**East County Citizens Advisory Board (ECCAB)**

Eastern Montgomery Regional Center

3300 Briggs Chaney Road, Silver Spring, MD 20904

**Wednesday, October 5, 2016**

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**Members Present:** Roy Chavera,Peter Myo Khin, Fisseha Adugna, Jerold Samet, Melissa Daley, Samantha Blizzard, Faustina Smith-Neil, Fred Stichnoth, Richard Romer, Sharon Brown, Curtis Watkins, Jeffrey Bond, Dr. Shivonne Laird, Hildegarde Sylla, Sharon Brown.

**Introduction of New ECCAB Board Members**: Jeffrey Bond, Shivonne Laird, Hildegarde Sylla.

**Guests Present**: Jeremy Beck, Robert Richardson, Commander Marcus Jones, Ed Weiler, Brian Anleu, Mara Parker, Jack Schwartz, Sebastian Smoot, Harriet Quinn, Lee Yaffe-Stark, Margaret Poore, Rob Richardson, Jan DeGilit.

**Staff Present:** Jewru Bandeh and Chiffon Smith

**Update on Proposed Bills – Brian Anleu, Legislative Aide, Office of County Councilmember Tom Hucker, 5th District** provided a brief on: Bill 38-16, Housing and Building Maintenance Standards-Foreclosed Property Registration Penalty and Bill 39-16, Housing and Building Maintenance Standards-Registration of Vacant Property, including but not limited to the following topics:

* The Maryland General Assembly created the Foreclosed Property Registration Task Force in 2012 for the purpose of addressing maintenance and care of vacant properties, i.e. taxes, exterior upkeep and related maintenance, related safety concerns to individuals, and economic impact surrounding community homes and business.
* Maryland is approximately 3 (three) years behind other states in addressing this issue.
* Approximately 34% of vacant property owners have not registered with the State Foreclosure Registry, which caused the county to lose required tax revenue for taxes relating to title transfers, maintenance bills, related fees etc.
* Hundreds of these vacant properties are due to foreclosures.
* The state is trying to address loopholes in the system that allow this situation to thrive.
* The biggest problem is unmaintained vacant properties.
* The State Foreclosure Registry mandates a homeowner of these type of properties to register with the county.
* Homeowners are charged a fee when an inspector has to go out to address a problem vacant property.
* Vacant property registries are now a national norm.
* There is good evidence to support the system of a graduated fee schedule on foreclosed property homeowners, regarding vacant properties.
* These fees only apply to unmaintained properties, and are included in the annual tax bills issued to the owners.
* On October 18th at 1:30pm there will be a public hearing regarding the vacant property registry. The first work session is currently scheduled to occur in early November.

Comments/questions on Foreclosed/Vacant Property Bills from ECCAB members and guests in attendance included**:**

* Board Member PeterMyo Khin asked about the time table for the review process and fee schedule, relating to the determination of a vacancy status.
* Board Member Melissa Daleyasked about the impact on condominiums and their governing associations. Anleu responded the matter was not addressed at this time since it is not the practice of DHCA to go inside of a home or unit. He added that the Vacant Property Bill may not have an impact on condominiums but the Foreclosed Property Registration Bill will have an impact on condominiums.
* A community member (Eileen Finnegan) commented it would be good to encourage DHCA to be more proactive in enforcement.

**Regional Director** Jewru Bandeh commented on the purview of DHCA.

**Special Guest Presentation: Jeremy Beck, Project Manager, Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), State Highway Administration (SHA)**, provided an update on MD-28/MD 198 Corridor Improvement Study and the Alternatives Under Consideration, including but not limited to the following topics:

* There are four phases/stages of development, and currently the state is in Stage 1, the Project Planning Stage, which was initiated in 2001 after the ICC study.
* The purpose of this study is mainly to improve local traffic safety and related operations, and to preserve rural and suburban quality of life by addressing localized traffic issues.
* He presented three (3) alternatives in a detailed study, which included:
1. Not building or a “no build”;

2. Building a transportation system/travel demand management that included expansion for
 bicycles, etc., however is not expansive to include additional traffic capacity;
3. Same plan in alternative 2 (bicycles, etc.) but with additional expansion for traffic capacity.

* MDOT is also doing a related environmental study, looking at consideration of historical properties, parks, residences and businesses, with the goal to consider the impact on all affected entities.
* MDOT is also performing some public outreach to meet with stakeholders, and community members upon request.
* The study was completed in the summer of 2016, and the draft for environment concerns should be completed by February 2017.
* Expectations are that there will be public hearings on the design phase in March 2017.
* The alternative selected should be completed by the summer 2017, with complete project planning by the fall of 2017.
* The next step after fall 2017 would be to secure funding to move forward to the design phase.
* MDOT is working with Parks and Planning in this project.

