**Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee**

Mid-County Services Center, 2424 Reedie Drive Wheaton MD 20902

Meeting Minutes, Tuesday February 11, 2014

APPROVED

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

**Members Absent:**  Luis Bonilla, Rick Kessler

**Staff Present:** Ana Lopez van Balen, Director, Mid-County Services Center. Pete McGinnity, Manager of Business Development DGS

**Guests:** Adam Fogel, Staff to Councilmember Navarro. Chris Gillis, Staff to Councilmember Leventhal. Phil Normandy, Brookside Gardens. Brooke Farquhar, Dominic Quattrocchi, Bill Dwyer, Stephen Chandlee and Mary Bradford of Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning

**Call to Order:** 6:07pm by Chair Henriot St. Gerard, followed by introductions. A motion was made and passed to approve the January meeting minutes with a correction of a member’s last name. A couple of community concerns about potholes, crosswalk painting and burned out streetlights were addressed. Henriot the passed the meeting to representatives of the Park Dept

**Park and Planning Discussion:** Brooke Farquhar discussed the possibility of events at Veterans Park and awareness of connectivity of Urban District to Wheaton Regional Park.

Phil Normandy spoke of renovations to Brookside Gardens which would be starting in about a month. Some regular events have been cancelled but believes Garden of Lights will go on. They will be discouraging car traffic because parking will be so limited during renovations. He is working on the Master Plan for Wheaton Regional Park.

A discussion followed about traffic during the Garden of Lights and ways to alleviate that. Also discussed was the Master Plan for the park. Some additional comments from the Park and Planning staff included the desire for a Beltway sign for the park, the need to connect Metro, the interconnectivity of the Urban District to the park and the idea of how solving these issues could go a long ways toward making Wheaton a destination.

Next, Brooke turned the discussion towards Veterans Park. Chair Henriot St. Gerard stated that we noted the limited use of the Park during our Walking tour. We would like to leverage the asset. Marian Fryer informed the group that they used to have concerts and dances there and with new residents that would be a good area to have activities.

Mary Bradford, director of the Parks Dept, noted that if you provide the content they can provide the venue. She agreed that urban parks needed lights, paths and seating. She took questions from WUDAC members on event sponsorships, budgeting and emphasized the fact that the Park is a buffer between the Urban District and the residential neighborhood behind. She stressed that it is important to show up for budget hearings! She hopes to come back to form an advisory group.

**Council Update:** Henriot then passed the meeting to Adam Fogel, staff to Councilmember Navarro. Adam informed WUDAC that the Council was briefed by the Dept. of General Services on the problems that historic preservation would add to the Wheaton Youth Center Project. Those problems included the cost, $7-8 million, and the take away of needed green space. There will be a public meeting on Feb. 13th at 7:00pm at the Wheaton Recreation Center. Councilmembers Leventhal and Navarro oppose the historic preservation designation and want the project to go forward. Lastly, Adam mentioned legislation introduced by Councilmember Navarro. Bill 13-14 would favor local businesses in a tie vote for County procurement contracts and Bill 14-14 would require employers seeking County business to provide health insurance to employees.

Chris Gillis, staff to Councilmember Leventhal, announced that the Arts and Humanities Council is thinking of coming to Wheaton. WUDAC should send letter to support project.

**Chair Report:** Henriot informed WUDAC that WRAC is transferring their business award program to us. He led a brief overview of the Awards and the selection process. The Executive Committee will vet the nominees. WRAC will offer nominations as well. Discussion followed on how best to get input into this process.

**Directors Report:** Ana Lopez van Balen reported that there will be a meeting of the Wheaton Regional Park Citizens Association at the Saddlebrook Center at 6:30pm Wednesday.

MCCAB is soliciting nominations for their awards for Citizen of the Year and Civic Organization of the Year to be presented at the Chamber of Commerce Awards Dinner on April 30th. She also noted that MCCAB would like to work jointly with WUDAC on towing and Bike-sharing issues.

The Façade Improvement Program has had 4 property owners express interest. Ana also mentioned that the Big Belly(trash compactor) contract was still several weeks away from completion. Also, the Night Time Economy Task Force had a meeting with County Executive Leggett. Ana also noted that they got a response back from the Transportation Dept. on our letter concerning Town Square issues. She handed members a copy of the response.

**Sub-Committee Reports:**

Design: Dan Thompson shared that the committee work was focused on our goals of a walkable Wheaton. We would like to have an event in conjunction with civic organizations for businesses and would like to develop a brochure to help businesses become compliant and recognize businesses that make progress. We would like to reach out to Transportation and other County Departments and have a joint sub-committee meeting with economic sub-committee to develop content.

Economic: Discussed possibility of a pop up event at Veteran’s Park, maybe around the 4th of July or Irish Celtic theme for later. They will build a relationship with the VFW.

Two letters were submitted for review : Avalon Bay and the Recreation Center. After discussion, motions were made and passed to send both letters, the Avalon Bay letter with slight changes and the Recreation Center letter with no changes.

Devala Janardan made a motion for the Chair to testify at the hearing for the Historic Preservation of the Youth Center. The motion passed.

Adjourn: 7:36pm