



Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board (MCCAB) Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 18, 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, Carol Kosary, Lee, Rick Gross, Rob Fox, Debra Liverpool, Serge Thomas.

Montgomery County staff: Luisa Cardona, Director Mid-County Regional Services Center

Guests: Judy Conklin- League of Women Voters, Rachel Silverman-Montgomery County Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Robin Riley, Director, Montgomery County Department of Recreation.

Elected Officials: Hannah Wilcove (Representative Councilmember Glass), Joseph Gelula (Representative Councilmember Sayles)

Attendees: Douglas Taylor, Joan McDermott,

Time	Topic	Notes
7:00 p.m.	<p>Call to Order & Welcome</p> <p>Meeting Protocols</p> <p>Introduction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair called meeting to order 7:08 p.m. • Chair reviewed meeting protocols and recognized guest speakers. • Welcome new members
7:10 p.m.	<p>Agenda Minutes</p>	<p>Motion made to accept Agenda, and Agenda accepted.</p>
7:15 p.m.	<p>Rachel Silverman, Montgomery County Office of Management and Budget</p>	<p>Will provide overview of Capital Budget and answer questions regarding community engagement aspects of Capital Budget and Operations Budget.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Executive submitted Capital Improvement programs to the Council on January 15. • County Council held public hearings and community sessions and will be taking final action in middle of May. • Bi-Annual Capital Budget Process means every odd number year a full budget where all project requests are considered and submitted with new projects and project changes. Even number FY year budget only changes to full capital budget is considered. • Biannual odd/even year budget plans help stabilize capital budget process which encompasses large and expensive projects. Also allows projects to get focus and off the ground. • Capital Improvement Budget recommendation this FY focuses on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Environment and climate sustainability in grid.

- Energy conservation projects, energy performance standards and upgrading county facilities for energy conservation.
- Flood mitigation studies and projects \$153 million.
- Funding to purchase 220 electric, battery and hydrogen buses.
- Funding for electric bus depot at Shady Grove site to support electric buses.
- New project to Headquarters Retail space in Wheaton to attract retail clients or make it amenable to community use.
- Glenmont land purchase from State Highway for Glenmont Sector plan development.
- Funding to continue Wheaton Arts and Culture center for FY27
- Fourth District police station in facility planning project stage partnering with MC Department of General Services to establish requirements for spaces needed in new facility. Then site selection process
 - Fourth District police station is the oldest in the county (1960) and needs replacement.
- Planning for Olney substation currently not on county property and being funded by state grant.
- School budget and transportation represents another larger portion of budget. MCPS recommended for \$1.9 billion dollars which is highest amount ever allocated for school construction despite less revenue received from housing market (taxes and transactions). Projects were deferred in transportation. MCPS largest spending in CIP.
- Transportation 1.7 billion dollars (900 million in six year period) in mass transportation and bus rapid transit. Bus rapid transit Viersmill segment possibly opening FY27.

Question: Serge asked if Rachel could provide a specific example of a project that was delayed in public transportation.

Rachel responded projects in Down County area, such as Capital Crescent tunnel, which was delayed and restored several times by County Executive.

Luisa responded the Library in Kensington (Noyes Library).

Rachel agreed and shared that there was also a cost increase in the delay. Project was re-bid years later to mitigate the increase in cost.

Question: Arquilla responded that DOT had also bus lanes on Georgia Avenue were delayed due to funding.

Luisa pointed out that the MC Office of Management and Budget has a beautiful website to view budget by departments.

Question: Arquilla asked if County was still getting 1 billion dollars from federal government and how does that affect current budget.

Rachel responded it may be FEMA funding at 33 million.

