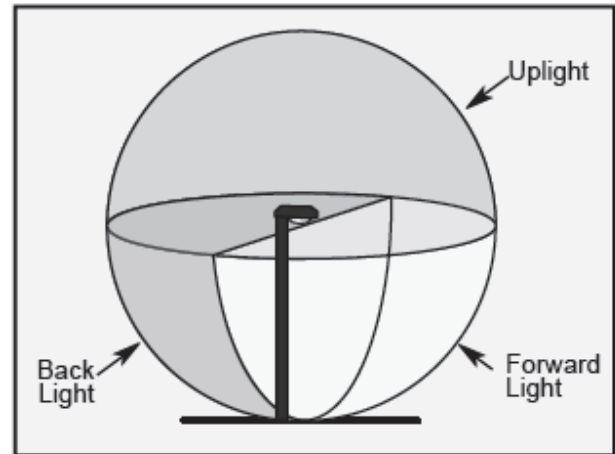
After the interview process was completed, the County Council voted to select **Tina Patterson** as the new board member. She took her spot on the board in June, 2017. Some have said that they hoped her skill in mediation would promote better exchanges among members of the board and with those testifying before its frequent public hearings.

### *"Streetlights" continued*

The new standard was published in 2016. Although the county's website still posts the old standard, Kutty Menon of Traffic Engineering recently assured Dale and me that the county has been enforcing the new specification and that the website will soon be corrected.

The new standard requires that the new LED installations maintain the appearance of the traditional sodium lights in style and color, while imposing the limit B1-U2-G1. This "BUG" rating refers to the three main types of light pollution: backlight, uplight, and glare. (See [www.darksky.org](http://www.darksky.org).) Backlight and glare is the downlight portion that invades your living room at night or glares into your eyes while driving. The uplight rating of U2 means that no more than 100 lumens can go up to the sky,

which is equivalent to a 1 W LED bulb. Although that doesn't sound like much, keep in mind that your portion of the night sky is affected by the uplight from all of the lights in Montgomery County.



credit: [blog.1000bulbs.com](http://blog.1000bulbs.com)

## **Greater Sandy Spring Green Space Holds Annual Meeting**

### **Sharon Dooley**

Greater Sandy Spring Green Space held its 2017 annual meeting this year at the Sandy Spring Museum. After a short business meeting with a report on the activities of the past year given by acting President John Spears, since President Bobby Berg was on a leave of absence, board members were introduced. Candidates up for reelection were affirmed by members in attendance.

The keynote address for this meeting was given by District 3 Democratic Congressman John Sarbanes. Congressman Sarbanes has served Marylanders since 2007 and currently serves on the Energy and Commerce Committee (subcommittees on Health and Energy and Commerce) as well as the Committee on Government Oversight and Reform where he serves on the subcommittee on National Security.

He discussed several concerns he had with changes proposed by the EPA and the new Secretary Scott Pruitt, which would roll back many regulations for clean water and breathable air which have been protecting our population and the environment. He spoke about actions taken to promote coal use and mining which would serve to further pollute our air and mentioned the special interests which were being served by these moves. Increasing air pollution can threaten the health of both forests and people, as we have seen. He decried the actions of those who are climate change deniers. He indicated that we in Maryland are seeing the results of sea level rise in the Chesapeake Bay and along our shore lines.

Additionally, Sarbanes spoke passionately about the need to continue to work cooperatively across state lines, as Maryland and other nearby

### *Annual Meeting, cont'd*

have long been doing to monitor and protect the waters of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed areas. He mentioned that the city of Annapolis is now flooding an average of 50 days a year due to issues with rising seas and global warming and noted that this destruction is projected to increase to 200 days each year just within this generation. In discussing the Presidents' proposed budget, he stated his belief that Congress would make substantial changes and that many of the severe cuts are not reasonable in his view. He described that the funding for the Chesapeake Bay cleanup and maintenance efforts would drop in the suggested budget from the present levels of \$73 million, down to a negligible \$3 million dollars.

