



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

Thursday, March 20, 2025

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

Call to Order:	Arquilla Ridgell, Chair			Respectfully Submitted by: Meghan Pazmino, Secretary		
Date/Time:	March 20, 2025, 7:00 PM ET					
Attendees:	X	Arquilla Ridgell (Chair)	X	Serge Thomas (Vice Chair)	X	Liza Smith
	X	Carol Kosary		Lee Rubenstien	X	Debra Liverpool
		Gary Fellman (Parliamentarian)		Ben DuGoff	X	Joan McDermott
	X	Meghan Pazmino (Secretary)	X	Phillip Ardanuy	X	Jonathan Chambers
	X	Rob Fox	X	Rick Gross	X	Irina Norrell
Staff:	Talia Beaulieu-Hains, Luisa Cardona					
Guests:	Hannah Wilcove (Councilmember Glass’ Office), Jose Ortiz (Councilmember Fani-Gonzalez’ Office) Councilmember Natali Fani-Gonzalez Tommy Heboer (Councilmember Sayles Office)					

Time	Topic	Notes
7:04	Call to Order & Welcome	Chair called the meeting to order and reviewed meeting protocols.
7:04	Agenda Minutes	Chair called for a motion to approve the February 2025 minutes. Carol moved to approve the minutes. Serge 2nd. February 2025 minutes are approved.  Chair called for a motion to approve the March agenda. Serge moved to approve the agenda for the meeting. Carol 2nd. Agenda approved.

