



EAST COUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD (ECCAB)

Wednesday, January 5, 2022

Summary of Virtual ECCAB Board Meeting

ECCAB Members Present: Rachael Evans, Bill Bentley, Sebastian Smoot, Chris Bolton, Larry Edmonds, Ken Flemmer, Fisseha Adugna, Samantha Blizzard, Raj Chebium, Terrell Daniel, Roberta Goldberg, Dawn Hill, Len Newman, Susan Price, Kimberly Price-Evans

Guests Present: Eileen Finnegan, Elizabeth Joyce, Fatmata Barrie, Beth Gochrach, Harriet Quinn, Daniel Koroma, Edward Lattner, Leo Frankel, Margie Georgen-Rood, Mark Pharaoh, Douglas Miller, Peter Myo Khin, Craig Wilson, Chris Leacock, Vikki Garcia, Naomi Spina, Don Ziegler, Jeremiah Pope, Pam Dunn, Councilmember Gabe Albornoz, David Lorenzo, Brian Anleu, Vikki Garcia, Dan Wilhelm, John Kinsley, Jacob Goudy, W. Gioen, Jake Adler, Douglas Miller, S.D. Cooke, Meredith Wellington, Joy Nurmi, Ben Brandt, Hester Phelps, Jeremiah Pope, Eileen Finnigan, Elizabeth Joyce, S.D. Cooke, James LeBlanc, Harriet Shangarai, Ruth Rueda.

Staff Present: Jewru Bandeh, Linda Cooper, Beth Gochrach

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m.

Welcome, Introductions and Community Comments: Skipped to allow time for other agenda items

Approval of Meeting Minutes: The meeting summary for December 5, 2021 was approved.

Discussion with Montgomery County Council Senior Legislative Analyst and County Council President

Topic 1: Thrive Montgomery 2050 Plan Update/Discussion with Pam Dunn, Montgomery County Council Senior Legislative Analyst, Council Member Gabe Albornoz, and Council staff. The session is designed to provide additional opportunity for ECCAB members and other East County residents to provide their views on the plan.

- Pam Dunn provided a summary of the status of Thrive 2050. The Council Planning, Housing and Economic Development committee has held 10 sessions to review Thrive. [See Attachment #1]
- Board members discussed priorities for East County that Thrive should address. The following goals were proposed (presented in order of mention):
 - Improving the quality of life while also avoiding gentrification
 - Preserving affordable housing and preventing displacement
 - Supporting more economic development in the East County
 - Encouraging more market-rate housing in East County, to draw more income, retail, and amenities to the area.

- Supporting a mix of housing types and affordability levels within individual neighborhoods, to rectify the issue of concentrated poverty and segregation by neighborhood in East County.
- Expanding the sidewalk and bike network in East County, to serve residents without a car and reduce automobile dependency.
- Addressing climate change, for example stormwater infrastructure to reduce flooding.
- Expanding public infrastructure (sidewalks, streetlights, natural gas, high-speed internet, cell phone coverage, etc.) in neighborhoods that do not currently have them.
- Providing faster and more reliable transit options, for example dedicated bus lanes on US 29, and feeder routes to the FLASH transit system.
- Variety for recreational facilities for different backgrounds (e.g., cricket, futsal).
- Encourage retail, dining, entertainment, and education amenities closer to home (i.e., not having to drive from Colesville to Columbia or Laurel).
- Installing more sidewalks, multi-use paths, trails, and neighborhood streets to connect neighborhoods that are adjacent but lack a direct connection.
- Supporting both the long-term objectives of current residents while ensuring the future generation of residents have access to and can afford the amenities they need to succeed in the future (housing, jobs, education, health, sense of belonging).
- Chris Bolton made a motion to assign the ECCAB's PED/QLI joint committee with the task of reviewing Thrive at their upcoming meeting (Wednesday, January 12, 2022). The motion passed without objection.

Topic 2: Ethics and Guidelines for Board Members

Ed Lattner, Chief, Division of Government Operations, Montgomery County Attorney's Office will provide a Brief Overview of Montgomery County Public Ethics Law/Requirements relating to employees/Boards, Commissions and Committees engaging in political activities and Compliance with the Open Meeting Act, BCC meetings and communication.

- Jewru Bandeh explained that every few years, the County Attorney's Office provides an overview of the applicable laws and policies for members of county boards, such as ECCAB.

The following is an incomplete summary of topics covered.

- Board members can participate in political activities (Maryland Code 1-301, County Charter 405), but it must be done on their own time.
- Advisory boards and commissions cannot hold candidate forums because it is not part of their purview. The jurisdiction of boards and commissions are defined in their bylaws, resolutions, and charters.
- The advisory boards can write advisory letters to county policies and plans. Such letters can be supportive/unsupportive of a whole policy or only specific elements. However, they are not allowed to "lobby", which is to support or oppose a specific legislation.
 - Obvious examples are state or federal laws, as the regional advisory boards were established for the limited purpose of advising the county executive and council.
 - For county bills, the board can provide commentary on how it would affect the jurisdiction of the board (e.g., the ECCAB may write a letter how a specific county bill could affect East County).

Open Meetings Act:

- The attorney general provides a helpful manual: <https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/Pages/OpenGov/Openmeetings/default.aspx>
- All official business must be conducted in public. Reasonable advance notice and agenda must be provided.
- Minutes only need to include a review of topics discussed, actions taken, and votes.
- Deliberations of standing committees with regular meeting times must comply with open

meeting act. Ad-hoc committees established for a limited purpose might not be subject to the same requirements.

- Boards and commissions cannot ban recordings of meetings.
- Drafts of letters are not required by law to be available to the public. Any final, approved letter sent by a board or commission must be available to the public upon request. The board may choose to publish or not publish it.

Jewru Bandeh explains the ECCAB's *typical* procedure for drafting and sending letters. He notes this process was developed specifically to provide transparency and opportunity for community input.

1. At an ECCAB meeting, the board votes to take on an issue and assign the chair and/or a committee to draft a letter.
2. A draft letter is discussed and developed at a committee meeting or an executive board meeting. Sometimes the draft letter is finalized at the meeting. Sometimes a consensus is reached on the content at the meeting, and the chair finalizes the letter ahead of the upcoming full board meeting. The chair consults/seek further guidance from the Regional Director as needed.
3. The draft letter is sent to full board meeting.
4. The draft letter is reviewed by the board, discussed, and voted on at the full board meeting.
5. The director sends the final letter to the County Executive and Council and posts a copy on the ECRSC website.

Reports/Updates-County Agencies

None, due to time constraints.

Old Business

None.

New Business/Additional Community Input/Comments

None

Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 9:12 p.m. The motion was seconded and approved without objections.