These amounts would basically zero out current efforts and would not be adequate to fund the necessary measures to maintain basic restoration efforts.

Montgomery County is bordered by the Patuxent River on the east and the Potomac River on our western edge, and both flow into the Chesapeake Bay and are valued portions of this critical watershed. While funding for 2017 was secure, future funds remain in question.

After his remarks, the Congressman took several questions from an interested and involved audience. He encouraged the audience to remain engaged with Congress and passed out some literature which gave necessary pointers on those actions. Following the meeting, members and guests shared refreshments and conversation.

### **Good News/Bad News re: Pesticide Legislation Sharon Dooley**

Between 2014 and 2015 US beekeepers lost an average of 42.1% of their bees. 75% of all food crops need pollinators in order to grow. In comparison Maryland beekeepers lost 61% of their bees, an even greater loss than that seen nationally. As a consequence, Maryland legislators this year passed ground breaking - first in the nation - legislation to protect pollinators such as honey bees. This legislation is only a partial ban on the neonicotinoids as it exempts those such as farmers and veterinarians who have received special training in the safe use of these pesticides. In Maryland, these products will no longer be sold to regular consumers.

The driving force locally was the fact that agriculture is an important product in the state economy. Gross cash income for agriculture in crop and commodities was 2.4 billion dollars in 2015 with soybeans and corn being the leading crops. Beef and milk cows alone accounted for

more than 100,000 of the state animal livestock tally in recent years and all require crops for feed.

In Montgomery County, there was bad news on the pesticide front. Legislation which passed a couple of years ago was appealed by some county residents, landscapers, the lawn industry and pesticide trade groups and was overturned by a local court. The judge ruled that county law cannot supplant state law. He stated that state laws regarding pesticides mimic those of the Federal Environmental Protection Agency. He indicated that the county does not have the authority to restrict pesticides more stringently than higher regulatory authorities. This local law had not yet taken effect but had been supported by a majority of the county council and many local community groups. This support was based in part on good evidence that many commonly used pesticides contain carcinogens. Councilmember Nancy Floreen spoke

after the ruling noting that her experience as a breast cancer survivor made her aware of the need for the health of all in the community to reduce exposure to these harmful chemicals.

After this ruling, 8 of the 9 council members voted to appeal the ruling of the court. The

original law was allowed to take effect without the signature of the county executive who stated that he felt there were issues with the original law. Many believe that improper use of these commonly available chemicals compounds harm to the community.

## **Dale Tibbitts Spoke About County Tree Program**

### **Sharon Dooley**

GSSGS member Dale Tibbitts – who is also chief of staff to County Councilmember Marc Elrich (D-at large) - spoke to members at the annual meeting also about programs through the county and the parks department to provide free trees for county residents. One is for urban trees and concerns street trees; others concern additional communities and efforts to increase the local tree canopy. Olney is eligible for the free trees program through a Parks and Planning Department initiative called **Shades of Green**, while Brookeville, Ashton and Sandy Spring are not currently in these particular receiving areas. The Department of the Environment also provides free shade trees through a program called **Tree Montgomery**. Details are available through the county websites. Trees help clean the air through breaking down and cleaning the air of most of the

major pollutants we currently have in our atmosphere; this breakdown of carbon dioxide and return of oxygen allows us to all breathe clean and healthier air as we go about our daily lives.

A few years ago the GSSGS annual meeting featured local artist Greg Mort who spoke about the International Dark Sky program (see [Darksky.org](http://Darksky.org)) and initiatives to use downward facing lights to reduce light pollution at night. Green Space President Bobby Berg has worked diligently over the last few years to get Montgomery County to adopt this standard as the basic lighting program for developments in the county. Dale informed the members that the county has now adopted the downward lighting model as the standard installation for future developments. This news was received with enthusiasm by those in attendance.

