



EAST COUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD (ECCAB)

Wednesday, March 1, 2023 Meeting Summary

Members Present: Peter Myo Khin, Larry Edmonds, Bill Bentley, Mark Pharaoh, Roberta Goldberg, Dawn Hill, Ken Flemmer, Sebastian Smoot, Len Newman.

Members Absent: Rachael Evans, Susan Price, Gertrude Jones, Fisseha Adugna, Kimberly Price-Evans.

Guests Present: Chris Wilhelm (Councilmember Kristin Mink's office), David Lorenzo-Botello (Councilmember Evan Glass' office), Greg Chmiel, MCPD 3D, Ed Weiler, Rob Richardson, Dan Wilhelm, Sharon Brown, Eric Carzon, Kristina Ellis, Margie Goergen-Rood,

Staff Present: Jewru Bandeh, Cicero Salles

Welcome: The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m.

Meeting Minutes: Minutes from the February ECCAB meeting were approved as amended to add the name of the new Lieutenant (officer) from the 3rd District.

Approval of Letters: The following two letters drafted by the ECCAB Executive Committee and submitted to the Congressional delegation for the FY24 Congressional Earmarks were formally adopted:

- Letter of support for federal funding of Montgomery County Department of Transportation's Burtonsville Park & Ride Transit-Oriented Development Project
- Letter of support for federal funding of Department of Housing and Community Affairs Neighborhood's Revitalization Section Pilot Program for the White Oak Commercial Area and Transit Center

Montgomery County Police Department (3rd and 4th Districts Updates:

- Updates included information on Auto thefts and theft from autos continue to be a problem.
- There was a recent carjacking in Burtonsville and the Wheaton area is seeing an uptick.
- MCPD continues to increase patrols and monitoring.
- Tires and rims are also being stolen, particularly from Hondas.
- Car thieves continue to target vulnerabilities of Kia and Hyundai vehicles.

- There have been nine shootings recently: three with victims, and six “no contact” (no known injuries).
- The homicide division is actively investigating the shooting on the bus on Stewart Lane & Lockwood Drive. MCPD will be providing enhanced support to protect the LGBTQ+ community from disruptive protestors.

Comments from Community Members:

- One community member raised concerns about reckless driving, speeding, and loud vehicles on East Randolph Rd.
- What is the arrest rate? MCPD responds that arrests are being made for auto thefts. Most of the suspects are juveniles, which raises challenges with interrogations and detention. MCPD continues to confiscate illegal weapons and drugs (particularly fentanyl) from traffic stops.

Presentation by Guest Speaker Mary Beck (Capital Improvements Program Manager, Montgomery County Office of Management and Budget) presented background on the County’s capital improvements program (CIP):

- The “full CIP” is normally updated every two years. On the “off-years”, a “biennial CIP” or “CIP amendment” can be adopted to adjust the CIP; these adjustments must adhere to one of the following three criteria: 1) emergency needs, e.g., life and safety; 2) availability of new funding sources; and 3) a need to balance the budget.
- The County will be hosting six community forums to gather community input on the FY25-30 CIP in the coming months. The County Executive’s East County CIP community forum: April 12, 2023 at White Oak Community Recreation Center, 7:00 – 8:30 P.M.
- Mary Beck provided an overview of draft CIP. The County has two budgets: the capital budget is for one-off projects, such as new construction; the operating budget is for recurring annual expenses, such as wages and salaries. All departments received are proposed for increased funding, except transportation. There is a \$136.7 million dollar increase across all funds. Notable was the \$89 million dollar increase in Transportation. County Government has a \$102.3 million increase and Education has a \$104 million dollar increase. MCPS received record funding for school construction. MCPS plans to construct wellness centers at every high school. Eight schools are planned for completion by FY28: among them, Blake, and Springbrook. New arts center in Wheaton is proposed.
- Housing: \$30.2 million to “jump start” affordable housing programs. The money is invested to assist non-profits to start projects, and once the project is sustainable, the County’s investment is recouped so that it can be used in future projects.
- Montgomery College: County Executive and OMB asked MC to defer addition of the East County Campus to the next fiscal year CIP, because it is not eligible to be included in an “off-year” amendment.

Presentation by Carina Gonzalez (Montgomery County Public Schools, Division of Facilities-Real Estate Management Specialists) Burtonsville Elementary School:

- The County Executive and MCPS have agreed to construct a new building for

Burtonsville Elementary School, as opposed to the previous plan of expanding the existing school. This will cost more money and could take longer, but there is broad support for this approach. MCPS sent letters/postcards to residents, Home Owners Associations, and MCPS families notifying community of the project. The community has an opportunity to provide input on either March 9, 14, or 28 at MCPS Office in Rockville.

