Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee

2400 Arcola Ave, 2nd Floor, Wheaton MD 20902

Meeting Minutes, Tuesday May 14, 2019

Members Present: Bill Jelen, Chair; Chelsea Johnson, Vice Chair; Jim Epstein, Stuart Amos, Mariela Garcia-Colberg, Leah Haygood, Omar Lazo, William Moore

Staff Present: Luisa Montero-Diaz, Mid-County RSC Director; Kevin Jackson, Aide

Guests: Richard Cisneros, LEDC; Justin Stone, MC SBAP; Neil Greenberger, MC PIO; Keith Compton, MCDOT; Laura-Leigh Palmer, ASAP Graphics; James Mensah, State Farm; Elle Meyers, Sentinel Newspaper; Eden Durbin, Aide to Delegate Solomon; Pete Wilson; John, Aide to Delegate Al Carr

Call To Order: 6:40pm by Chair Jelen

Review: After review a motion was made and passed to approve the March Minutes without changes. After review a motion was made and passed to approve the April Minutes without changes.

Community Concerns: James Mensah inquired about a County proposal to increase the hours of parking meter operation. Member discussion followed. Some issues discussed were the extra costs for employees to park, customer pushback and the strain on businesses with free parking.

Reports:

County Council: No Council Report but Eden Durbin, aide to Delegate Jared Solomon, gave WUDAC members a brief update on the election of Adrienne Jones to be Speaker for the Maryland House of Delegates. She also noted some legislation championed by Del. Solomon that passed this year including bills to get the lead out of drinking water, money for community colleges, minimum wage legislation and the Clean Energy Jobs Act.

Chamber of Commerce: William Moore, on behalf of the Wheaton & Kensington Chamber of Commerce, updated WUDAC on the Community Awards Dinner sponsored by the Chamber. 138 people attended. They lost two sponsors from the previous year leading to overall revenue being down \$700; however, the event went smoothly and generated a lot of good publicity, so it was considered a big success. On May 15th, there is a ribbon-cutting and grand opening at the Blade and Shave Barber Shop at 2401 Blueridge Ave. May 22, 6-8pm there is a networking Happy Hour at the new Knowles Station Wine & Co. in Kensington. Sunday June 2, the Chamber will have a booth at Taste of Wheaton and later in June at a time and date still to be determined, there will be a Meet and Greet with the artists of the Wheaton Arts Parade and a tour of the float-making facility.

Mid-County RSC/Wheaton Urban District: RSC Director Luisa Montero-Diaz reported to WUDAC that our budget letter to Council was included in the Urban District budget packet sent to the County Council. Councilmember Reimer said to come back mid-year to see if we are on target.

The final report for a Wheaton Arts/cultural facility will be submitted in June. The CE put \$100,000 in the CIP budget to develop a Program of Requirements.

The Duffie Companies, the developers for the HOC/Lindsay Ford Property, has engaged Maier Warner Marketing/Communications firm for the community engagement and they will start reaching out in the next few weeks. We still don't know where Lindsay Ford is going.

Luisa also reported on a \$5000 grant from the Md Arts Council that was awarded to Montgomery College that they will use to make a video about Wheaton and a \$10,000 operational support grant from MSAC to our A& E District.

Luisa urged WUDAC members to show up for the upcoming May 20 CIP budget forum to promote arts funding

In June we hope to have Jane Mahaffie from Stonebridge Carras and Artist Norie Sato here for a discussion on the Town Plaza.

Lastly she reminded WUDAC members that they needed to complete Open Meetings Act training and also Parliamentary Procedures training and submit the certificates to her

Wheaton Revitalization Project

a. Keith Compton, MCDOT project manager: Construction is 64% complete with estimated May 2020 completion date. Top out will be in late June or July. Windows will be going in this week and skin will be complete by December 2019. Phase I move in will begin mid-June 2020 with 7 entities in by August. Town Square construction south of Reedie will begin by end of month. It will be a 10 month project. They hope to schedule a topping out celebration in late June. There is work being done on Veirs Mill this week to upsize sanitary sewer lines. Keith praised the contractors for safety standards adhered to during the project. JLL Leasing is the agent for retail leasing. County and Park & Planning are working on lease requirements and it does not look like retail will be in place by building opening. Underground parking should open by May 30, the substantial completion date, but not before as the garage will be used by contractors

b. Justin Stone, Manager, SBAP, MC Dept. of Finance: SBAP update has 30 applications from businesses with 38 disbursements for a total of \$586,012 with \$322,000 in FY2019. Still plenty of funds left with 71% disbursed. They have requested \$450,000 for FY2020. Justin then shared information on how businesses have fared under the program. A member inquired about a façade program.

c. Neil Greenberger, MC PIO: Neil noted he is assigned full time to promote Wheaton. He's not just here for revitalization project, but to promote everything that is happening here. He shared that over 100 people were signed up for the Safety Walk. He will share info on how the SBAP has impacted business survival during construction and they are working with LEDC for ads on busses and bus shelters to promote Wheaton as "Open for Business". Jim Epstein shared that the Wheaton Arts Parade appreciates all that Neil has done and hopes he can promote future pop-up events in Wheaton. Lastly, Neil noted that we need businesses to reach out to workers and consumers. You can't just rely on PIO. Member discussion followed.

Business & Action Item Updates:

a. Wheaton Safety Audit Walk: Mariela Garcia-Colberg led the discussion. She noted the event will be 10-1pm on May 18th. Over 100 people are signed up and many elected officials and dept heads will appear. She then went over some of the assignments for the event.

b. Pop-up Event Update: Jim Epstein led the discussion for a pop-up event scheduled for June 30, 1-5pm at Veteran's Park. In the future they hope to have more events but as of now there is no funding.

For this event the Parks Dept. is providing games. Green Plate Catering is our food and beverage partner. The Civitan group is providing Finger Paint. We need volunteers to run games. The American Legion lot is available if needed

c. FY20 Wheaton Urban District Operating Budget: Luisa reported that the budget has been approved with the caveat that it will be revisited in December. We may need supplemental appropriations after we do an analysis.

d. Discussion with WMATA,MCDOT,MCPD,Westfield: Luisa reported on a meeting they had that morning. Some concerns were that the Town Plaza will abut WMATA property so a communication channel is needed. They agreed on the need to put together a team to meet monthly. They walked the bridge and garage with WMATA and discussed how WMATA will use County grant of \$1.5 million. They will add lighting, paint, cameras and panic buttons. WMATA will hire the contractors. WMATA also promised a major cleanup to take place right away. They will also add way finding signs

Other:

Leah Haygood announced that One Montgomery Green will hold their gala on June 27th from 6-9pm at Brookside Gardens. They have early bird pricing in effect.

There was a brief discussion of the CE Benchmark 4 Business listening tour. It was noted that it may be a great opportunity to discuss leasing and vacancy concerns. Luisa shared that there is an online link to post concerns.

Guest Dan Thompson noted that there will be a Latinex Night at the Art Factory this Friday from 7-9pm

On May 31, MHP will have a mural unveiling at Amherst Gardens, Pembridge Square

On Sunday at 9:30 there will a Westfield cleanup in the Kensington Heights community. Meet at the swimming pool

Adjourn: 8:40pm