



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

**Thursday, May 16, 2024**

**7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.**

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

Meeting ID: 898 2774 3604, +13017158592

**Members:** Benjamin DuGoff, Meghan Pazmino, Lee Rubenstein, Rick Gross, Rob Fox, Debra Liverpool, Serge Thomas, Arquilla Ridgell, Gary Fellman,

**Montgomery County staff:** Stephanie Bello, Community Projects Manager Mid-County Regional Office

**Guests:** Gene Smith, business Center Manager, Montgomery County Business Center. Patrice Cheatham, Program Manager, Montgomery County Business Center. Dan Sanayi, Chief Design and Operations, Montgomery County Department of Transportation. Devang Dave, Engineer, Montgomery County Department of Transportation. Michael Guilano, Montgomery County Department of Transportation

**Elected Officials:** Hannah Wilcove (Representative Councilmember Glass)

**Attendees:** Jim (from WUDAC)

Time	Topic	Notes
7:04 p.m.	<p><b>Call to Order &amp; Welcome</b></p> <p><b>Meeting Protocols</b></p> <p><b>Introduction</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chair called meeting to order.</li> <li>Chair reviewed meeting protocols and recognized guest speakers.</li> <li>Welcome new members</li> </ul>
7:10 p.m.	<p><b>Agenda Minutes</b></p>	<p>Chair called for motion to Approve Agenda. Serge made motion to accept Agenda, Phil 2<sup>nd</sup> motion to accept and Agenda accepted.</p> <p>Chair called for motion to approve March Minutes. Serge made motion to approve March 2024 Minutes , 2<sup>nd</sup> motion by Rob, and Minutes approved.</p>
7:15 p.m.	<p><b>Elected Officials</b></p> <p><b>Hannah Wilcove (Representative Council member Glass)</b></p>	<p>Hannah discussed the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council made vote on Reconciliation, but final vote will take place on May 23<sup>rd</sup>.</li> <li>Council will continue Drone as First Responder program in Wheaton. Program has been successful in collecting information and improving response times.</li> <li>Funding available to expand retail space in Wheaton Park and Planning building.</li> <li>Funding available to staff Sandy Spring Fire station to address delayed 911 response times.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reminder that on June 1, the metro redline stations will be closed through the Summer.</li> <li>• Councilmember Glass will be hosting series of Pride events which will be announced in his newsletter /website. Next newsletter May 21.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7:25 p.m.</b></p>	<p><b>Gene Smith, Business Center Manager, Montgomery County Business Center</b></p>	<p>Montgomery County was reconstituted about 1 ½ years by Office of County Executive Elrich.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works with small businesses and retail spaces navigate county government processes such as licensing and permitting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Connect with resources through Montgomery County</li> <li>○ Economic Development Corporation</li> <li>○ Latino Economic Development Center.</li> <li>○ Maryland Women’s Business Center</li> <li>○ Small women’s business center</li> <li>○ Black Collective</li> <li>○ Crossroads community kitchen in conjunction with Takoma Park.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Three Branches and three Innovation Centers. Make sure all businesses have access to centers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Germantown focuses on Life sciences.</li> <li>○ Rockville focuses on Med-tech, IT and International soft landing.</li> <li>○ Silver Spring focuses on Minority female owned disabled contractors.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Business liaison and small business advocates. does mainly business outreach and business assistance. Looks for ways to make the process more efficient and easier and makes the recommendation to council.</li> <li>• Administrative and Funding functions that manage about 9 contracts with resource partners which is almost \$1.9 million. Business are provided with technical assistance, coaching, and manage MOVE Program.</li> <li>• MOVE Program assist business attempting to fund businesses starting to move into county or existing businesses obtain grant based on square footage/lease.</li> <li>• Business outreach in which business liaisons are assigned regions or need based travel door to door to meet with businesses to share resources or identify challenges. Accompanies businesses through entire process until issues are resolved or helping with licensing or permitting issues.</li> <li>• Resource Library is provided to help share resources.</li> <li>• Website has license, permits, registration, incentives and funding, laws, and regulations. Also support for minority and women owned businesses.</li> </ul>

