



FRIENDS OF WHITE OAK
Meeting Minutes
12-3-18 at 7pm

Members present were Elisse Wright Barnes, Shane Pollin, Dave Feehan, June Henderson, Barry Wides, and Pete Fosselman (staff). Kim Jones, Shana Davis-Cook, and Brian Downie were necessarily absent.

- Pete welcomed everyone.
- Agendas and Minutes were made available to the public.
- Minutes
 - Approved by email from October 23, 2018.
- From the Public
 - No comments
- Future Meetings
 - After some discussion about a regular meeting schedule, the board (at Barry's suggestion) decided to have a set schedule starting in January by quarters. Pete will send out a Doodle Poll to determine the future three dates.
- Presentation by marketing firm Sharp & Company on proposal for White Oak.
 - Charise Geiling and Shelley Johnson were guest speakers from Sharp.
 - A brief history of how Sharp was chosen for the task and the interview process was given. Then a history on their research thus far was shared. Many of the main neighborhoods and key commercial areas were visited by Sharp staff.
 - A survey was done and over 1,000 people responded. Reasons people visit White Oak are for dining and shopping. Reasons they don't come more often is because of a lack of dining choices, limited shopping and crime (or perceived crime). It's about being "better, safer, cleaner".
 - Pete gave a police crime report to Sharp that indicates most incidents are down from prior years.
 - In fact, the police have a special unit called SAFE that patrols and works for the White Oak community.

- Stories online are far and few and those one finds tend to be negative. It was agreed the positive profile of White Oak must be raised through outreach and marketing.
 - June commented about some of the “characters” who tend to hang out at the bus stops. They can be intimidating to some.
 - Shane asked who the audience is? Pete noted the target is both locals to fix the negative perception and visitors to show off what’s happening and the great changes.
 - Dave noted White Oak is a transportation hub with all the bus lines, key state roads and the BRT coming.
 - Sharp’s plan is phased with step one being the branding, logo and social media. Some draft logos were shared as well as the idea of a mascot for White Oak such as a squirrel.
 - The biggest asset White Oak has is the untapped FDA campus and their thousands of employees. FDA must be hyper focused upon. Elisse commented on how the FDA is “walled off” from the community. Pete and Shelley have contacts at the FDA.
 - Key events such as food truck days/nights, festivals, farmers’ market, wing night, and other community events should be planned.
 - Barry commented that buy in from the property owners is essential.
 - Elisse asked if the street lights were still out along Stewart/Lockwood? Pete will drive by and look. Lighting is essential to people feeling safe.
 - Dave spoke with staff at the GSA about their Good Neighbor Program where GSA becomes involved in the community. He and Pete will be meeting with GSA soon to discuss further.
 - Barry believes we need to emphasize the unknown positives in White Oak like the elaborate hiker/biker trail system we have.
 - Pete and Shane suggested a flyer or handcard to be given in public places like the Metro Stations or community events.
 - Elisse emphasized how big food trucks can be in drawing crowds; Dave suggested a rib cookoff.
 - Dave shared an inspirational story about how a jet cannot take off if all the necessary aspects like fuel, itinerary and staff are in place. White Oak is that jet.
 - June suggested we needed a type of main street to hold events and be the center of activity.
 - Pete said it’s important we get additional community feedback on the marketing plan such as meeting with other property owners and leaders. Council Members Navarro and Hucker are also key.
 - Charise and Shelley will get a copy of the presentation to us so those not present may review it; and all may gather feedback.
- Comments by Pete
 - In efforts to increase the membership of the board, Pete has begun reaching out to community members in the business, non-profit, and residential sectors. Those interested should submit a bio or resume to Pete.
 - The board should take another look at the FOWO “structure” document to make sure they are keeping with the board’s goals and intentions.
 - Pete updated the board on the status of the LATIP traffic mitigation efforts in Hillandale. The public hearing was held last month with many testifying in favor and opposed to the improvements. The Director of Transportation will be making the final decision based on input from several community meetings and the hearing.

- Pete requested from DOT and DPZ that the Lockwood Transit Center be cleaned up again (fence repairs, weeds and trash issues). Some of the work has already been completed.
 - Pete has relocated one of his offices from the East County Regional Services Center to the White Oak Recreation Center with the intentions of better community outreach by being in White Oak. He will still have a satellite office in the Executive's Office in Rockville.
- Meeting adjourned