



EAST COUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD (ECCAB)

Wednesday February 5, 2025 Meeting Summary

Board Members Present: Fisseha Adugna, LaTonya Brooks, Rachel Evans, Ken Flemmer, Roberta Goldberg, Metassebia Kefelegn, Peter Myo Khin, Len Newman, Tina Oyenya, Kimberly Price-Evans, and Dan Wilhelm. **Board Members Absent:** George Brown, Radwan Chowdhury, BJ Dawkins, Sheala Durant, Mark Pharaoh, Susan Price, and Calandra Tate Moore.

Present: Capt. Jason Cokinos, Lt. Kevin Conroy, Sharon Brown, Margie Goergen-Rood, Chris Howe-Smith, Claire Iseli, Ken Jones, Omega Tawanezui, Ed Weiler, and Chris Wilhelm, Mustapha Mansur, Steve Coniglio, Dr. Earl Stoddard.

County Regional Office Staff Present: Jewru Bandeh, Cicero Salles, and Ayanna King.

Welcome and Introductions. The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. by chair Peter Myo Khin. Board members, government officials, and public members introduced themselves.

Approval of Meeting Summary: The meeting summary for the December 4, 2024 meeting was approved without any objections. The January meeting had been canceled because of bad weather.

Police District 3: Commander Capt. Jason Cokinos gave the following update:

- Most crimes are occurring at a lower rate than last year. For example, homicides are down 75%, and auto thefts are down 25%. Robberies are down except for the apartments in the Lockwood, April and Stewart areas.
- Thief of auto parts is still on the rise.
- Police Lt. Gregory Chmiel has moved to HQ and a replacement will be announced in a week or so.

Police District 4: Lt. Kevin Conroy indicated crime trends for District 4 mirror those of District 3. He indicated fentanyl use has dropped sharply. They have only issued 4 non-auto tickets so far this year.

Presentation 1: Earl Stoddard, County Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, provided an update on recent federal immigration actions:

- The federal government, not the county or state governments, are responsible for immigration.
- County agencies do not collect immigration status of individuals seeking or receiving services. Additionally, the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) and the Sheriff's Office do not carry out immigration enforcement nor do they ask about immigration status. If the Police learn that a person is not here legally, based upon an investigation for some other reason, they only notify ICE if they had been informed that they have a warrant (signed by a judge) of the named person. The Supreme Court ruled years ago that public schools must educate all children, regardless of immigration status.
- The ICE office in Baltimore is responsible for the entire state of Maryland and a small area in Virginia. That office only has a staff of 14 and is the smallest office in the entire country.
- The Baltimore office currently is only looking for individuals who have committed a crime and in most cases a judge has already ruled that they be deported. Nevertheless, they will detain others who they find as part of their search for primary target (called collateral targets).
- There are two types of ICE enforcement actions: warrant (an outstanding deportation order issued by a judge) and ICE warrant or detainer (an administrative action, not issued by a judge). ICE can legally enter a building based upon a warrant but for a detainer they need the occupant's permission. It will likely be hard for the typical person to determine the type of enforcement action.
- The Baltimore ICE Office director does not go into schools or churches, not because he cannot legally, but because the risk of conflicts with legal residents is too high. Rather, they just wait for their target to leave the school or church to detain them.
- Mr. Stoddard indicated the above situation could change at any time.
- Mr. Stoddard also indicated that, while the Baltimore Office has increased their enforcement tempo, there is a limit to how much they can expand. He indicated that it takes time to train new personnel, and that ICE only has the capacity to train 300 people nationally per year. They also have a limited amount of space to hold individuals and that sometimes people are released after being picked up because of limited space (nationally).
- There are federal agencies other than ICE who are looking for criminals.
- Montgomery County will follow up with the families of detained individuals to identify any services the family might need. (The Quality of Life Committee will be covering this topic at their Feb 12 meeting.)