**Patrice  
Cheatham,  
Program  
Manager,  
Montgomery  
County Business  
Center**

- No long-term leases which provide more flexibility so office only pays for space.
- Can contact them through “Contact Us” on website

Business liaison to do outreach and troubleshooting in Mid-County area. For example, if business have need for outdoor dining, she will walk business through that process. She has updates on happenings in Mid County:

- Monthly meetings with County Executive and businesses.
- March 29, 2024 for Women’s History month focused on women owned businesses.
  - Stopped at Budget Blinds in Silver Spring to discuss building possible showroom.
  - Contusa Restaurant on University Blvd. In Wheaton to enjoy meal and meet with business.
- Opportunity to deliver businesses a Certificate of Appreciation for operating in Montgomery County and also put them on social media to promote business.
- Attended two Ribbon Cuttings in Olney in May 2024. Christopher Gardens .
- Working with Regional Services Center to advertise Taste of Wheaton
- Grants for restaurants who will provide meals to recreation centers.
- Façade improvement in Wheaton-Chuck Levin family will be making improvements to 4 store fronts along Georgia Avenue 11305 through 11307. County matching grant \$250,000.
- Northgate Shopping Center in conjunction with District 4 police station have public information gathering sessions to provide community with public safety information.

*Question: Gary asked what 5 top challenges are facing businesses in mid-county area and what is being done to help resolve challenges. Also, question about extended hours on parking fees.*

Patrice responded there has been feedback regarding vacancies, loitering, drug activity, parking meters, aggressive ticketing , and business is slow. Some businesses offered to pay customer’s meter.

Gene responded they work closely with other government departments such as Public Safety and Transportation to see how issues can be addressed or if broader based or targeted solutions are required.

*Question: Serge asked if they could provide an overview of what County has done since Covid to ease regulations on businesses specifically regarding Glenmont Shopping Center and Wheaton. Are guides provided in other languages.*

Gene responded they have worked with County to ease permitting process and currently working on a guide for small businesses to help

		<p>navigate opening or processes. There are resources provided to translate resources and information from guide books into multiple languages. They also conduct surveys to gather information from businesses.</p> <p><i>Question: Arquilla asked If the Business Center reached out to businesses or wait to see if business need resources?</i></p> <p>Patrice responded they are proactive and perform outreach by looking at which areas out County may need attention at that time. They communicate in person one on one with businesses and answer inquiries.</p> <p><i>Question: Serge asked/commented regarding grants are helpful to businesses to help with on boarding new hires.</i></p> <p>Gene responded that Business Center works closely with Work Source Montgomery so grants also provide opportunity for training workforce and bringing more jobs to county.</p> <p><i>Question: Gary asked if they had reached out to Small Business Administration to sponsor events to reach out and meet communities.</i></p> <p>Gene responded they have partnered with other county departments (Office of Procurement) and Maryland Small Business Development Center.</p> <p><i>Question: Arquilla asked if they partner or interact with the Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce.</i></p> <p>Gene responded they meet monthly and may get referrals from Chamber of Commerce to help businesses.</p> <p>Patrice responded that Chambers may also provide information/resources about public programs and funding.</p> <p>Hannah responded that Councilmember Glass sponsored MOVE Bill with the Economic Development Committee and is frequently reaching out to partner with their office.</p> <p><i>Question: Arquilla asked how they respond when they see trends occurring or ask questions to determine why business is falling victim to the trends.</i></p> <p>Patrice responded they don't always aware when stores close but will approach a business if they notice closing signs. They provided information to employees to contact Workforce Montgomery.</p>
<p><b>8:00 p.m.</b></p>	<p><b>Dan Sanayi, Chief Design and Operations, Montgomery County Department of Transportation.</b></p> <p><b>Michael Guilano</b></p>	<p>Manges Traffic Division of MCDOT, responsible for design of intersections focusing on improvements and safety.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic studies conducted to review impact on public and concept developed, then design implemented.</li> <li>• Grandview project was based on study in 2016. Design implemented 2018,2019. Consulting services made recommendation. Mark, may have more details.</li> </ul> <p>Intersection was realigned for new MC building. Not sure as to why design was wanted to make intersection one way. Recommendation was probably made due to site development and to share Reddie Drive.</p>

