

Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee

2400 Arcola Ave, 2nd Floor, Wheaton MD 20902

Tuesday February 12th, 2019

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

Staff Present: Luisa Montero-Diaz, RSC Director; Sidney Cooper, Marketing Manager, WUD; Joe Callaway, Operations Manager, WUD; Kevin Jackson, Aide

Guests: Elise Perkins, EP Communications; Justin Stone, SBAP, MOCO Dept. of Finance; Neil Greenberger, MOCO PIO; Laura-Leigh Palmer, Karen Cordray, residents.

Call to Order: 6:33pm by Chair Jelen

Review Minutes: The Draft of the January meeting minutes was reviewed. A motion was made and passed to approve the Minutes without changes.

Community Concerns: In response to WUDAC member questions, Neil Greenberger, PIO, updated the progress of the Wheaton Library. It is 76% complete and slated for late Summer 2019 opening but that is tough to call due to the volume of furniture, books and equipment that must be moved after the building is finished. There will be a pottery studio managed by the rec dept., an indoor walking track and lots of modern computers. No kids programs will be available this summer.

Reports:

a. Council: None

b. Chamber of Commerce: William Moore, on behalf of the Wheaton/Kensington Chamber, reported on a Business Expo held on January 23rd at the Kensington Town Hall and also on their monthly meeting held earlier today that was primarily dedicated to the planning of their annual Community Awards Dinner

c. Mid-County RSC/Wheaton Urban District: Director Montero-Diaz updated WUDAC on the progress of the Revitalization Project. The 3rd floor is complete and work has begun on the 4th. Excavation is underway for the Town Plaza. Utility work is complete on the Triangle, still some work left on Reddie. There is a waterline break on Ennalls. They are having trouble finding the source.

HOC has purchased the Lindsay Ford property. They have initiated community engagement about amenities.

Proyecto Salud clinic is not being fully utilized since their move to the South Tower at Westfield. A flyer was handed out. They would like our help to get the word out about their services.

Information was given on an Equity Task Force to be formed as part of Vision Zero. They are looking for community stakeholders to join. MCCAB will have one seat. The Task Force will act like a lens for suggestions to accomplish Vision Zero goals.

The Interactive Budget Forum originally scheduled for last night has been postponed until next Tuesday. The Office of Management and Budget is introducing a Budget simulator tool that will allow County residents to share their priorities for the County's operating budget.

The MCDOT micro transit program, Flex, will be expanded to Wheaton.

Luisa thanked Kevin Jackson for putting together a Mid-Year Update on WUDAC activities. A Summary flyer was handed to members.

Lastly, she reported on a study done on Latino owned food businesses in Wheaton. Part of the challenge is cataloguing and knowing what is here. The author of the study took the time to sample the cuisine and talk to the owners.

Wheaton Revitalization: Justin Stone updated WUDAC on the progress of the financial aid rendered to Triangle business owners affected by the construction. The grantees are receiving 1099's since the IRS considers the aid as income. Total disbursed is \$547,000, \$282,000 in FY2019. Eligibility will end once the building opens. An issue of signage for parking under the new building came up. There is a need for visible signage to alert the public to the underground parking garage.

Neil Greenberger informed WUDAC that this weekend is sales tax free for those purchasing Energy Star appliances. He also reported that a new center for veteran's services has opened in Gaithersburg.

Wheaton Urban District-Marketing and Promotion: Luisa Montero-Diaz gave a brief history of the Wheaton Urban District and a listing and explanation of her duties and areas she is working on.

She then turned the discussion over to Marketing Manager Sidney Cooper. Members were given a handout to aid the discussion. Sidney explained her work on the logo, website, social media outreach and event planning. Elise Perkins discussed her work on the social media aspect. A member asked why we are not on some platforms. Elise responded that's it's mostly driven by content. The worst thing is not having enough content to keep a page alive. She handed out a flyer and pointed out a WUDAC call to action, urging members to follow accounts, engage on platform of choice by submitting events or engaging directly, listen to community concerns, provide insight and use #WheatonMD hashtag. A brief discussion followed about the Rebranding of Wheaton, budget markers, and ways that WUDAC can help with social media content.

Lastly Sidney distributed a flyer of a proposed Events Wish List.

Business & Action Item Update: Chair Jelen briefly noted a call amongst members of the Redevelopment Committee that was formed during the retreat. They will do a follow up call on February 22.

Adjourn: 8:50pm