Presentation 2: Steve Coniglio, Principal, Innovative Development Group, LLC, provided an update on his plans for housing at the Burtonsville Park and Ride Lot. The plan shows a new parking structure in the northwest corner of the lot and town houses to be built on the remainder of the existing 6-acre lot. The state has provided \$5M to the county to cover part of the parking structure cost. The builder of the townhouses will provide the remaining funding. The parking structure is expected to be four levels, hold over 250 vehicles, and be owned by the county.

The plan for the housing units has changed over time. The current plan is for 97 townhouses (no 2-over-2s or apartments). There will be 15% MPDUs scattered throughout that are the same size and quality as the market rate units. The units will typically be some 1600/1700 sq ft with three

bedrooms. The plan is that the town houses will be 16 feet wide by 42 feet long with a two-car garage (vehicles staggered). They will be three-story not counting the garage level and they will not have basements. Their next step is to submit their plans to the Planning Department/Board.

Letter Supporting White Oak Project. ECCAB's Executive Committee sent a letter in December supporting a Department of Housing and Community Affairs request for federal funding to undertake a revitalization project for the commercial area in White Oak near the transit center. This letter was an updated version from what ECCAB had sent last spring. The Board endorsed the sending of the letter.

ECCAB Committee Reports. There were no committee reports.

Jewru Bandeh reported the following:

- He is very busy answering questions relative to county services for families of undocumented immigrants who fear being deported.
- District 14 will have a roundtable discussion with businesses and the Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce on the state budget (and potential impacts on businesses) on February 24, 10-noon at the Regional Services Center.
- The County Place-Based Management Grant Program is accepting applications until February 26. Funds will be available on a competitive basis (\$100,000 of the funds will be earmarked specifically for the White Oak Science Gateway Planning Area) for services that directly support economic development and revitalization strategies, community building/place-based management and marketing related services.
- The County Executive is developing his proposed operating budget, which will be submitted to the Council on March 15.
- The groundbreaking for the new Burtonsville Elementary School will be set soon.
- The topic for the February 10th Planning and Economic Development Committee meeting will be an education presentation by the Planning Staff, referred to as Planning 101.
- The February 12th Quality of Life Committee meeting will be about services to immigrants and others, especially in light of ICE deporting some family members.
- There will be a forum concerning proposed additions to the CIP that were submitted on January 15 by the County Executive.

Chris Wilhelm reported that Councilmember Mink will be introducing three bills next Tuesday (February 11):

- Bill 6-25 would implement stronger protections for renters under the County's consumer protection laws. Many renters have faced tremendous challenges regarding unfair or deceptive trade practices by corporate and private landlords, including unfit rental housing, amenities not as advertised, failure to repair essential building services, imposition of junk fees, and chronic housing violations.
- Bill 5-25 would impose a \$20K tax when a permit is required to demolish a residential building. This would normally occur when a larger house is going to be constructed. An exception would be allowed where the owner would remain the same.
- Bill 4-25 would require the police to follow a public engagement process when they are introducing surveillance technology. The process will be the same one they recently used for the drone program.

Chris Howe-Smith reported that Councilmember Glass is tracking actions being taken by

the Trump administration and is in close contact with the Maryland congressional delegation. He also reported that two of Councilmember Glass's bills were approved yesterday (February 4):

- Expedited Bill 22-24 would delay the payment of impact taxes until the final inspection of the building. This would save the expense of financing this cost for a good period of time, thus reducing the cost to the public to purchase it. The impact tax would remain the same.
- Expedited Bill 26-24 would require any policy directive regarding U visa certification by a law enforcement officer to be consistent and no more restrictive than allowed under federal immigration law. The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act enacted by Congress in 2000 provided a type of nonimmigrant visa (U visa) for victims of certain crimes who have suffered substantial mental or physical abuse and are willing to assist law enforcement in the investigation or prosecution of criminal activity. The purpose of the federal legislation is to strengthen the ability of law enforcement agencies to investigate and prosecute cases of domestic violence, sexual assault, trafficking of noncitizens and other crimes, while also protecting victims of crimes who become humanitarian/material witnesses.

Old and New Business: None

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.