		<p><i>Question: Gary commented that Wheaton residents are avoiding intersection because of confusion. It impacts ability to move around area and return to Mall. Discourages residents from visiting area. There must be a better solution.</i></p> <p>Sanayi responded he appreciates the input. Although he was not apart of the study, to allow a left turn would be inadequate because certain guidelines and standards must be met.</p> <p><i>Question: Gary commented that if the lights were different to shut down traffic so left turn could be made. It would be nice if the intersection could be revisited.</i></p> <p><i>Question: Rob commented that there was idea of possibly completely closing down the entire intersection to make the area walkable for pedestrians.</i></p> <p><i>Question: Gary commented that he agrees with Rob that they should consider closing the intersection to make it walkable, but parking may be a challenge.</i></p> <p>Sanayi responded that different options were considered but designing the intersection as one way was the decision. He can reach out to some of the previous team members that conducted the study to see why the decision was made to make the left turn restriction.</p> <p><i>Question: Serge commented that it is nice for him to go from Henderson to Grandview without facing all the traffic. Also, it may better control individuals that want to race or speed through the intersection.</i></p> <p><i>Question: Jim commented that WUDAC has been involved in conversation with the County about the intersection and whenever decision was made about intersection, they were concerned about pedestrian safety. There is a concern that if Reddie Drive is closed off, the area businesses may lose access to public customers coming from Georgia. Recent meeting with Councilmember Fani Gonzalez and Westfield business members, MCDOT and Vision Zero Representatives decided to look into synchronizing the lights around the intersection and ViersMill and also focused on pedestrian safety around Elkin Street. Also, there is parking under new County building. Also parents expressed concerns that they need parking in front of Dance studio. Funding of Wheaton projects also relies on parking fees.</i></p>
<p><b>8:25 p.m.</b></p>	<p><b>Arquilla Ridgell, Chair (Board Business)</b></p>	<p>There are no more vacancies. All selections have been made. Last applicant expected to be brought on board shortly. Hopefully all will attend Board Retreat.</p>
<p><b>8:35 p.m.</b></p>	<p><b>Stephanie Bello, Community Projects Manager Mid-County Regional Office (Director's Report)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WUDAC hosting Substance Abuse Townhall June 18, 2024.</li> <li>• Taste of Wheaton, June 2, 2024 (see website)</li> <li>• Bi-weekly Newsletter coming out tomorrow-May 17, 2024.</li> <li>• County updates on Diversion Center upcoming. Meeting will be held May 21, 2024 with press release and virtual.</li> <li>• Public Works Event May 18, 2024. Hosted by MCDOT.</li> <li>• Library has Summer Reading Challenge June 14 to August 31 for youth and adults.</li> </ul>

		<p><i>Question: Arquilla commented that Board previously had table set up at Taste of Wheaton event and wondered if Board wanted to participate.</i></p> <p>Stephanie responded she would be glad to help the Board make the connection to set up a table.</p>
<b>8:40 p.m.</b>	<b>Rob Fox (WUDAC Liaison)</b>	Will update next month because WUDAC meeting has not occurred yet.
<b>8:41 p.m.</b>	<b>Community Concerns</b>	Brief check on status of previous community concerns at intersection of Connecticut and Denfield Rd. Issue
<b>8:45 p.m.</b>	<b>Adjourn</b>	Chair adjourned meeting.