



## **EAST COUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD (ECCAB)**

### **Wednesday, April 3, 2024 Meeting Summary**

**Board Members Present:** Fisseha Adugna, Bill Bentley, LaTonya Brooks, George Brown, Rachel Evans, Ken Flemmer, Roberta Goldberg, Metassebia Kefelegn, Peter Myo Khin, Calandra Tate Moore, Len Newman, Mark Pharaoh, Kimberly Price-Evans, Susan Price, and Dan Wilhelm. **Board members absent:** Gertrude Jones, Radwan Chowdhury, and Sheala Durant.

**Guests Present:** Dr Kisha Davis, Chris Wilhelm, David Lorenzo-Botello, Daniele Moxley, Hugo Cantu, Rob Richardson, Eileen Finnegan, Sharon Brown, Ed Weiler, Margie Goergen-Rood, Mustapha Mansur, D'Ante Thaggard, Eileen Finnegan and Ken Jones.

**County Regional Office Staff Present:** Jewru Bandeh, Cicero Salles, and Ayanna King

**Welcome and Introductions:** The meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m. by Chair Peter Myo Khin. Board members, government officials, and public members introduced themselves.

**Approval of March 6, 2024 ECCAB Meeting Summary:** The meeting summary of the March 6, 2024 meeting was approved with no objections.

**Presentation/Discussion on Youth Safety from a Health Perspective: Dr Kisha Davis,** Health Officer, County Department of Health and Human Services gave a presentation on the County's Youth Safety Initiative. The presentation was emailed to the Board before the meeting.

Various problems concerning youth have increased over the last few years and as a result a group has been put together to understand the many problems and address them. The effort is in its early stages and is currently largely focused on collecting data and understanding what actions need to be taken. The group is being led by DHHS and includes the state Dept. of Health, various police departments, state corrections, state's attorney, state Dept. of Juvenile Services, WorkSource Montgomery, Recreation and members of the non-profit community. It is addressing substance use and abuse prevention; violence and injury prevention; and mental health and suicide prevention.

Krishna provided charts that provided a lot of data including (note: data is not available just for east county):

- Most of East County was majority white in 1990 but by 2020 it had changed so that no race now has a majority.
- County-wide there were 32,917 residents living in poverty in 1990, but now it is 82,175.

- The rate of chronic public-school absenteeism has increased from 2018 to 2023 at all grade levels. Middle School has the lowest and High School the highest (about 30%). This is defined as 18+ days/school year.
- From October 2022 to September 2023, overdoses decreased statewide by 1.4% but increased in the county by 17.9%. Nevertheless, the county has the third lowest rate on the basis of population at 13.1 per 100K. Youth are using less drugs but the drugs are more dangerous. Many want to take fentanyl.
- The crime data is not complete, but they are working to improve it. Police staffing by district is not adjusted to account for the number of calls. The data showed the number of offenders, but data was not available on the basis of population. The number of motor vehicle thefts increased from 2019 to 2023, with a large percentage in east county (along US29 especially).
- In response to questions, we learned that there are many services available to address youth problems, but families are often not aware of them. There is a need to communicate the availability of services.

### **Committee Reports:**

- ✓ **Quality of Life/Services Committee Report:** Roberta Goldberg, Chair, reported that a subcommittee continues to work toward holding a forum this fall concerning youth and juvenile violence. At their March 13 committee meeting, Tim Hoang, Renter Alliance Outreach Coordinator, gave a presentation on what the alliance does to help tenants.
- ✓ **Planning and Economic Development Committee Report:** Rachel Evans, Chair, reported that Rogers Stanley, Chief of Neighborhood Revitalization, DHCA, gave a presentation on façade improvements in the White Oak area. She also indicated that the committee had supported a proposal by Dan Wilhelm concerning urging CIP funding for a study of BRT along Randolph Road, extending it to the development east of Old Columbia Pike/US29, and adjusting the US29 Orange route. Since Jewru indicated the topic needed to be included in the agenda, the subject will be taken up again at the April 8 meeting.

**Old Business:** None

### **New Business, Community Announcements, Additional Comments:**

- **Jewru Bandeh**, East County Regional Office Director, reported the following:
  - Montgomery College East County Education Center: The ribbon cutting event is April 20, 2024. Classes begin April 1st.
  - The application deadline for applying for ECCAB vacancies expired on March 22. After the Executive conducts a preliminary screening, the remaining names will come back to Jewru for review with ECCAB Chair and an ad hoc selection committee.
  - ECCAB members were reminded about the BCC attendance policy.
- **David Lorenzo-Botello** reported the following for Councilmember Glass:
  - The Council committees are starting to review the Executive's proposed operating budget.
  - The Council enacted Expedited Bill 3-24, Late Night Establishments - Hours

of Operation, which would define a hookah lounge, and set restrictions on the operating hours in downtown areas. These establishments may only allow patrons to smoke, vape or use hookah pipes on Monday through Thursday, from 9 a.m. to 2 a.m.; on Friday and Saturday, from 9 a.m. to 3 a.m.; and on Sunday, from 9 a.m. to 2 a.m. or from 9 a.m. to 3 a.m., if the following day is a federal holiday. The goal of the legislation is to reduce crime in downtown areas.

- The Montgomery County Council enacted legislation on Sept 26, 2023 that will prohibit the sale and use of combustion engine-powered leaf blowers and leaf vacuums in most areas of the County. The County Executive has transmitted regulations to the Council to establish the reimbursement program to replace this banned equipment.
- Within the Office of Broadband Programs, the Montgomery Connect program provides free Chromebooks to Montgomery County residents who do not have access to a computer.
- **Hugo Cantu** reported for Councilmember Will Jawando that they are active in the operating budget process.
- **Daniel Moxley** reported that the Recreation Department is hiring temporary workers for the summer youth programs.
- **Chris Wilhelm** reported for Councilmember Kristen Mink that the MCPS funding requested for Burtonsville ES and JoAnn Leleck ES were tentatively approved, but funding for the Paint Branch HS addition has not. These tentative decisions will not be finalized until late May.
- **A motion** was made and seconded that Chair Myo-Khin would testify before the council on the FY25 operating budget using the letter the Board had previously approved. The motion was approved with no objections.
- **Riderwood.** In light of the presentation on youth, Dan Wilhelm informed the Board that Riderwood employs a large number of youths from nearby high schools and colleges, many working in the restaurants. A resident-led evaluation team has identified 61 students to receive college scholarships for the school year starting this fall. Residents have been asked to donate to this program – with a goal of \$250K for the year.
- **Friends of White Oak (FOWO).** Rachael Evans reported that the FOWO is having an open house on April 17 that will provide information on development in the White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan area.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 8:52 pm.