



## Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board (MCCAB) Meeting Minutes

Thursday, December 19, 2024

7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Held virtual via Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89827743604>

Meeting ID: 898 2774 3604, + 1 301 715 859

<b>Call to Order:</b>	Arquilla Ridgell, Chair		<b>Respectfully Submitted by:</b> Meghan Pazmino, Secretary			
<b>Date/Time:</b>	December 19, 2024, 7:00 PM ET					
<b>Attendees:</b>	X	Arquilla Ridgell (Chair)	X	Serge Thomas (Vice Chair)	X	Liza Smith
	X	Carol Kosary	X	Lee Rubenstien		Debra Liverpool
		Gary Fellman (Parliamentarian)	X	Ben DuGoff	X	Joan McDermott
	X	Meghan Pazmino (Secretary)	X	Phillip Ardanuy	X	Jonathan Chambers
	X	Rob Fox	X	Rick Gross	X	Irina Norrell
<b>Staff:</b>	Talia Beaulieu-Hains, Luisa Cardona					
<b>Guests:</b>	Hannah Wilcove (Councilmember Glass' Office), <i>David Mullins, Director of Outreach, Montgomery County Renters Alliance</i> , Charlie Scott, Senior Government Relations Officer, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, Dianne Whitaker, MCPL; Tim Hoang, Outreach Coordinator Renters Alliance; Hannah Wilcove (Councilmember Glass' office)					

Time	Topic	Notes
7:04	Call to Order & Welcome	Introduction of newest MCCAB Member, Irina Norrell representing Rockville/Olney
	Meeting Protocols	Board Chair called meeting to order, reviewed meeting protocols.
	Introduction	Chair called for a motion to approve the agenda. Serge made a motion to approve the minutes. Rick 2nd. Agenda approved.
7:10	Agenda Minutes	Approval of November minutes: Serge made a motion to approve the minutes. Liza 2nd. November minutes approved.

7:12	Elected Officials	<p>Hannah Wilcove, Councilmember Glass' office updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● MCPD launched an online portal to report hate and bias incidents, reports can be made anonymously. This was a recommendation from the Anti-Hate Task Force</li> <li>● Last night there was a community conversation in Wheaton to discuss a recent burst of auto thefts. If there are specific neighborhood level concerns and you want to set up a meeting, please get in touch. It can help get a deeper understanding of what's happening at the neighborhood level--what can be feasibly done, what would they do if they had more resources, and how they are working to keep everyone safe. E-mail Hannah Wilcove and she will set something up: <a href="mailto:Hannah.Wilcove@montgomerycountymd.gov">Hannah.Wilcove@montgomerycountymd.gov</a></li> <li>● Overall crime rates have gone down in Montgomery County and across the country. Some rates, especially property crime, have increased, especially in neighborhoods near the Beltway it makes it an easy opportunity for people not in the neighborhood to break into cars and then leave.</li> <li>● Question about the community event sponsored by County Council with different organizations and whether there will be similar events. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hannah: yes, there will probably be a future event and will share with the MCCAB and with newsletters more in advance.</li> <li>○ Luisa: Event was led by the Council and quickly put together in response to federal changes, they wanted to get resources out to people quickly. Office of community partnerships is looking to do more events but more in communities rather than coming to the Council office to make people feel more comfortable.</li> <li>○ Hannah: We provide a lot of information about resources on our website.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
7:21	Renters Alliance Initiative	<p>David Mullins, Outreach Director with Montgomery County Renters Alliance Tim Hoang, Outreach Coordinator</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Community non-profit exclusively focusing on renter outreach, education, organizing, and advocacy</li> <li>● Founded in 2010 in response to the County's Tenant Work Group Report which called for the establishment of an organization dedicated to tenants rights</li> <li>● Help support formation of tenant associations--helping go door to door with flyers or attending meetings; Individual case work for people facing eviction, helping with OLTA (Office of Landlord Tenant Affairs) and code complaints;</li> <li>● We always recommend people try to resolve issues with their landlords first--we want to foster good relationships.</li> <li>● OLTA complaints could be lease issues, ledger discrepancies, excessive rent issues.</li> <li>● Code complaints--anything structural, mold, broken</li> </ul>

windows, things not getting fixed. We can help facilitate follow-up with the county to make sure the inspector goes to the property and sees what needs to get done.

