

APPROVED 12/11/12

**Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee Meeting
Tuesday November 13th, 2012
Mid-County Regional Center, 2424 Reddie Drive, Wheaton MD 20902**

Members Present Henriot St. Gerard (Chair), Devala Janardan (Vice Chair), Nadia Sesay, Marian Fryer, Tom Stanton, Dan Thompson, Luis Bonilla, William Moore, Jeannette Feldner

Members Absent Jim Onder

Staff Present Ana Lopez van Balen, Director, Mid-County Regional Center, Pete McGinnity, Manager, Wheaton Redevelopment Program Sidney Cooper, Marketing Manager, Wheaton Urban District

Guests Ash Kosiewicz and many members of the Coalition for the Fair Development of Wheaton, Abigail Adelman and Danila Sheveiko, representatives for Stop Costco Gas Coalition, Ken Silverman, staff, councilmember Navarro

Call to Order 5:34pm by Chair Henriot St. Gerard

Motion October Meeting Minutes approved with one typo change

Chair Report Henriot St. Gerard reported on WUDAC retreat held on Nov. 3, 2012. Stated purpose was to meet new members and strategize on how to accomplish WUDAC goal to re-engage the community and businesses. The members formed two new sub-committees, Economic and Design/Infrastructure. Henriot asked Devala Janardan to brief the meeting on efforts to change our Bylaws.

Director Report Ana Lopez van Balen updated WUDAC on several topics including: County approval of the Wheaton Library Recreation Center Project to combine two facilities in its current location, an upcoming Wheaton Public Safety Workshop to look at actual as well as perceived safety issues in Wheaton, and the beginning of meetings with the small business community on the effects of planned Redevelopment changes and the council approved small business fund. In addition, she briefly touched on an upcoming Planning Board hearing on the Glenmont Sector Plan, the Costco opening scheduled for January, and the fact that Costco is still proceeding with their plans for a gas station

Wheaton Small Business Survey Pete McGinnity reported on the results of the survey. The top three concerns of the urban business community are: Parking, Rents, and Safety. Pete stated that the county is working on a Memorandum of Understanding that will be presented to council in January. In addition, a parking study is to begin towards the end of the fiscal year. He emphasized the need for a marketing strategy in advance of construction to assist with continued patronage of the existing businesses. Dan Thompson urged the planners to think not just about

parking but also pedestrian access. Devala stated that WUDAC could act as a clearinghouse for information.

Community Concerns Raymond Rose from Barbarian Comics spoke on behalf of the Coalition for the Fair Development of Wheaton. He reiterated the concerns expressed in the Small Business Survey on parking, rents and safety. He asked for the parking study that has been promised to be undertaken. He also worried that rents would rise as leases renewed and the safety concerns if business employees have to walk long distances to their cars. He also requested adequate signage to inform the public that businesses were open and more information on economic resources available to help. He asked WUDAC to send a letter to request the County's help. The chair informed Mr. Rose that the matter would be addressed at a future meeting. Ana responded that Wheaton has assistance available to escort employees to cars and that we would be sending a newsletter to the business community to keep them informed on issues.

Marketing Sidney Cooper reported on the results of a Wheaton Community Survey that was conducted. The top three "likes" were: variety of good restaurants, Metro availability, and the Small Business feel. Areas identified as needing improvement included: shopping, dining and the Business Environment.

She stated that attendance at the Summer Concerts was a concern and all events were being evaluated to see if they are a good return on investment. Our budget is small and there is a need for new rotation of Banners and to promote Clean and Safe Team. She briefed WUDAC on new website and followed up on Ana's comments on the newsletter, stating it will start in December and may include Marketing tidbits.

Council Report Ken Silverman, staff for Councilmember Navarro, introduced himself and reminded the Committee and guests of Navarro's sponsorship of the Business Assistance Program. He also stated Navarro's ongoing desire to make sure the bill is useful for Wheaton's businesses.

New Business Henriot asked for a motion to approve new sub-committees discussed at retreat. Motion was approved. The meeting date and time for the first meeting was set as the first Monday in December. Design at 6:00pm and Economic at 7:00pm at the Regional Center. A motion was also approved to change the start time for the monthly WUDAC meeting from 5:30 to 6:00pm. The new Wheaton logo and website were also approved.

Other Concerns Abigail Adelman and Danila Sheveiko introduced WUDAC to their organization, the Stop Costco Gas Coalition and urged us to visit their website: stopcostcogas.org.

Henriot asked for volunteer to attend community meeting on Bus Rapid Transit at the Wheaton Library on Nov. 15.

Adjourn 7:10pm