- The County Executive and County Council do not have direct control of line items in the MCPS budget, but rather they approve a total budget, which is allocated to projects based on the Board of Education's approved budget. Timeline for the school:
 - ✓ Nov 2021: BoE approved funding for expansion of Burtonsville Elementary. Scheduled completion date was August 2025.
 - ✓ May 2022: County Council delayed project by two years but maintained funding.
 - ✓ November 2022: Board of Education approved construction of a new school at a different location. Scheduled completion date is August 2027.
- The selected site is 11 acres large along Saddle Creek and Bentley Park drive. MCPS also considered and rejected two other locations (both owned by the Parks Department). MCPS refers to this site as "Site 17". The new school site is within walking distance to hundreds of homes (there are no households within safe walking distance of the existing school) A bus route analysis will be required. Scheduled completion of the project is August 2027.

Q&A on Various Topics:

- Q: There is a concrete and materials handling yard ½ mile southeast of the proposed school site. Has MCPS considered the health impacts of being located near this industrial site? Carina Gonzalez: this can be evaluated during the design.
- Q: How does MCPS determine when to expand a school or build a new school? Mary Beck: many of the older buildings are expensive to retrofit.
- Q: What was the original purpose of establishing "Site 17"? Carina Gonzalez: often the county requires developers to set aside
- Q: Has there been any discussion of expanding public transit to the new school site? Mary Beck: this has not been explored yet.
- Q: What creative outreach efforts are planned for the new school? Mary Beck: the county aims to increase engagement with stakeholders that are not usually engaged in public forums. For example, in the most recent year, the county held operating budget public forums in multiple languages and collaborated with community organizations and non-profits to encourage more people to attend. The county would like to make the process more equitable, to that equity focus areas and other marginalized communities
- Q: Please explain how the impact tax revenues have been affected. Mary Keck: every four years, the County Council approves a new growth policy, which establishes impact taxes that are paid by developers to fund the amenities needed to support growing population. The County has eliminated impact taxes for affordable housing (Moderately Priced Dwelling Units), and in the most recent update, the County Council approved further reduction of impact taxes, such as eliminating them for Enterprise Zones. Another example is that the Council exempted projects with more than 25% MPDUs from paying impact taxes; some developers revised their plans to increase the MPDUs to avoid paying impact taxes.

- Q: What is the cost of the land for Burtonsville Elementary? Carina Gonzalez: there is no cost because the land is already owned by the Board of Education.
- Q: The council has several new members. Do you anticipate that there may be significant shifts in the budget with the new councilmembers? Mary Beck: there will be a learning curve. OMB held additional meetings to orient the new councilmembers.
- Q: There were recently two fatal crashes on Randolph Road. Is it possible to install traffic control devices? MCPD stated that they would conduct a study. Has there been any updates? MCPD replied that he will

Staff Council Updates:

Lorenzo-Botello – Councilmember Evan Glass’s office:

- Safe Streets Act of 2023. Last year, 19 pedestrians 50+ drivers were killed in Montgomery County. Prohibit right turns on red in urban districts; modify traffic signals to give pedestrians a head start to cross at intersections, requires an infrastructure review for students injured on county roads, requires County Executive to pass new plan for automated enforcement. Committee work session begins later in March.

Chris Wilhelm – Councilmember Kristin Mink’s office:

- The County Council is considering increasing the recordation tax to offset the reduction in county revenues from impact taxes.
- Councilmember Mink’s office aims to improve constituent services and reply quickly to concerns. Also, focusing on public safety. Wilhelm encourages community members to contact him directly if an issue needs to be escalated.

Update from ECRSC Director- Jewru Bandeh

- Acknowledges the one-year anniversary of Cicero Salles as White Oak Planning Coordinator, elevating him to a merit position status.
- Thanked community for providing support letters for the County’s FY 24 Congressional Earmark application. The County Executive will present his FY24 Operating Budget to Council on March 15th
- Thanked ECCAB for its support for additional staff to the ECRSC. A newly hired Program manager will begin work in early April.
- Update from DHCA staff Kristina Ellis: County is expanding the façade improvement program. The original program was a capital budget project dedicated for Burtonsville and Colesville. The program reimburses property owners 50% of the cost of improvements. Based on the success of the projects, DHCA has expanded the program county-wide. The DHCA website provides guidelines for property owners on the eligibility. A project is planned to start in Hillandale Center in the next few months.

New Business:

- Goldberg motions to have the two April committee meetings consolidated to sponsor/host the County Executive’s East County Community CIP Forum/Discussion on April 12. The Motion approved unanimously.

Old Business, Community Announcements/Additional Comments: None

Adjournment: A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 p.m. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.