



Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board (MCCAB) Meeting Summary

Mid-County Regional Services Center, 2424 Reddie Drive, Wheaton, MD

Call to Order:	Greg Intoccia, Chair		Respectfully Submitted by: Oriole Saah, Secretary			
Date/Time:	February 16, 2016; 7:00 PM ET					
Attendees:	X	Adjogah, Mensah		vacant	X	Rowden, David
		Bonilla, Luis	X	Neuringer, Jason	X	Saah, Oriole (Secretary)
	X	Intoccia, Gregory (Chair)	X	Newman, Rick	X	Shoenberg, Robert (Parliamentarian)
		Vacant		Vacant	X	St. Gerard, Henriot
		Lynch, Maisie	X	Romero, Francisco	X	Tankersley, Judy
Staff:	Luisa Montero, Director, Mid-County Regional Services Center					
Guests:	Joshua Faust, Department of Transportation/Highway Division Daniel Rubenstein, Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA) Katherine Mullen, Legislative Director, Senator Manno					

APPROVED

Call to Order: 7:08 PM by Greg Intoccia

Introductions

Agenda – approved as amended

Minutes – approved as amended

Community Concerns: none raised

Old Business:

- Taking the meetings on the road. Working with Dave Rowden to plan a meeting in Aspen Hill. Would like to reserve space at the Aspen Hill Library, which we must do through Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF). We would need to plan the March or April meeting there as the Library is closing May 1. Also considering a meeting at the Queensguard Rec Center, Mensah’s neighborhood, in May. Members should contact Greg as soon as possible to make arrangements.
- Member replacement – currently received eight applications for three open positions. Planning interviews for March 3.
- What is the quorum? There is a conflict in the rules. Judy presented a draft memo the Boards and Committees, to be reviewed by the county attorney, proposing a change to clarify the language (see attached) so that quorum would be the “majority of voting members.” The group discussed the letter and proposed changes. Some members believe there may be a “missing piece” to the guiding documents, perhaps language in the legislation that created the CABs, but this can be sorted out by the Attorney.



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Motion to submit the letter as amended – 10 voted in favor, none voted against, no abstentions (10 of 12 available seated members present and voting)

Council Updates: none available

Guest Speaker – Joshua Faust, Department of Transportation/Highway Division:

Public meeting on February 9 was canceled due to a snow event. Rescheduled for 10:00 AM on March 8 but schedules can change. Unable to share the presentation his office will make the County Council, as originally planned, because he must present it to the Council first.

Snowfall

1. 38.5 inches reported in North Potomac
2. 36 inches reported in Gaithersburg
3. 22 inches reported in Silver Spring

Snow Removal Response

4. 200 pieces of county owned equipment
5. 7 regional depots with defined geographic responsibility
6. 5,200 lane miles (note: roads with number are State roads, Maryland State Highway Administration (MSHA) responsibility, not county)
7. 1,000 lane miles of primary emergency roads (eg: Shady Grove, Randolph)
8. 4,200 lane miles of neighborhood roads
9. 5,400 dump truck loads of snow were removed from Wheaton CBD (central business district) alone. When there is no place to push the snow it must be removed.

Primary roads must be cleared to “spec” before plows can enter neighborhood roads. “Spec” is “passable” for Jonas (the name of this weather event). When there is more than 12 inches, a plow is attached to every fire station/rescue squad. If emergency assistance is needed the plow goes in first so the vehicles can pass. There were 17 rescues during the storm and all required the aid of the plow.

The snow maps were a source of frustration – it was not designed for a storm of this magnitude. There are 217 plow routes (group of roads on a route). These are up to 30 lane miles each and at least one has 186 intersections. Additionally, 60 miles of sidewalks were cleared this storm (Reimer’s legislation).

The Department is working to refine the distribution of information and communication. Twitter and Facebook were important tools in this storm.



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State or MSHA – state roads generated the highest number of complaints. Everyone did their best. The County always hopes MSHA responds as quickly and with as much equipment as possible. Not all equipment is always available.

Budget – the rule of thumb is \$1 million per inch. Expenses for this storm surpassed that mark. The Council will likely approve supplemental funding. The County also requested reimbursement from FEMA due to the state of emergency.

Contractors – all agencies call on contractors, including landscape and construction companies. When other agencies released their contractors Montgomery County picked them up as needed.

Q: How can what appear to be territorial issues with MSHA be addressed? Are they statutory?

A: The division of labor is not based on statute. Governor Hogan is responsible for the performance of the state efforts. The MSHA (District 3 covers Montgomery and Prince George Counties), which comes under the authority of MTA (Maryland Transit Authority).

The Highway Division requests community awareness and community patience.

Q: What is the possibility/feasibility of closing State or county primary roads to traffic so that snow can be removed? This was done overnight with State (Interstate) Routes 270 and 70

A: Closing larger roads would only funnel traffic into neighborhood streets. Sometimes neighborhood streets are closed because, due to the neighborhood configuration, they can't be used while snow removal equipment is working on them.

Q: What happens when hydrants can't be located?

A: The County asks residents to dig hydrants out. A snow plow did plow over a hydrant, causing a muddy mess. It is helpful if residents help with visibility and accessibility.

Q: Is there any way to discourage residents who push large quantities of snow out into the road so that snow plows are unable to remove it?

