

## **Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee**

2400 Arcola Ave 2<sup>Nd</sup> Floor, Wheaton MD 20902

Meeting Minutes, Tuesday September 11, 2018

**Members Present:** Bill Jelen, Chair; Chelsea Johnson, Vice Chair; William Moore, Leah Haygood, Mirza Donegan, Omar Lazo, Meghan Remo

**Staff Present:** Luisa Montero-Diaz, Director, Mid-County Regional Center; Kevin Jackson, Aide to Regional Director

**Guests:** Stuart Amos, GM Westfield; Vicky Surlles, Administrator, Wheaton & Kensington Chamber of Commerce; Justin Stone, MC SBAP; Dan Thompson, Jim Epstein, Wheaton Wonders; Neil Greenberger, MC PIO; Mike Ferguson

**Call To Order:** 6:37pm by Chair Jelen

**Minutes Review:** A motion was made and passed to approve the July 2018 minutes without changes.

**Community Concerns:** William Moore thanked the WUDAC members for the card and support in the passing of his mother.

Dan Thompson, organizer of the Wheaton Arts Parade, thanked WUDAC for all their support. They would like a WUDAC representative in the Parade. They also have to apply for another Grant by Thursday and hope to have a letter of support from WUDAC to put in their grant package.

Leah Haygood, on behalf of One Montgomery Green, noted that there will be a hearing tomorrow night from 5:30-7:30pm before the County Council in Rockville on climate change and One Montgomery Green will brief the Council.

Omar Lazo, on behalf of his business Los Chorros, noted that the parking issue on the County lot near his restaurant is getting worse.

**Wheaton Revitalization Project:** Justin Stone, Manager, MC SBAP, updated WUDAC on the progress of the assistance program for businesses impacted by the construction on Lot 13. There have been 25 applicants resulting in 26 disbursements to 16 recipients. 4 applications are still in progress, 2 offers made and expired because the businesses left. One offer expired simply because the business didn't take the money; 2 applicants showed no impact to date; and one application was rejected. 49% of budget is disbursed and the remaining funds budgeted for this year are expected to be used in the next couple of months. We've spent \$122107 since July 1<sup>st</sup> and \$387000 since the program started.

**Westfield Wheaton:** Stuart Amos introduced himself as the new General Manager at Westfield Wheaton. He spent the last two years as Manger at Westfield Montgomery. He updated WUDAC on the workings at the Mall, sharing that they are working on the Capital Spending Budget, focusing on the Parking Garages structural safety and updating things such as the HVAC system. Also working on an infill

issue to cover space where the Costco Gas Station was to have gone. They also have a Chinese Buffet in the works and a couple of other restaurants in the Costco wing.

Dan Thompson asked about connectivity issues and asked why we never see the County and Westfield meet to talk about the problem. Stuart answered that WMATA was a big obstacle. He also talked about the recent sale of Westfield to Unibail-Rodamco, noting that consumers are unlikely to see a change but the combination of Westfield and Unibail, pairing an asset company with a development company was a great combination. They became one company on June 7<sup>th</sup>. Stuart added that anything Westfield can do to help the community they will do.

### **Reports:**

**County Council:** No report

**Chamber of Commerce:** William Moore updated WUDAC. Marc Elrich was a guest at their monthly Board meeting today. He shared his vision on business issues and his plans to help encourage economic growth in the County. William also noted that they had a great time participating in the Labor Day Parade and that their Community Guide was hot off the presses and ready for distribution. He also touched on some upcoming events, including the Wheaton Arts Parade on Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup>, a mixer about Solar energy options on Sept. 27<sup>th</sup> with One Montgomery Green at Los Chorros, and a mixer at AVA Wheaton Apartments on October 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Mid-County:** Luisa Montero-Diaz, Regional Director, updated WUDAC. She noted that the consultants for the Arts Cultural Feasibility Study are working on their draft report, based on the community engagement and market analysis.

Arts on the Block has completed an 8 ft disk for the Clock Tower and also smaller disks to be installed at later date.

Luisa and Joe Callaway are working on a budget for the new Town Plaza even though it's still two years away. They are formulating policies for 3<sup>rd</sup> party events as well as maintenance issues. Chelsea Johnson added that two WUDAC members and a community member are talking with Stonebridge Carras on development issues noted during our May presentation.

Luisa continued that Aspen Hill and Forest Glen are working on Master Plans. She will keep us informed.

TGIF's were popular even though one was rained out. The Jazz Festival scheduled for this weekend has been cancelled due to weather.

The Montgomery County Economic Development Center has published a very nice, colorful brochure about Wheaton.

BCC cautioned members of boards and commissions on conflicts of interest during the election season.

### **Business and Action Item Updates:**

**Wheaton Talking Tour Debrief:** Bill Jelen led a discussion on the Talking Tour. He thanked Luisa and staff and all who participated and stated that he hoped we created something effectual. Members received a handout "What's Next for Wheaton Community Forum". Bill then gave his take on the issues and asked for member input. Discussion ensued about how best to summarize the issues and which

decision makers and stakeholders to send them to. Chelsea Johnson stated that they will have a draft letter to send for discussion at the WUDAC next meeting.

**New Business:**

Pedestrian Safety Initiative: Luisa informed WUDAC on a new campaign by the County, "Obey the Crosswalk". Luisa gave a background on increasing pedestrian injuries and fatalities and then outlined the new program initiated by the County to educate the Public. Enforcement will come later. They are looking also at engineering solutions. There are two upcoming events for the public to weigh in. The Pedestrian Bicycle Safety Advisory Committee will hold its September meeting at Highland Elementary School on 9-27; and key County representatives will make a presentation at the September MCCAB meeting on 9-25.

Retreat Planning: Dates were discussed for holding the WUDAC annual retreat. The date was tentatively set for Nov.17, 11am-2pm

**Other Business:** A motion was made and passed to draft a letter of support for the Wheaton Arts Parade.

**Adjourn:** 8:27pm