- Emergency Rental Assistance--Has changed dramatically since COVID rental assistance; Now there is very limited rental assistance available.
- A state program now exists to provide a free lawyer if they are facing eviction.
- Upcoming Renter Town Halls: 1/8, 1/22, 2/12

**Questions:**

- There were quite a few people evicted in a mass eviction in Wheaton or Silver Spring. What's going to happen in the next few months when you have a lot of people going to be laid off. Will the state or county provide funding for their housing?
  - There's a high volume of evictions, some for unpaid rent of \$20,000, some \$14, but there's no resources to help pay this rent.
  - Buildings are allowed to mass evict people. It's just a very high volume of failure to pay rent at the court.
- How does it work, are you a go between or an advocate?
  - We go door to door and do outreach. We flyer letting people know about our town halls where they can find information about county services. We try to be there to support, but also do specific outreach. We get a list from DHHS of people facing eviction so we go door to door to see if they need help.
- Can you share a success story of a tenants organization?
  - We have some good examples, but we can also push back on the idea that renters are transitory. We've had some organizations that have brought the county in to stop landlords from unlawfully raising the rent.
- What is an unlawful increase and what kinds of rents are people able to find? Who is having trouble finding housing? All the new buildings seem to be luxury apartments.
  - The county weighed in and capped increases at 6% (except for City of Rockville). Anyone who has a building built since the year 2000 isn't covered by rent caps. A senior getting a 6% increase year over year is still hard.
- Rental properties come in all shapes and sizes and different types of landlords. Where does your focus mainly lie--is it on larger properties?
  - You can't treat all rental properties the same, but the Rental Alliance as much as possible tries to not differentiate. There are 1-2 unit property owners who are difficult and large property owners who are great. You need at least 3 properties for the cap to apply to you. For outreach, a lease is a lease so we try to reach everyone, but the advice changes.
- A good resource could be a list of how long the tenants of a building have lived there--80% have lived here x time.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ That’s a good metric to have. Turnover of management companies can disrupt a good thing, so we would love to see more long term and be able to quantify that. We hear a lot about how much it costs to turn over an apartment. The county requires a 2 year lease be offered. More and more we saw the 2nd year offered was more expensive. There are so many moving parts in this market now. I love that metric because it speaks to stability, which is really what renters want.</li> <li>● Do you do any lobbying? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We don’t have the budget for paid lobbyists, but we are joining with other organizations in the state to be a unified voice. We work as a coalition.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● What legislation is before the state? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We had the highest eviction filing rate in the country along with the lowest filing fee, but the fee was raised. The one thing that for sure is going to be before the legislature is good cause eviction, where at the end of the lease a landlord can just give 60 days notice and not renew a lease, and we have seen that as retaliation and cover for discrimination.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● There isn’t anyone creating any bills for the state? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Jheanelle Wilkins is the author of the good cause eviction bill and has introduced it year after year. It allows local governments to create laws that there needs to be a reason for evictions.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Has anyone gone to Annapolis to testify? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We’ve coordinated testimony the past few years and are excited to do so again this session.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Is this more effective at the state level? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ It’s a local enabling legislation, so it allows local jurisdiction to do the just cause type bill.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
8:00	WMATA - Redline Bus lane update	<p>Charlie Scott, WMATA Senior Government Relations Officer, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority</p> <p><b>Presentation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Value of Metro: economic, environmental, and safety</li> <li>● Recent accomplishments: increased ridership and increased customer satisfaction; trying to increase police presence and crisis intervention specialists; fare evasion is down 82% since increasing enforcement and raising height of fare gates</li> <li>● About a \$5 billion budget, 2nd busiest rail system behind NYC which is 8 times our size</li> <li>● Ridership plummeted during covid but has been steadily increasing since then</li> <li>● In Montgomery County--Redline shut down earlier this summer, but ridership at those stations has returned. Our faregates can detect when riders go over, so we can see the number of non-tapped (fare evasion) has decreased since a year ago.</li> <li>● Bus Priority Project--had support from the county and state for bus lanes, piloted to continue to see how traffic would respond. Just late this afternoon, State Highway said they would continue lanes, but only during</li> </ul>