A: The Highway Division is not involved in enforcement. Department of Housing ?? (DHCA) is in charge of enforcement.

Q: Why did some areas seem to be cleared earlier than others?

A: Municipalities (Gaithersburg, Rockville, Takoma Park, Summerset – any other incorporated towns) do their own snow removal. They are responsible for significantly fewer lane miles.

Q: There were reports of plow sitting idle when areas were not yet clear. Why would that happen?

A: First, drivers are encouraged to rest when they feel too tired to operate the equipment safely (a nap is preferable to driving into a house). Second, no plow can enter a neighborhood street until all primary streets are passable. They used to be allowed to start on neighborhood



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streets as soon as every primary road in a depot's area was done but that led to charges of unfairness across the county so the current policy implemented.

Q: Why are streets marked "in progress" on the map when residents have not seen a plow on their street.

A: "In progress" means that at least one road in that plow route has been started. The map is served from DTS in Rockville so changes to the map must go through them, at least for now.

311 can normally handle 175 calls at one time but they received so many calls that the system crashed. They received more calls in a typical hour, during the event, than in a typical day.

Q: A tree limb blocked the entrance to a neighborhood. Calls for help were made to the county but no response was received. Neighbors eventually were able to move the limb but would hope for better county response in the future.

A: Highway Division now forming "strike teams," after the derecho, so that county highway employees and equipment are attached to PEPCO and tree crews during weather events.

Q: Where HOAs clear neighborhood streets, can contractors clear county roads to reach the neighborhoods?

A: This is a liability issue. Private Contractors can apply to go through the safely process and participate with county contractors under county supervision.

Q: (comment really) Mr. Faust reported that he had been working since Sunday evening on the most recent snow event (not Jonas, not a named storm). In spite of his exhaustion, his presentation to MCCAB was clear and lucid and easily understandable. Bob voice praise, shared by other MCCAB members, for his performance in the face of fatigue.

Director Report (Luisa, please complete this, I missed part of this to clarify a piece of information with Mr. Faust)

*** missing ***

- Friends of the Library book store will relocate to the old Silver Spring library location during Wheaton Regional Library & Rec Center construction.
- Twinbrook Library is now open.
- North Wheaton follow-up community meeting will be March 21.
- ??? IMPACT Silver Spring Board group "Abundant Community"

MCCAB Awards – please solicit nominations in your community. Once received, MCCAB will vote on a winner in the "Outstanding Citizen of the Year" and "Outstanding Civic Association of the Year" categories.



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Committee Reports

Quality of Life

- Jason N presented a draft letter regarding public safety but it is not yet ready for Board consideration
- The next item will be either the Bowie Mill Bikeway project or Alerts. A speaker is planned regarding Alerts.

Land Use, Zoning, & Transportation

Guest speaker re. Bowie Mill Bikeway: Daniel Rubenstein, Chair, Bikeways and Pedestrian Subcommittee of the Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA) – see handout

Q: Cost?

A: Not known without design input. County planners can use the cost of the Needwood project (in progress) as a guide.

Q: Does the county need to secure additional land for this project?

A: No. Significant setbacks from the road already exist (see photo in presentation). There is a grassy shoulder, then a utility right-of-way, and then private property lines. There are short stretches of sidewalk built, as required, by developers. Sidewalks would need to be removed or reworked to build the bikeways.

Q: Since the initial vision for bikeways was presented in 1978, how was the county so forward thinking?

A: Unable to speak to that but grateful for the foresight.

Q: How was “strong community support” quantified and measured?

A: GOCA ran two surveys. One was a general transportation survey with questions about commuting. The other was about commuting by bicycle. Over 2000 responses were received. Data supported bikeways – the surprise was the overwhelming desire for separated rather than on-road bikeways. The survey did not ask questions about cost. It is up to the county to determine the economic feasibility.

Q: How can MCCAB address one specific issue when it has not addressed other similar issues?

A: MCCAB has addressed the CIP in general and specific projects in particular in past correspondence. MCCAB previously expressed support for bikeways and pedestrian access.

A draft letter voicing support for the Bowie Mill Bikeways project was presented to the Board.

Motion: MCCAB should support the letter, in favor of requesting that the County Council include the Bowie Mill Bikeway in the CIP for FY 2017 to 2022.



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Discussion: Are there any statistics on use? None, but this will increase access to commuting as well as recreational use.

Motion: amend the letter to request a feasibility study of the bikeway rather than dedicated funding. Motion passed: 9 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention.

Motion to adopt the letter as amended: 8 in favor, 0 opposed, 2 abstentions.

Liaison Reports

Permitting – meets in March

Olney – has not met since last MCCAB meeting

PEPCO – has not reconvened yet (but must admit that PEPCO did a good job with the storm)

WUDAC – Walking tour 2/29 from 6:30 to 7:30, details will be included in email

New Business

- Email – please limit conversation to procedural issues such as choosing dates, facilitating subcommittee meetings, etc. We've been getting too close to the line of doing business in email, giving the appearance of making decisions or forming consensus, which we cannot do.
- Issue – focus on issues, not on people. No name calling.

Reminder: Next two Subcommittee meetings will be March 9 and April 11. After this we will return to our regular first Thursday schedule.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn meeting approved at 9:16 pm.