**Comments/questions on MDOT’s presentation:**

Board member Jerold Samet asked about the projected completion year of the design, and was advised by Beck that the projected completion of the design is the year 2040, due to the fact that this is a long-term study.

Board member Sharon Brown commented on the impact of DOT’s Design, with concerns of the negative impact of economic development, specifically regarding additional traffic related hardships on the East County in attracting new business to the affected corridor.

Board Member Peter Myo Khin added to Board member Brown’s comments with concurrence and specifically citing negative impact on plans for Highway 29 on the Burtonsville area. He asked DOT to reconsider the economic development impact for East County by DOT’s alternatives presented for selection.

**Approval of September 2016 Meeting Summary**: Board Member Peter Khin made a motion to amend the September 2016 Meeting Summary to include acknowledgement that Board Member Fisseha Adugna was appointed to the Bus Rapid Transportation Corridor Advisory Committee North as the ECCAB representative. This motion was seconded by Board Member Curtis Watkins, the Board approved the motion unanimously. Board Member Peter Myo Khin made a motion for approval of the September Meeting Summary, which was seconded by Board Member Curtis Watkins and approved by Board.

**Update from East County Regional Services Center Director’s:** Jewru Bandeh provided a brief report highlighting the following items:

* A public notice went out to recruit and fill two (2) more ECCAB members.
* The new Board Member orientation training date is pending.
* The retreat date for the Executive Committee Board Members is forthcoming.
* Progress for the construction for Washington Adventist Hospital is going well and timely.
* He is working and collaborating with DHHS and other County partners to establish a Social Service delivery system in the East County. Will work on having the DHHS Director to come to the December ECCAB meeting to provide an overview.
* A charrette for Maydale Nature Conservation Center building design is scheduled for October 10th at the ECRSC.
* The Human Rights Commission meeting scheduled for October 12, 2016 to discuss East County related issues has been changed and will be rescheduled.

**Update from 3rd District Police Commander Marcus Jones:** The IDA section has been relatively quiet, but noted a few robberies in the Ashton area. On the coming Friday, October 8th, an invitation is extended to the community for “Coffee with the Cops” at the 3rd District station. On October 24th he is attending an outreach to establish dialogue with the African Caribbean community. Proactive efforts continue with community policing. Board Member Peter Myo Khin asked Commander Jones for assistance in arranging the attendance of a police representative to comment on District 4, since several Board members represent Police District 4 area as well.

**Update from ECCAB Planning/Economic Development Committee Chair:** Peter Myo Khin provided an overview of the activities undertaken by the Route 29 Corridor Advisory Committee, a partnership between the Maryland State Highway Administration and Montgomery County Department of Transportation to collect data, analyze, develop alternatives and assess impact of these solutions to mitigate current and future congestion on the roadway with the goal of improving traffic flow on this highway.

The PED Chair, Peter Myo Khin made a motion that the Board task a committee to explore whether to support Bills 39-16/38-16, and to create a draft letter to address response. The motion was seconded and passed.

**Update from ECCAB Quality of Life /Social Issues Committee:** Samantha Blizzard made a motion to select Board Member Sharon Brown as the new Quality of Life Committee Chair. She accepted the nomination. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

**Update from County Council Staff Member Mara Parker**:

* All county council sessions and meetings are open to the public, are live and can be streamed.
* There is a Joint Public Safety /HHS meeting planned on October 10th, regarding mental health.
* There is a public hearing on the bills proposed, on October 18th at 1:30pm.
* On October 24th there is a Community Education Service meeting regarding “School to Prison Pipeline.”
* On October 24th there is a PHED committee meeting regarding the Rental/Landlord housing bill.
* On October 8th at 10:30am there is a “Coffee with Cops” public outreach scheduled for the 4th District at the Aspen Hill Donut shop.
* On October 1st, new legislation Noah’s Law went into effect due to tireless efforts by the parents of deceased Police Officer Noah killed in the line of duty by a drunk driver.

**Citizens’ Comments:**  Calverton Citizens Association gave thanks for the MCPD’s timely prompt positive response to traffic concerns and related matters in their community along Cherry Hill Road. Ed Weiler wants fliers for convicted sex offenders to be distributed more proactively, and he encouraged more traffic stops regarding drug activity in MC. Thanks was given to MCDOT regarding for requested traffic improvements by DOT for the left-hand turning lane. A representative from the Stonegate community spoke about traffic and related concerns of a pending construction plans for a mega church in their area, and advised how they have been in contact with Parks and Planning. The community working to stop the construction of the mega church. She indicated that the initial approved construction plan for the church was substantially smaller than current one under review.

**New Business:** Jewru Bandeh advised that the Percontee Group, the Montgomery County development partner for Site II/Viva White Oak will be asked to present at the next ECCAB meeting, November 2, 2016 as requested by the ECCAB earlier.

 **Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned about 9:05 pm**.**