

Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee

Mid-County Regional Services Center, 2424 Reedie Drive, Wheaton MD 20902

Meeting Minutes, Tuesday April 12, 2016

Members Present: Devala Janardan, Chair; Omar Lazo, Vice-Chair; Ali Oliver-Krueger, William Moore, Mirza Donegan, Leah Haygood, Derry Goberhansingh, Dan Thompson

Staff Present: Luisa Montero-Diaz, Director Mid-County Regional Center; Sidney Cooper, Urban District Marketing Manager

Guests: Andrew Rollo, resident; Laura-Leigh Palmer, resident; Richard Cisneros, LEDC; Peter Bang, MCDED; Judy Cochran, League of Women Voters; Marian Fryer, Wheaton Coalition; Rebecca Peele, aide to MD Del. Al Carr

Call To Order: 6:39pm by Vice-Chair Omar Lazo in the temporary absence of the Chair. A motion was made and passed to approve the March Meeting Minutes without changes. A new member, Ali Oliver-Krueger, greeted members and gave a brief background on herself.

Community Concerns: Judy Cochran from the League of Women Voters introduced herself and briefly noted her group and handed out her business card

Reports:

A. Small Business Assistance Program: Director Montero-Diaz introduced two guests, Peter Bang from DED and Richard Cisneros of LEDC. Mr. Bang then proceeded to give background information on the Small Business Assistance Program. He noted that there were two parts to the program, with both technical and financial components. There are requirements for businesses to meet. They will not simply be cutting checks. They have contracted with LEDC for business outreach.

Richard Cisneros then updated WUDAC on his efforts to reach out to those businesses

B. Taste of Wheaton Update: Marketing Manager Sidney Cooper briefed WUDAC on preparations for the Taste of Wheaton, which will be held June 5th. The biggest challenge has been getting restaurants to sign up to participate. There will be Beer and Wine sales again this year with proceeds going to MUM in support of the Wheaton Food Bank. The TOW will also be open to more businesses and organizations other than restaurants this year. Sidney then touched on a brochure produced in partnership with Yelp highlighting several highly rated restaurants. That started a discussion amongst members about the appropriateness of advertising these restaurants at the Taste. William Moore, WUDAC member and owner of the IHOP, pointed out that most of those restaurants aren't even participating in the Taste. He felt that only those restaurants participating should be noted and that Yelp was not a reliable indicator of the quality of any restaurant as those ratings can be subject to manipulation. William suggested that playing favorites was probably related to why Sidney is having trouble with restaurant participation.

C. Wheaton Urban District RSC Director: Director Luisa Montero-Diaz reported on several upcoming events:

The Dennis Ave Health Center Grand Opening is April 27th

Election Judges are needed for the primary election on April 26

The Parking Mitigation Plan for the upcoming Redevelopment will be revealed at the end of the month. The planners have found a way to keep 30-40 spaces open on Lot 13 during construction.

The property tax increase noted in Leggett's 2017 budget request has been reduced due to the State of Maryland spreading out the expense of the Wynn case over several years.

Our A&E redesignation application was submitted. Director Montero-Diaz briefed WUDAC on the process and thanked everyone for their input.

D. Chamber of Commerce: William Moore reported that that afternoon's meeting centered around the upcoming awards banquet and that they are eagerly awaiting WUDAC's honorees. He also mentioned that the Chamber will be meeting with other local chambers to discuss County Council bills to further increase the minimum wage.

Business & Action Item Updates:

Chair Janardan passed out a copy of a letter of support from WUDAC for our A&E redesignation submitted to the Maryland State Arts Council.

Ballots were handed out to members for a vote on WUDAC's awards for the Community Awards banquet. Omar Lazo was selected as Business Leader of the Year and BeClaws was selected as Best Property Improvement.

Chair Janardan then led a discussion on the Walking Tour. Topics included location and speaker assignments. The program calendar was handed out. Director Montero-Diaz noted that Rebecca Peele had gotten the Highway representative to confirm.

Other Business:

Next subcommittee meeting is April 25th.

Dan Thompson remarked that the Arts Grants had less applicants this year. He felt there needed to be an emphasis on the Arts and Humanities Council to remain focused on Wheaton.

Adjourn: 8:15pm