

## **Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee**

11701 Georgia Avenue, Wheaton MD 20902

Meeting Minutes, Tuesday January 14, 2020

**Members Present:** Bill Jelen, Chair; Chelsea Johnson, Vice Chair; Crystal Myers, Leah Haygood, Mariela Garcia-Colberg. James Mensah, Chris Pyon, Jim Epstein, William Moore, Omar Lazos

**Staff Present:** Luisa Montero-Diaz, Mid-County RSC Director; Shawn Morris, Aide.

**Guests:** Alexandra Samaniego, LEDC; Laura-Leigh Palmer, ASAP Graphics; Neil Greenberger, MC PIO; Keith Compton, MCDOT; Chip Py, resident; Matthew Rakola, Matthew Rakola Photography.

**Call To Order:** 6:38pm by Chair Jelen

**Minutes Review:** The December Meeting Minutes Draft was reviewed. A motion was made and passed to approve the Minutes without changes

**Community Concerns:** Chair Jelen apologized for not publicizing the meeting on the Next Door App. A member discussion followed on ways to publicize WUDAC meetings.

### **Reports:**

**a. County Council:** Neil Greenberger, MCPIO, announced that the CE will introduce his CIP recommendations tomorrow. There is more funding for schools and affordable housing. Discussion followed, including an explanation of the Capital budget vs Operating Budget. Neil spoke of increased funding for Senior programming. Luisa shared that it was already in place for programming at the Wheaton Rec. Center.

**b. Chamber of Commerce:** William Moore, on behalf of the W&K Chamber, shared details of their successful Holiday on Duty program, which provided meals to First Responders, and their Angels for Children Drive, which distributed toys for children at the MHP housing complexes.

He then noted several upcoming events: a Business Expo on Jan.29<sup>th</sup>, a February Mixer, time and date to be determined, featuring a lecture on Montgomery County history and their Annual Awards Dinner, set for April 29<sup>th</sup>.

### **c. Mid-County RSC/Wheaton Urban District:**

Luisa Montero-Diaz updated WUDAC on the SBAP program. It has passed \$1 million in disbursements for Triangle businesses. There was a Cocoa Crawl on Lot 13 to encourage local shopping before the Holidays with kid's activities, refreshments and prizes. About 50 people attended.

The Census kicks off April 1<sup>st</sup>, with notices going out in April and May. It will be online but if you don't respond you will get a mailing and then a knock on the door. Luisa will try to get someone to address WUDAC on ways we can help. The Complete Count Committee has met 3-4 times to coordinate efforts. Montgomery County has a Census Coordinator. Aide Shawn Morris added that an undercount costs the County \$18000 per person over 10 years.

There will be a Racial Equity Training class. This mostly concerns MCCAB but Luisa can get WUDAC members enrolled also.

Luisa then shared details of a meeting with WMATA. The County is taking control of the traffic signal at Ring Road/Reedie. Security upgrades in the garage have started. WMATA claims that cleaning/repairs never happened because they relied on contractors. Now they have a daily cleaning schedule.

Details were shared on a property swap deal between the County, MHP and WMATA. The deal is on hold because CE Elrich wants further review whether this is best way to utilize funds for affordable housing. Chair Jelen wants WUDAC to follow up since this might be a good opportunity to improve the sidewalk in that area.

**d. Wheaton Revitalization:** Keith Compton, Project Manager, updated WUDAC on the progress of the Park and Planning building and Town Square development. The building is 89% complete and is on track for completion by May 31. They have framed out to the 13<sup>th</sup> floor. This week they will begin work on mechanical systems and will continue over the next three months. Second week of February furniture arrives. Work continues on the upgrade to the sewer at Veirs Mill and Reedie to handle the load of the new building. The work on Reedie will wrap up in late Feb/early March. The intersection of Reedie with Grandview will be finished in March. The concrete barriers on Triangle Lane will be removed next week and they will build out the sidewalk. Keith stated that they were interested in adding lights across Triangle Lane as they feel it will be a visual enhancement. They will repave Triangle Lane and restore business parking as operations move inside the building. When the trailers are removed 50 spaces will be available. The performance stage will be delivered by the 31<sup>st</sup>. They are looking at adding cool lighting to up-light and illuminate the area. MCDOT will be streetscaping both the East and West sides of Grandview to enhance the area around the P&P Building. Staff will start occupying building in early June with move-ins continuing through early September. Discussion with WUDAC members followed, with questions on the retail space in the new building, insurance needs, parking and use of open space behind building.

#### **Presentation: Matthew Rakola Photography**

Matthew Rakola, a local photographer, shared a slide show detailing his project to capture, through video, photos and oral recitations, the history of Wheaton. He shared background on himself and his work and asked WUDAC to help with ideas for this project. Stuart Amos, Westfield Manager and WUDAC member, sent word via email that he would like to support this project.

#### **Old Business & Action Item Updates:**

##### **a. Review FY20 goals**

Members received a handout of FY20 goals. Due to time, no review tonight

#### **New Business:**

##### **a. Should WUDAC host a FY20 forum**

Chair Jelen led a discussion on holding a community forum this year. Members seemed to support the idea of a forum after the building/town square opens but only if we identify relevant issues. Some questioned whether it would be effective and whether the CE sees it that way. A member remarked that letters have been sent in the past with no response and no face to face meetings; Luisa reminded of recent responses to WUDAC's expressed concerns/issues.

**Other:** Jim Epstein asked about the status of the Ad Hoc Art Committee. Luisa stated that it had to be reviewed by the County Executive.

**Adjourn:** 8:43pm