rush hour: Weekdays 6:30-9:30 am and 3:30-6:30 pm.

- Purple Line--This is just a MTA project, not a WMATA, though we are good partners. We needed to shut down during the summer to support their work. Summer was used for the most intrusive work, and future work will need to be done at Silver Spring. Any future work will be just weekend shutdowns.
- Ongoing initiatives: DMV Moves, an initiative looking at transit in the entire region (MARC, VRE, RideOn, etc.) to see what we can do collaboratively to be more efficient working with each other. Also what the region needs to do to fund all these transit systems in the future. In most places transit is not one of the most well funded programs.
- Better Bus--Partnered with Montgomery County DOT looking to improve the bus system for the region. Many routes have been the same routes that we inherited in 1973 when we bought bus companies. The bus network has not evolved as the region has. New routes, new names, aiming for June 2025 to launch.
  - New cross county route called the M22 in the Aspen Hill, Wheaton area.
  - Glenmont/Wheaton/White Oak the M44
- Automatic Train and Door Operation--back in use on the Red Line as of December 15. All staff had to be retrained on the automatic system. This is returning to the old system, not a new system. Trains are getting to their destination sooner, so we'll also be working on the schedule in light of the efficiencies.
- Winter Construction--downtown on the Blue/Orange/Silver line for about the next week or so. We put the most disruptive shut downs for when ridership is the lowest.

#### Questions:

- Fare evasion at the Wheaton and Silver Spring stop--tailgaters through the gate and people can just walk over. Station managers are supposed to avoid confrontation and there's no police around. What's the point of reporting fare evasion?
  - I would never suggest fare evasion has been eliminated. Piggybacking when people follow a paying patron and people who can jump over gates has decreased but has not gone to zero. We can tell when someone has piggybacked. We know what stations have the highest fare evasion, but we don't have enough police to put them everywhere.
- What kind of resources would you send to those high evasion area?
  - It needs to be police with enforcement abilities. If they aren't sworn officers, it isn't part of their job. That's not their role in the system. I know it seems frustrating seeing someone in a Metro uniform not doing anything, but they don't have any authority to stop someone. We've explored county partnerships, but they are stretched thin with issues beyond Metro. We're glad to see it decreasing and I think it got to the point where people thought everyone was doing it, they might as well too. It's in the 4% range rather than the 18% range.
- One complaint in the Olney Sandy Spring area is reliable transportation. A lot of kids can't get summer or after school jobs because of transportation. Will the routes run later or continue to be the same?
  - I don't know the specific routes, but definitely looking at the span of service is something we are trying to improve across the system. Transit is not just for 9-5 office workers, it's for everyone.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Luisa: This could be a county question because that's a RideOn Route.</li> <li>● The Automatic train operation seemed a little rough on Wednesday. It felt like they were training someone new. Just sharing for customer experience. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ About 80% of our operators have been trained so about 20% of trains will still run in manual, and any operator has the ability to switch to manual operation. It's still a bit of a learning curve doing it. Another week or so I think it will improve.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● The new bus routes--are they in full effect, where can we find the full information. In our area (Olney), there's an issue with reliability and direct buses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ On our website we have the entire "Better Bus Network" and you can find the routes for each jurisdiction. They are not operational, they were approved in late November. We are aiming for June 29, 2025. We have a lot more work in the next 6 months to train operators and get signage up.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Is the Metro system complete? Will any new lines be added or extended? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ I don't think there will be. If you're familiar with the Silver Line that was envisioned from the start of the system, and then got going about 30 years ago. So that gives you a sense of how long it takes to go from an idea to operating. Another way across the Potomac River would be the next thing and could be another 30 years.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Every station only has one lift for disabled persons. There are usually stations not accessible because of lifts out. Is there any plan to improve redundancies to improve access? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ There are opportunities as we add entrances to stations. As part of the Purple Line we're adding a new entrance to the Bethesda Station. Any new stations we open are required to have better redundancies. It was built and opened in a time before the ADA. We want to do everything we can to maintain and improve our infrastructure. But it is costly and often done more in conjunction with a larger station improvement.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● I saw a press release that the Red Line is getting shorter headways of 4 minutes. How will this happen? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This is in the General Manager's proposed budget and the Board would vote on it in the March meeting. This is in response to increased congestion in a targeted window of about 45 minutes to be responsive to crowding and make sure people can get on the train at every station. It's not a done deal, but it's not the most costly improvement.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Are you prepared for the overload of people coming back to the office? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Yes, we are ready for them. We have the rail car capacity to further improve capacity. We can make adjustments as crowding warrants. As long as we can keep our work force ready to run a few more trains we will be ready to respond. I hope you're right that increasing demand will be a thing next year.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
--	--	--

