**Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee**

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

Meeting Minutes, Tuesday September 09, 2014

APPROVED

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

**Members Absent:** Luis Bonilla

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

**Guests:** Brent Wise, Manager, Westfield Wheaton. Adam Fogel, Staff to Councilmember Navarro. Derry Goberdhansingh, resident

**Call to Order:** 6:04pm by Chair Devala Janardan. Brief welcoming remarks were followed by member and guest introductions. July Meeting Minutes were approved without changes.

**Community Concerns:** In the absence of community concerns, Devala introduced Brent Wise, Manager, Westfield Wheaton

**Westfield Wheaton:** Brent Wise started by briefly sharing background information on himself. He then gave an update on the status of the various stores and the merchandise mix and noted some of the recent newcomers. He indicated that their Costco is one of the busiest on the East coast. He stated that Westfield is interested not only in national brands but also some regional players. They are in talks concerning the old theater space. He feels it’s important to attract a theater and more restaurants although he did not believe that anything would happen along restaurant row until 2016. He then took questions from WUDAC members. Some issues of concern included the connectivity to the Triangle area and the clogged entryway into the shopping center. Brent noted that 40% of traffic comes by Metro. WUDAC member Henriot St. Gerard asked Brent to be aware that the closure of Lot 13 during redevelopment may necessitate using Westfield for events such as the Taste of Wheaton.

**Chair Report:** Devala Janardan spoke briefly about a Bicycle Pedestrian Priority Program. There will be hearings in the Fall. He announced that our retreat will be Sept. 22. WUDAC member Tom Stanton announced that the event WonderFall Wheaton, scheduled for Veteran’s Park in October, will not go forward due to lack of business interest. He would like to discuss at the retreat.

**Director’s Report:** Ana Lopez van Balen spoke of some initiatives to benefit the business community. She passed out a draft of a Community Toolkit for members to look at. Also, she mentioned a project at DPS, Recipes For Success, a guide to help entrepreneurs open restaurants. Ana mentioned that business owners should come to DPS for a design consultation before you sign a lease. Other items she mentioned: a reminder that the FY2016 Budget process has begun, a law requiring landlords of a building over 50000sq feet to benchmark its energy use, a culinary walking tour on Sept. 20 hosted by Janet Yu, a Food Truck Fest on Sept. 27 and a community mixer with the Chamber of Commerce on Nov.19. She also noted that TGIF was a big hit. Family movies were the most popular and they hope to focus more on that next year. Lastly, she shared that WUDAC member Nadia Sesay has resigned due to a new job. A search for a new WUDAC Chamber of Commerce representative has begun.

**County Council Update:** Adam Fogel briefed WUDAC that the Council is back in session and had a meeting today. Some issues coming before the Council will include public campaign financing, cybersecurity, real property transfer taxes, and sick leave. In addition, they will review recommendations from the Right to Vote task force and work on the Fair Criminal Records(Ban the Box) legislation. The Council will also discuss help for small businesses impacted by Wheaton Redevelopment for the FY2016 budget.

**Old/Unfinished Business:** Devala opened the discussion on the Walking Tour by noting that we sent notes to Joe Callaway so that he could direct concerns to the correct department for action. Next, the discussion turned to the formulation of a letter to elected officials about the Tour. Devala passed out a handout highlighting our findings from the event. A discussion followed about the structure of the letter and also whether there should be two letters. A motion was made and passed to draft a letter to the County Executive and Council to thank them for attending the Walking Tour and highlighted our takeaways and requests in conjunction with the Urban District requests for the Budget.

**New Business:** Devala talked briefly on the upcoming September 22 retreat. It will be from 6-8pm. He asked that members think on goals to be accomplished this year. Devala stated he is working on a master list and to please get him items that we feel should be a priority for WUDAC. He envisioned that the agenda for the retreat will be 90 minutes discussion and then a 30 minute breakout.

**Adjourn:** 7:30pm