		<p>Luisa responded it may be related to Opioid funding for Narcan, education.</p>
<p>7:40 p.m.</p>	<p>Robin Riley, Director Montgomery Department of Recreation</p>	<p>Senior is largest growing population around entire county.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eight “Primary” senior centers around county. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Damascus, Holiday Park, Long Branch, Schweinhaut, Potomac, White Oak, Wheaton, Downtown Silver Spring. • Neighborhood senior centers offer programs 2 days a week at eight sites from 11am-2pm. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Praisner-East County, Mid-County, etc. • Maryland Senior Olympics primary organizer and delivery. Organize and register participants for different events and over 65 different activities. Over 60% of participants are Montgomery County residents. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Every other year is a qualifying year. Next year FY25 will be qualifying year. • Offer classes for 55 years and older. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Two Senior centers have evening and weekend activities. Holiday Park and Schweinhaut Senior Center are open Wednesday and Saturday nights. • Senior Outdoor Adventure Recreation (SOAR) Program during weekday offers seniors trips and tours up and down east coast. • Day Trippers Program on weekend days allows seniors to travel with any family member on a day trip. • Senior Camps. Each senior center offers a 3-day camp in summer seniors experience a full day of programming such as “Hawaiian Day” where they may get hula dance instruction along with Hawaiian food, Hawaiian arts and learn more about Hawaiian culture and then go to pool for the day. • Senior centers during day and evening hours offer music, arts, fitness, wellness, and activities. • There is a gap to fill for seniors 55 years and older interests in evening and weekend activities. Looking for more community input. • Evening sports program include sports on the weekends, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Soccer for women and men ○ Adult softball for various age groups 55+, 65+ ect. ○ Basketball during winter months ○ Volleyball • Looking to expand neighborhood programs. • Meals are provided at sites. Total of 60,000 hot meals a month provided at all sites throughout county.

		<p><i>Question:</i> Serge asked if senior centers that have music offer various types of live band music?</p> <p>Robin responded yes, absolutely. Holiday Parks is one of the sites that offers live bands, performances, and dances. They have “Senior Prom” on Wednesday nights where participants can dress up and pretend it ‘s prom night. Includes contest for best dressed and photo booths. Welcome anyone interested that plays in band have them contact Dept. of Recreation.</p> <p><i>Question:</i> Rick Gross commented that when he accompanies his mom to senior center at Wheaton, the staff does an outstanding job. They are engaging and encouraging. Sometimes centers are overrun by pickleball players.</p> <p>Robin responded the staff (Alex, Mark, Nakita and staff) works well together. It is very busy and has a library and track for walking. She will pass compliments on to staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robin also mentioned there are volunteers interested in helping with social engagement of seniors. • Bone Builder program Praisner Rec center where participants wait in line to get ticket for 45-minute class which also includes a social engagement portion. <p><i>Question:</i> Carol commented a concern that community centers in her area are not as accessible. She travels to Lifetime center in Gaithersburg.</p> <p>Robin responded that there are challenges in Up County areas, and some Centers, such as Mid-County) nearby are not close enough. As county grows the need/demand increases .</p> <p><i>Question:</i> Rob thanked Robin for the helpful information regarding various age groups. Robin shared that she and community engagement staff is available to speak with the community and welcomes opportunity to speak with any groups.</p> <p><i>Question:</i> Carol commented that Jerimiah Project is still ongoing development of Crabbs Branch.</p>
<p>8:00 p.m.</p>	<p>Elected Officials Joseph (Representative Councilmember Sayles)</p>	<p>Joseph discussed the following Budget items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council President Friedson with Co-sponsor Councilmember Sayles introduced \$20 million appropriation bill for economic development fund to promote high paying jobs in County. • Councilmember Glass leading initiative on “Make Office Vacant Extinct” (MOVE) grant program into law which aims to move businesses into County to make use of vacant office space. • Reviewed and discussed FY 2025 Budget discussion focused on economic development, housing, minority business support. • Health and Human Services (HHS) Committee held session on ending and preventing homelessness.

**Hannah Wilcove
(Representative
Council
member Glass)**

- Despite Recordation Tax bill passing , budget will see a 20% decrease in recordation funds due to current market conditions in housing. Only 4% may be available for support.

Hannah discussed the following items:

- Sponsored MOVE Act grant program “Make Office Vacant Extinct” (MOVE) grant program into law which aims to provide an incentive for businesses to move into County to make use of vacant office space. Received authorization since FY 2014.
 - Legislation makes program permanent.
 - Increases grant award to offset lease amounts.
 - Expands program eligibility to include office expansion for existing businesses in county. Support from Councilmembers Sayles , Fanni-Gonzalez, and Falcom.
- David is moving to new position. Councilmember Glass now hiring for Legislative assistance.

