

## Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee

2424 Reedie Drive Wheaton MD 20902

APPROVED, Tuesday October 08, 2013

**Members Present:** Henriot St. Gerard(Chair), Devala Janardan(Vice Chair), Rick Kessler, Jeannette Feldner, Nadia Sesay, Tom Stanton, William Moore, Dan Thompson

**Members Absent:** Luis Bonilla

**Staff Present:** Ana Lopez van Balen, Director, Mid-County Services Center

**Guests:** Chris Gillis, staff to Councilmember Leventhal. Sgt. Russo, Montgomery County Police. Chris Helsabeck, representative of Avalon Bay. Bob Harris, attorney for Lerch, Early and Brewer. Randall Spadoni, resident.

**Call to Order:** 6:02pm by Vice Chair Devala Janardan in the temporary absence of the Chair. Introductions followed. A motion was made and passed to approve the September Meeting Minutes without changes.

**Directors Report:** Ana Lopez van Balen noted that the comment period on the Redevelopment Project has been extended to October 18<sup>th</sup>. Comments received by October 2<sup>nd</sup> are online. The developer has been forwarded the comments and the County is in discussion with the developer on aspects of the project.

The County is recommending Historic Preservation on the Wheaton Library/Rec Center project and the Historic Preservation Commission is presenting to the Planning Board on October 17<sup>th</sup>.

Ana reported that they are about ready to advertise the Wheaton Façade Improvement Program to businesses. She also informed WUDAC that the Curbside Cookoff event attracted around 4000 people and that the Urban District is pleased with the attendance. She finished by reminding the Committee that there is one more presentation of the Nighttime Economy Task Force scheduled for October 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm. This brought a few comments from members as to the lack of specificity to the recommendations and the hope that mention of Wheaton as an A&E District could be included.

**Chair Report:** Henriot St. Gerard reported that the retreat went well and thanked everyone for their input on the Redevelopment Comment Letter and thanked Devala for his work in writing it.

He mentioned that he had received a response from County Executive Ike Leggett to a letter from WUDAC with regards to the Walking Tour. The County Executive is embracing what we wrote. Henriot stated that our hard work is paying off and he will forward the response to WUDAC members.

**Council Report:** Chris Gillis, staff to Councilmember Leventhal, updated WUDAC on the progress of the Redevelopment proposal. They had a meeting two weeks ago and some of the concerns expressed by the Council included how small businesses would interact with the large buildings and the lack of green space.

He reported on the introduction of Bill 27-13, the Minimum Wage Bill. The bill would raise the minimum wage over three years to \$11.50 and then index for inflation. He noted that they were partnering with

other jurisdictions to present an area wide approach to the effort to raise the wage. There will be a public hearing before the Health and Human Services committee on October 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm. He stated that if we had a strong position on the matter we could coordinate our effort with the Gaithersburg and Germantown Chamber of Commerce.

**Police Report:** Sgt. Russo responded to a question about reports of prostitution in the Urban District. He noted that it appeared to be Bar generated and not Street generated and that they were closely monitoring it. He also reported that they have had a lot of thefts from autos and thefts from lockers at LA Fitness. He also reported an assault at the McDonalds on University Blvd. He closed with statistics on other crimes and noted a couple of commercial burglaries.

**Avalon Bay Presentation:** Chris Helsabeck, Vice President of development for Avalon Bay, presented a visual rendering of the project. He gave some background on the company and a history of their involvement in the community and in this particular development. They have the 3.7 acre "BBT" site at Blueridge and Georgia. It was purchased in 2004 as a potential multi-use community but the zoning did not work out. It is now 75% vacant and will be 100%vacant in January. The plan now calls for apartments geared towards Millenials. They envision approximately 300 units with garage parking and plan to call the building AVA. Chris stated that they are just starting the public presentation phase. They are looking for feedback and a possible letter of support from WUDAC and also advice on other groups they might meet with.

**Other Business:** Devala Janardan explained the formation of our Comment Letter on the Redevelopment proposal. He emphasized our commitment to a continuous Town Square on Lot 13. A motion to approve the letter passed.

Devala also brought up the issue of the Historic Preservation of the Rec Center. He discussed an email that he received from DGS. WUDAC members felt we needed more info before we could act. A motion was made and passed to ask the Planning Board for a 30 day extension of the comment period.

**Community Concerns:** A resident, Randall Spadoni, asked WUDAC to expand ways we are communicating with the public. He stated that the Newsletter is good but that they need more. He pointed out a blog called "Friends of White Flint" as good at keeping the public informed.

**Adjourn:** 7:36pm