7:04	Elected Officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hannah Wilcove, Councilmember Glass' office <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We know everything at the federal level continues to happen at a rapid fire pace.</li> <li>○ We are reviewing the County Executive's budget and we know there are concerns. There are public meetings on April 7 and 8. Attending the meeting or submitting written testimony is a great way to get your voice heard.</li> <li>○ Capital Improvement Plan highlights: A lot of residents came out to share concerns about Route 34, the only route between Wheaton and Bethesda. We're asking them to re-evaluate their proposal on this route.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Heather Mahoney (Councilmember Sayles' Office) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Introduced herself as a new member of Councilmember Sayles' office.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
7:13	More Housing N.O.W. Presentation Natali Fani-Gonzalez	<p><b>Councilmember Natali Fani, Gonzalez</b>  <b>More Housing N.O.W. New Options for Workers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The planning department was tasked with looking into attainable housing, so they created a plan. After the plan, there were town hall meetings and people raised concerns about the package, so Councilmember Andrew Friedson and I took the comments we heard during the town hall meetings and put together a package.</li> <li>• Three components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Building more workforce housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Would allow more residential building types (duplexes, triplexes, townhouses, small multi-family buildings). We heard people didn't want these "by right", without planning board approval.</li> <li>■ Through the optional method of development (which requires Planning Board approval)</li> <li>■ Along roadways at least 100 feet wide, with 3 or more existing travel lanes (Old Georgetown Road, University Blvd). Why 100 and not 80? If we do 80 feet, you'll have roads like Plyers Mill, Sligo, Arcola qualify. These are basically neighborhood connectors, so we made the requirement at least 100 feet.</li> <li>■ In the R-200, R-90, R-60, and R-40 zones.</li> <li>■ Would require 15% of units satisfy the definition of workforce housing, with a minimum of 1 workforce unit for structures with 3 or more units.</li> <li>■ Must have a front (address) on a designated roadway.</li> <li>■ Development standards are modeled on single family detached house standards for compatibility.</li> <li>■ Compliance with existing zoning laws and other regulations, such as water and sewer, subdivision, forest conservation, and easements is required.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ There is an interactive map that shows every single eligible parcel so you can see what qualifies. There was a hiccup in the original map where people saw government buildings as eligible, but that was a mistake and will be corrected.</li> <li>○ Workforce Housing Opportunity Fund <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ New countywide fund to incentivize the construction of workforce units.</li> <li>■ \$4 million in initial funding</li> <li>■ Eligible projects must provide at least 30% workforce units</li> <li>■ Workforce units must be affordable to 80% AMI (Area median income), on average.</li> <li>■ You'll see this discussed during the budget</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Converting Highly Vacant Office to Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ I've worked on this for over a year now and have had several sessions about this.</li> <li>■ We're doing office to housing ZTA</li> <li>■ The building has to be at least 50% vacant.</li> <li>■ This is already happening in DC.</li> <li>■ The Office to Housing Tax Abatement establishes a payment in lieu of taxes for conversion of high-vacancy commercial properties to residential use.</li> <li>■ DC has a 20 year abatement, we have a 25 year, but we are also asking for 15% affordable.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Pathways to Homeownership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Double the County's investment in the Homeowner Assistance Program from \$4 million to \$8 million. Last year the funds were gone in less than 6 months.</li> <li>■ Up to \$1 million is reserved for county employees.</li> <li>■ The County Executive already presented his budget and he increased the amount, though not the \$8 million we asked for.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Will there be a waitlist for the first time homebuyer money? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ For the homeownership fund, the money was done within 6 months, so once the money is gone that's it. I can ask if someone misses out on one year, if they can start at the top the next year.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ There is so much red tape in this program, you're better off saving your money. They assess my home at market value and I'm paying taxes at market value, but I can't sell it at market value. If there are repairs, I need to pay for those repairs, so I can't go off and move to a better situation. I don't want to sound ungrateful, but I don't think people realize. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The county is updating the MPU law and will be done by the end of this year. Then it will come to the Council so we can make changes. The law was created decades ago. Once they submit their</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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		<p>proposal, we'll have a town hall meeting. We need people like you who have gone through the program to testify.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Attainable Housing Plan had an estimate about how much housing was going to be built and it was very little that would actually be built. Do you have an estimate about how much housing you think will be built in the next 5 years? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The estimate of how many lots qualify is only about 2500 lots. It's nothing. We're only focused on strategic roads. Not every lot will be a lot of homes, they are just going to do 2 when they could do 3. It's not going to happen overnight.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
7:42	Charter Review Commission, Jim Michaels	<p>Jim Michaels, Charter Review Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There are 76 sections of the charter</li> <li>● It's mandated by the council to report on even numbered years, so we're in the process of figuring out what we want to cover in our next two years.</li> <li>● How do we decide what we want to study? We want to encourage more public participation in this process of telling the commission about what can be improved about the charter and about how the county operates.</li> <li>● We figure out what are the issues that seem to be at the forefront of peoples' minds. We engage the council and speak with councilmembers and the County Executive, and staff members. We start off with some ideas, but then we reach out to gather input.</li> <li>● We ask for a list of what's not working and we will figure out what we can bite off and chew in the time we have. We figure out options and recommendations and then propose them in a public hearing.</li> <li>● Recommendations will be in a written report in the first quarter next year.</li> <li>● Right now we have two topics--budget surplus reserves are capped at 5% but we are running reserves at 11%, but it seems like it would be wise to update the charter to what is actually happening.</li> <li>● Another issue is taxing authority: Legislation to have a more flexible taxation structure (residential vs. commercial) is under consideration in Annapolis. We are trying to determine whether we need to revise the charter to reflect how that authority will be used.</li> <li>● The commission recommends changes to the council, and it's up to them to decide if it goes on the ballot for residents to vote on.</li> <li>● The other way is to petition for amendments to go on the ballot. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ One circulating now is a cap on all spending. It would prohibit the Council from spending more than it had the year before it. They could only increase the amount by the amount of inflation. This would lock the county into the same spending level forever.</li> <li>○ If there's a petition with at least 10,000 signatures, it will go on the ballot no matter what. But we can still study them and write a report so we are on the public record and there's an</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		<p>opportunity for the public to comment. So those two topics will be on our agenda for study over the next year.</p> <p><b>Questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you need a legal background to serve as a commission member? What's the process entail? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ You do not need a legal background. We have 11 members, but only 2 are lawyers. It's the same process for all the other commissions and boards.</li> <li>○ You can only be a member of one board at a time.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Who evaluates these for legality? What happens if they violate the state constitution? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Commission will write its report to the Council. The Council will hold a hearing, where the Chair is required to testify in a public hearing. It allows the Council to ask questions. That process includes a legal review by the county attorney's office.</li> <li>○ The Commission is reconstituted with the start of every new Council.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Hannah Willcove: Councilmember Glass has been working to amend the state constitution because of the difference between county populations and the 10,000 signatures required. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Comment: If we change the amount, we make it harder to petition the government. I would like Councilmember Glass to rethink this.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
8:25	Board Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The June meeting needs to be rescheduled due to the Juneteenth Holiday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Serge moved to change the date of the meeting to June 12.</li> <li>○ Gary 2nd the motion.</li> <li>○ Board voted and the motion passed.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
8:33	Mid County Director Update	<p>Luisa Cardona</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The County Executive submitted his proposed budget. It's a difficult budget year, so you'll see cuts. There is also a proposal of a 3.5% tax to pay for our school contracts--not to add additional services, just to meet our obligatory needs to MCPS. This takes into account what the state is supposed to provide. The number we are responsible for might change.</li> <li>• Every department cut parts of their budget. This 3.5% is specifically only for schools and for the schools budget, specifically to meet contract needs.</li> <li>• The CIP is out and the meeting is Monday. We will provide dinner that night and child activities. This one is not virtual, we're having one virtual and then the regional ones.</li> <li>• There are a lot of things in the CIP and it's a lot of money over a long period of time. We are asking you to help get people out to the budget forums. It's a difficult thing to understand because it's over so much time. It typically takes ten years to build things. These projects mean so much to the community so it's important to get people there.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's always good for members of the MCCAB to attend the Council budget hearings on April 7 and 8.</li> <li>• The Food Hub money is being reduced, Mid County has two, so there will be cuts in case something drastically changes. The cuts are not a result of cutting county money, it's the loss of other funds. We'd have to cut other county programs to maintain this funding. We go to the food hubs and we know that it's critically important.</li> </ul> <p>Question: How much of the school lunch money is federal funds and what is the impact?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All of it. We don't yet know the impact.</li> </ul> <p>Is the budget increase permanent?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It isn't a property tax, but it's based on the assessment. If your house is worth less than \$500,000 you won't see any increase.</li> </ul>
8:54	WUDAC	No updates.
9:05	Community Concerns	None.
9:05		<p>Serge moved to adjourn the meeting.  Gary 2nd.  Vote to adjourn unanimous.  Meeting adjourned by Chair at 9:05 p.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>NEXT MCCAB MEETING: April 17, 2025</b>  <b>NEXT EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING (members only):</b>  <b>April 3, 2025</b></p>