Question: Carol asked if 21.9% office vacancy was comparable to surrounding jurisdictions. Is this the new normal?

Hannah responded Yes. The average for suburban Maryland is around 20% and District of Columbia has also been hard hit. Hopefully MOVE Act will help vacant offices. One example is Verizon wireless recipient of MOVE grant in FY 2023 which moved from Greenbelt to Montgomery County.

Question: Carol commented that her area began to see steps toward re-zoning to allow building townhouses.

Question: Serge asked where the greatest concentration of vacant building are?

Hannah responded Bethesda 24% , Chevy Chase 27% , and Germantown 27% have highest office vacancy rates .

Question: Debra asked if anyone was working with MCEDC? Who will administer grants after they stop in July 1.

Hannah responded Yes. Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation. CEO spoke at their press conference and several members met with Councilmember Glass to keep communication flowing and open. MCEDC previously administered grants but will stop beginning July 1, 2024. She is not sure who will be new grant administrators.

Question: Rob commented about challenges of zoning conversions and suggested various regions collectively share resources and adjust to accommodate various individuals.

Joseph responded that their office is taking initiative towards approval to make new housing more available and passed zoning text amendment “Open Pathways for Economic Necessities” to eliminate barriers to re-zoning.

		<p><i>Question:</i> Rob commented that when new building was built in Wheaton there was a concern about minimum use size when individuals were looking for housing.</p> <p>Hannah responded that text amendment was passed to make it easier for houses of worship to build and develop affordable housing.</p>
8:25 p.m.	Arquilla Ridgell, Chair (Board Business)	<p>Arquilla discussed the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board vacancies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Seven of the Board vacancies were filled. One vacancy is open. ○ One more candidate who was on military leave, will be interviewed. ○ Twenty-five applicants interviewed. Eight positions available. ○ Difficult decisions because it was a very talented applicant pool. • Board retreat. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Planning session will be held on May 2nd by Zoom to set goals and suggest issues. ○ Retreat to be held June 6, 2024 at 7:00 pm in person on Reddie Drive. In new building. Same time as the Executive Board session is usually held. <p>Luisa commented that the Board had reached out to the Office of Innovation to facilitate part of the retreat and attend the next planning session.</p>
8:35 p.m.	Luisa Cardona, Director (Mid- Couty Director’s Report)	<p>Luisa discussed the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community grants are available for communities and neighborhoods to use for block parties, community events of all sizes. Application process is simple, and money is available. • Hosting community event with Councilmember Fani-Gonzalez and DGS to gather community input on the design of the interior of the Wheaton Arts and Cultural center April 24, 2024 at Wheaton Library. Dinner will be provided by Councilmember. • Attended meeting with Economic Development Committee for Wheaton District and budget items were approved and received and increase was approved. Costs have increased for Wheaton District events (Taste of Wheaton, Summer concerts).
8:40 p.m.	Rob Fox (WUDAC Liaison)	<p>Rob discussed the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation was given to WUDAC on CIP projects happening in Wheaton. Budget was discussed and reviewed. • Presentation was given from Wheaton Jobs Center about workers, employers, training, and development. • Updates from Chamber of Commerce held 6th annual Business Networking Expo.

<p>8:41 p.m</p>	<p>Community Concerns</p>	<p>Megan raised a concern regarding the Rock Creek Palisades Citizens Association neighborhood paving project that excluded paving part of the neighborhood street that included a lower income section. County representative response was that portion of neighborhood street was not on the current schedule. Question is why is that street not on schedule and what can be done?</p> <p>Arquilla responded neighborhood could ask for a review or it could be a funding issue, restrictions or require land purchase.</p> <p>Rob responded it may also be an issue of timing with utility companies.</p> <p>Luisa responded that Meghan could forward her the email and she would reach out to the representative and get more details.</p>
<p>8:45 p.m.</p>	<p>Adjourn</p>	<p>Chair adjourned meeting.</p>