

Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes, Tuesday January 12, 2021

Online via Zoom

Members Present: Chelsea Andrews, Chair; Mariela Garcia-Colberg, Vice Chair; William Moore, Jim Epstein, James Mensah, Omar Lazo, Crystal Myers, Stuart Amos, Leah Haygood, Chris Pyon, Bill Jelen

Staff Present: Luisa Montero-Diaz, Mid-County RSC Director; Shawn Morris, Aide; Kevin Simpson, Community & Economic Coordinator; Jake Adler, Community Projects Coordinator

Guests: Karen Cordry, KHCA; Michael Paylor, Chief, Traffic Engineering MCDOT; Shannon Rush-Locke, Wheaton Studio of Dance

Call To Order: 6:32pm by Chair Andrews.

December Minutes: After thorough review a motion was made and passed to approve the December Meeting Minutes without changes.

Presentation: Michael Paylor, MCDOT Chief, Traffic Engineering, returned to WUDAC to update members on traffic and pedestrian concerns that had been raised in previous meetings. With a slide presentation he noted ideas that County traffic engineering staff had for Reedy and Grandview in the vicinity of the Town Plaza and how they arrived at their conclusions. There will be a rectangular rapid flashing pedestrian beacon on Grandview near the new office building and a crosswalk and pedestrian hybrid beacon along Reedy Drive at the Plaza Crossing.

The design is complete for a HAWK light at Price and Georgia. Right of way issues are being resolved and this should be completed soon. In addition, Michael addressed issues including the signal reconstruction at Reedy and Georgia, Signal Reconstruction and lane modifications at Blueridge and Georgia, a new through lane on Grandview to Blueridge, the new pedestrian barrier on Georgia, and ongoing traffic and lighting issues on Triangle Lane. Designs for a mobile barrier system on Reedy Drive for special events were also discussed and evaluated.

Reports:

a. W&K Chamber of Commerce: Omar Lazo, on behalf of the Chamber, reported that they had held a Board meeting earlier in the day. Some issues discussed were the new development and its related traffic issues on Knowles Ave in Kensington, the ongoing financial strains on member businesses caused by the Covid crisis, and the new PPP legislation passed by Congress.

b. Mid-County: RSC Director Luisa Montero-Diaz updated WUDAC members on a County Town Hall on the Covid Vaccine scheduled for next Thursday. Also, the Office of Community Partnerships will do a survey on whether people are willing to get the vaccine or not.

The art project on Lot 17 championed by Margaret Rifkin is moving forward. Likewise, a proposed mural on Lot 13 has been commissioned by MNCPPC with interest from 5-6 artists.

The Hughes Consolidated hub held a January 6th toy give-away for Three Kings Day. Toro Taxes was the sponsor.

Joe Callaway's last day is January 31. Chelsea Andrews proposed sending a letter to the County Executive requesting recognition for Joe's service to the County. We should state in the letter what Joe has meant to us. A motion was made and passed to send this letter.

c. Wheaton Regional Park: There is a work group on the Wheaton Regional Park scheduled for January 21. There are also two online community forums on Jan. 13(English) and Jan. 14(Spanish)

Old Business & Action Item Updates:

a. Sub-committee reports

1. CoVid-19 Recovery: Committee as a whole did not meet but Chris Pyon talked to business owners in the Triangle and many have received relief grants from the County

2. Town Plaza: Jim Epstein inquired about progress on the homeless situation, stage lighting and skate boarding in the Town Plaza. Luisa noted the problem with the homeless has decreased due to the cold weather but it's not going to be easy to fix. Someone will be coming out to do an assessment on the stage lighting. The skate boarding has disappeared with the arrival of cold weather but mitigation did not make the construction punch list so it will be the Urban District's problem to solve.

b. Wheaton Gateway: There will be an online meeting on Jan. 27 at 7pm. Bill Jelen will share his thoughts

c. Recruitment: We will welcome two new members to our February meeting to replace Omar and Leah.

Community Concerns:

James Mensah shared information on a virtual Haircut-A-Thon benefiting MUM, Jan. 11 to Jan. 23

Chelsea repeated information on the Wheaton Gateway in response to a question from Karen Cordry

New Business:

a. Planning Retreat-Phase II:

Members felt we should move forward with what we have on our plate now. CoVid is still a relevant topic.

b. Other:

James Mensah stated that the Communications subcommittee hasn't met but he will get the other two members engaged.

The Gateway subcommittee will have a robust report at next meeting. A suggestion was made to have the Duffie Companies and HOC return for an update presentation.

Jim Epstein asked about event planning. Luisa responded the hope is to have events in late Summer/Fall

There was a suggestion that WUDAC be the venue to have artists present their vision for the MNCPPC mural that is being planned.

Adjourn: 8:27pm