8:35 pm	Board Business	<p>Budget letter has been submitted.</p> <p><b>Meeting Chat Update:</b>  There will be a new policy for use of the chat function. It was disabled for policy reasons in terms of having to keep a record of the chat for FOIA requests and the quantity of boards. There were a lot of side chats and</p>
---------	----------------	---

		<p>that wasn't a true open meeting. Some conversations were not appropriate and some conversations were not included in the minutes because they weren't verbally shared.</p> <p>The general consensus was disagreement with disabling the chat so we decided to write a letter because most Board members felt they didn't like that the chat was disabled. Rob will work on a draft letter.</p> <p>You can shut off private chat and make the only option to chat to everyone. But the engagement is worth it. Also some with disabilities may better be able to participate with the chat.</p> <p><b>Noyes Library:</b> At the Executive Board meeting, we discussed that the Noyes Library in Kensington had \$3.1 million for renovations. The construction company couldn't do the work with the budget available, and the estimated cost was \$7.7 million. The County Executive went back to the company and asked for a new proposal within the set budget. It's still in the queue, the project just needs to be revised to stay within the budget. We decided to table any discussion or action.</p> <p><b>Glenmont Corridor Study</b> 30-50 people signed up to attend the meeting. See the website for the presentation.</p>
8:54	Luisa Cardona, Mid County Director Report	<p><b>CIP budget Forum:</b> March 31--A forum where the MCCAB can ask direct questions, supporters of the Library can come and share. We'll share the flyer, if there's a building on there that people care about, they will come.</p>
8:55	Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee	<p>Had elections for the new board.</p> <p>Had a presentation on the mural project.</p> <p>Traffic division update from Michael Paylor from Montgomery County DOT. Updates included Wheaton Triangle space.</p> <p>Hispanic Heritage Month updates, HalloWheaton event was well attended.</p> <p>Invite to the Wheaton-Kensington Chamber of Commerce Event.</p> <p>Wheaton Placemaking Meeting--They have a grant and are taking input--either a skate park or bike park as a pop up with a brewery and a restaurant. If you have preference, you can still give your input.</p>
8:58	Community Concerns	None
9:00		Rob moved to adjourn the meeting. Serge 2nd.

		<p>Vote to adjourn unanimous. Meeting adjourned by Chair at 9:00 p.m.</p>
--	--	---

**NEXT MCCAB MEETING: January 16, 2025**  
**NEXT EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING (members only):**  
**January 2, 2025**