

Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee (WUDAC)

Tuesday | November 14, 2023 | 7:00 pm-8:30 pm

Hybrid Meeting

2nd Floor Mid-County Board Room

2425 Reedie Drive, Wheaton MD 20902

In Person: Crystal Ruiz, Luisa Cardona, Jim Epstein, Pedro Matamoros, Nina Koltnow, Dan Thompson

By Zoom: Kit Wood, Ali Oliver-Krueger, Karen Cordry, Rob Fox, Tanya Baskin, Dave Jarrett, Office of CM Fani-González (José Ortiz)

There is a quorum.

Public Meeting

I. **Call to order** 7:01 pm

II. **Community Concerns** 7:02 pm

- Dan Thompson: The County Executive created an advisory board to promote the Wheaton A&E District. Dan distributed a letter to WUDAC to request its support regarding the A&E District boundaries.

III. **Reports/Updates** 7:05 pm

a. **Elected representatives in attendance**

From José Ortiz (CM Fani-González's office): District 6 has an agreement with the County to provide services for some of the youth affected by fentanyl. Six youth are already in program; three more will go in next week. Twenty beds are available in MoCo; we will have more available in Baltimore. Beds will be available for students (under 16) who are uninsured.

Drone pilot program appropriation was approved last week. Roll-out scheduled for Nov. 20, and residents will be advised by Police about the particulars. It is a 9-month pilot in Wheaton and Silver Spring, which will be evaluated by the Police and the public.

CM Fani-González is working on a bill for some county residents to be able to camp or stay short-term in new accommodations on County farms (similar to B&B).

b. Wheaton & Kensington Chamber of Commerce, Ali Oliver-Krueger

Recent events:

- We held the Chamber of Commerce Annual Awards dinner on October 18. It was a success, with 82 people attending.
- On November 3, we held a roundtable meeting with Maryland State Comptroller Brooke Lierman for a discussion about economic activities and resources. The Comptroller was on a day long visit throughout Montgomery County, and wanted to meet with Chamber members.

Upcoming:

- **Holiday On Duty:** We are accepting donations for our Holiday on Duty program, which delivers meals to public safety workers on duty during the holidays.

- **Holiday Mixer and kickoff for "Angels for Children"** at Los Chorros Restaurant. There will be appetizers and a cash bar. For the toy drive, MHP staff and volunteers as well as the Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad organize the collecting, wrapping, and distribution of gifts and toys. Donations of new toys and monetary donations sought. For details on both events, [click here](#).

c. **Committee Reports**

- [Arts and Entertainment Committee](#) - MHP/Amherst project is moving forward. Committee members met with MHP and Planning Department to address issues of accessibility, footprint, parking, loading for the housing project. Subsequent meetings with DGS will address design concerns for the Arts and Cultural Center.
 - The Planning Board will hold a hearing Nov. 30 on the Development Plan for this project. For more info on the meeting, [click here](#). For the current Sketch Plan, [click here](#).
- [Social Media Committee](#) - Tanya
 - Did audit of social media presence and effectiveness; working to be more deliberate about social media. Participation in Wheaton social media is increasing. We now need to be strategic about how we use resources (such as building an evergreen content library).
 - Also need to get more attendees to WUDAC meetings.
- [Economic Development Committee](#) - Karen

- Office of People's Council; there is a push to defund the position. It is a public advocacy program to help residents deal with the planning process. The Committee recommends advocating for funding the position.

d. **MCCAB**, Rob Fox

- CM Glass: Safe Streets became law; suicide awareness and firearms prevention acts have been proposed.
- Dept. of Environmental Protection talked about energy use, stormwater management, enforcement.

e. **MidCounty**, Luisa Cardona

- The County Executive just returned from India and Viet Nam on trade mission.
 - Security camera rebate program gives \$250/camera (up to 5 cameras) in high need areas; Wheaton is one of them. Can be private, such as a Ring. Residences and businesses are eligible. For more info, [click here](#).
 - There are 3 Mid-County Community Advisory Board (MCCAB) resident openings. Please get the word out. For more information, [click here](#).
 - MC Artist in Residency program - please help promote. For more info, [click here](#).
- Crystal: Wheaton is awaiting production for new mid-Georgia Ave barriers; a full set has been ordered.