## **Our Namesake – The Historic Sandy Spring**

### **Steve Berry**

Our mission statement is “is to promote, for the benefit of the general public, the preservation, protection and balanced use of open space and natural resources within eastern Montgomery County and the Patuxent River Watershed.” We are named for the historic Sandy Spring, a natural freshwater spring that feeds into the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia River.

Sandy Spring is also the name of the village located near the freshwater spring in Northeastern Montgomery County.

Sandy Spring, the village, was settled by members of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in the 1720's. After a while, a wooden Meeting House was erected. The brick Quaker Meeting House now standing

was built in 1817 on the site of the original Meeting House. For decades afterwards, it was the largest place of worship in Montgomery County. Quakers have been continuously worshipping on the site of the current Meeting House since 1753.

Over time, the Village of Sandy Spring developed into the hub of a small but prosperous farming and commercial center. Most of the old manor homes built by the early settlers and their descendants stand today across northeast Montgomery County even as modern residential subdivisions have been created near the site of the original village. Traditionally, the area encompassed by a six mile radius from the headwaters of the old freshwater spring is known as “the Greater Sandy Spring Community.”

Sandy Springers were instrumental in shaping Maryland’s political, economic, cultural, social and religious history during the 1800’s. Sandy Springers started a bank (the Sandy Spring Bank – which will celebrate its 150 year anniversary next year ) and an insurance company (Montgomery Mutual Insurance Company which was acquired a few years ago by the Liberty Mutual Insurance Company). Sandy Springers created forums for discussing farming techniques, horticulture, technological inventions, and current events. Sandy Springers were early champions of the women’s suffrage cause and the abolitionist movement. The Lyceum where meetings were held in furtherance of these happenings still stands as the Community House on the edge of the Meeting’s cemetery.

In the decades before the American Civil War, Sandy Spring became a central staging point of the Underground Railroad where escaping slaves were assisted and conducted to staging points further north. Quakers, like other whites in colonial Maryland, once owned slaves. But, in 1777, the regional governing body for Sandy Spring Friends decided that all Quakers should free their slaves as quickly as possible. Any Quaker who ignored the edit was to be first

warned, and, then, if the offending Quaker failed to conform, be read out of membership.

Thereafter, nearly all of the Quaker farmers living in and around Sandy Spring freed their slaves resulting in the largest freed African-American community in the State of Maryland. Freedmen were given land and most established small farms. Local African-Americans established Montgomery County’s first independent African-American church, created their own schools and were among the first, if not the first, free blacks to own private property in Maryland.

Our land conservation community was founded when the opportunity arose to create land conservation easements on property surrounding the original Sandy Spring freshwater spring and safeguard this historic site from encroaching development. Since then, additional opportunities have arisen to create land conservation easements on parcels of land located within a six mile radius of the original Sandy Spring.

The Sandy Spring, from which Greater Sandy Spring Green Space, Inc., takes its name, is located on the Underground Railroad Experience Trail which runs for 3.4 miles between the Woodlawn Manor Cultural Park and the Village of Sandy Spring. The trail’s endpoint is a relatively short walk from the Sandy Spring Slave Museum which is located at 18524 Brooke Road, and the Sandy Spring Museum, which is located at 17901 Bentley Road. This trail is one segment of the planned Rachel Carson Greenway Trail Corridor, a 25-mile trail corridor that will one day connect the Patuxent River State Park to Prince George’s County.

By preserving our natural heritage for future generations, it is our hope that Greater Sandy Spring Green Space, Inc., is faithfully following in the socially conscious footsteps of the original Quaker settlers of Northeast Montgomery County.

**Green Space Advisor  
P. O. Box 92  
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**Greater Sandy Spring Green Space  
Board of Directors**

**Bobby Berg, President  
John Weske, Treasurer**

**John Spears, Secretary**

**Steven Berry  
Fran Hayward  
Sharon Dooley  
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**Please join us by either sending the membership fee of \$35 to our PO box or  
using the Donate button on our website.**