

WHITE FLINT DOWNTOWN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

December 9, 2014

Location: Bethesda North Conference Center, Brookside Room

Present: Cliff Cohen, Brian Downie, Ken Hartman, Francine Waters, Peggy Schwartz, Tara Flynn, Bob Daley, Tom Murphy, Andy Shulman, Paul Meyer, Bernie Meyers, Deirdre Johnson

Visitors: Dee Metz & Darcy Buckley (CE), Stephanie Cuppula (BUP), Gabby Rojchin & Sarah Wright (Streetsense), Tina Benjamin (OED), Kristi Smith (JBG), Todd Lewers (The Forum), Nkosi Yearwood (Planning), Jay Corbalis & Evan Goldman (Federal Realty), Rebecca Hertz (FOWF), Ginnanne Italiano (Chamber), Fred Marcial (Garrett Park), Ed de Avila (Lerner), Bev Haller (RSC)

8:05 am The WFDAC meeting was called to order by Cliff Cohen, Chair.

MOTION: A motion was made & seconded to approve the 11-18-14 Meeting Summary. The motion passed.

CHAIR'S REMARKS: Cliff Cohen thanked Federal Realty for taking the lead in coordinating the community naming charrette run by the Bethesda firm, Streetsense. He then introduced Streetsense Principal & Creative Director, Gabby Rojchin.

PRESENTATION: RESULTS OF SEPTEMBER 2014 District Name Charrette

Gabby Rojchin, Streetsense said the "District Branding" charrette was for the purpose of community feedback. Sarah Wright, Creative Strategist, described the criteria used, as well as the process, which included personal interviews with stakeholders. Attendees at the charrette were given 10 names to review, then asked to score each on a scale -5 to +5. There were 83 responses, and the most positive feedback was for PIKE DISTRICT, with a positive score of 2.13. This name would be used to market the Pike corridor from White Flint to the Rockville city limits for commercial purposes. It would not be intended to replace the names of any neighborhoods or existing retail sites. (Pike & Rose, White Flint Mall, North Bethesda Market, etc.). Committee comments were all favorable, as well as those from Evan Goldman (Federal Realty) & Ed de Avila (Lerner). The next step by the development community will be to create a proposed logo, which it will then share with the Marketing Committee. The goal would be to add the name & logo to the WFDAC website during first quarter, 2015, which is when the site plans to go live.

MOTION: A motion was made and seconded to endorse & support the name PIKE DISTRICT. The motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION: ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT DESIGNATION

Tina Benjamin, Office of Economic Development (OED), described the use of A & E (Arts & Entertainment) districts as a way to revitalize communities, as well as providing tax benefits. This State designation has been given to 3 areas in Montgomery County during the last 10 years: Bethesda, Silver Spring & Wheaton. Benefits include state & county tax advantages, as well as providing areas for artists to live & work. There would be no county funding. The A&E area has management & marketing responsibilities.

Stephanie Coppula, Director of Marketing (BUP), described marketing techniques, including a Way Finding' system, 'Ask Me' teams, Circulator Bus, & web site. The process, which can take several months, includes making an applications to State of Md. Arts Council, with support letters. The 2 yearly deadlines for applications are April 15 & October 15 and the State suggests a contiguous area no greater than 100 acres. The State designates only ONE A&E district per calendar year, and Wheaton's re-designation, required every 10 years, is due in 2015.

Cliff Cohen suggested the need for an A&E Ad Hoc committee.

UPDATES

Dee Metz (Implementation): Described some of the complex ownership details of the Conference Center land & buildings. The County basically has a 99 yr. lease w/a private entity that controls the hotel, as well as the land between the hotel and the Metro, which is currently used for parking. Currently that land could be developed further by that private entity, which is managed by JBG, but only for additional hotel use. The County is finalizing an amendment agreement to allow mixed use development on that site in the future, in order to retain the vision of the Sector Plan. Questions have come up asking why the County has not put this opportunity out to other developers, & Dee wanted to clarify to the committee that the County is bound by the long term lease w/the JBG entity. The County is negotiating changes to that lease, & is not free to deal with anyone but the current tenant. There is no project immediately pending & any future development would have to proceed through the typical private development approval process.

Brian Downie (Vice-Chair): ULI will revisit the TAP application, but the Committee will now need to fund the full \$15K cost. After a budget review, the focus will be on the streetscape criteria for the Pike. ULI timing is flexible. Discussion will take place at the January Committee meeting.

MOTION: A motion was made & seconded to adjourn. The motion passed.