IV. Guest/Presenters 7:38 pm

Wheaton Urban District FY 2025 Budget, Luisa Cardona, Crystal Ruiz, and Sidney Cooper (absent)

In preparation for WUDAC's budget request letter to the County Council and Executive, the Urban District Team presented the following information.

- Clean and Safe Team: Have hired new supervisor and filled 2 positions. More openings pending. 1.7 positions are in lapse, meaning that those positions cannot be filled, in order to save money in the budget.
- Almost \$200,000 invested in landscaping/placemaking FY23. Now it's more expensive to keep up.
- Clean and Safe Team members empty Wheaton trash and recycling, upkeep landscaping, have been doing a lot of outreach, conduct regular lighting surveys.
- They have supported many events this year, with more to come.
- TGIF programming removes the possibility of WUD making money Fridays in the summer. Maybe there is a better use for the Plaza. What does the community want? Maybe Hispanic Heritage Month will become a day-long event in Wheaton for the whole County.
- First quarter of 2024 will focus energy on new social media strategy more than individual small events. We need that investment. Keep eye on mission statement of WUD.

- In past year, all social media traffic has increased: Facebook, Instagram.
- Is the Loyalty Program something the businesses want?
- Streeterly: MCDOT did reline street, remove meters. Survey about winter was completed, with consensus not to have Streeterly in winter, but too late in the year to change it now.
- Goals for next year (FY24/25): Increased public rentals, increased social media presence, updated website, increased partnerships and sponsorships, alternative funding for Streeterly (some ABS? Montgomery Green), childcare facility in Parks Building, retail space in Parks Building. Existence of Streeterly is not in question.
- Buildout of retail space @ \$4million will be in budget request. White box space with private business (food?) in front and community use in back. At one point, 4th district police asked for that space. The admin offices only will move to 8th floor of Parks building temporarily. Police offered to pay for build-out in exchange to housing all operations at the County Building, but that is a non-starter.
- CM Fani-González is advocating for a new police space in Glenmont.
- In order to meet the FY25 budget goals, all agencies are required to propose a 3% reduction in expenses. That requires \$79,000 from Wheaton's UD budget, whereas only \$13,000 for Bethesda and \$28,000 for Silver Spring. We are focusing on preserving and improving current services. MCDOT is asked to prioritize projects based on equity. That could be helpful to Wheaton.

- Bottom line asks:

- \$50,000 – Events, Marketing, and Promotions
- \$200,000 – Streetscape Maintenance. Reasoning: Materials and service cost have increased by more than 20% since the pandemic (sidewalks, fencing, porta johns, tents, concrete, plants ect.)
- \$25,000 – Lighting/Facade. Reasoning: This is the chargeback MCDOT request based on increase in lighting pole damages.
- \$25,000 – Website Redesign. Compliance with procurement and county contracting policy requires we issue a new solicitation for web hosting. This will be an increase our yearly maintenance fees.

V. New Business: 8:25 pm

Budget Letter

Jim and Ali will work on a Budget letter from WUDAC to the County Council, then send it around for feedback. Pedro will help, Nina offered to clean it up. Members, please send any items that are priorities for you.

VI. Officer Openings and Voting 8:33 pm

Riana Cole - Parliamentarian

Nina Koltnow - Secretary

Ali Oliver-Krueger - Vice Chair

Jim Epstein - Chair

Moved, seconded, and approved.

VIII. Adjourn 8:37 pm

NEXT WUDAC MEETING: December 12, 2023 Executive Session
only.

NEXT PUBLIC WUDAC MEETING: Jan. 9 at 7 PM.