

Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee

Online Microsoft Teams Meeting

Meeting Minutes, Tuesday May 12, 2020

Members Present: Bill Jelen, Chair; Chelsea Johnson, Vice-Chair; William Moore, Jim Epstein, James Mensah, Leah Haygood, Omar Lazo, Crystal Myers, Mariela Garcia-Colberg, Stuart Amos

Staff Present: Luisa Montero-Diaz, Mid-County RSC Director, Shawn Morris, Aide, Sidney Cooper

Guests: Margaret Rifkin, Mark Doore, Rachael Wojnilower, Vicky Surles, Michael Paylor, MCDOT; Justin Stone, SBAP; Delegate Jared Solomon, Craig Wilson, John Hoobler

Call to Order: 6:34pm by Chair Jelen. Welcome to our virtual meeting.

Luisa welcomed everyone and gave instruction on virtual meetings and Microsoft Teams. Only last 4 appear on the screen

Review Minutes: The March meeting minutes were not available for review. They will be reviewed at our June meeting

Community Concerns: None. Luisa welcomed two new County staff members, Kevin Simpson and Jake Adler. They both then gave a short introduction of themselves and their new duties.

Reports:

a. Chamber of Commerce: William Moore, on behalf of the Chamber, noted that they held a virtual Board meeting that afternoon. They discussed the results of their recent online survey on how to add value to their members. The biggest takeaway was that members were too busy to take advantage of programs at the time listed. This has prompted the Chamber to plan to produce more online content that members can access anytime.

The Chamber is planning a June 24th Awards ceremony online to announce community award winners from the canceled April event. The event is being produced by Interact Story Theatre. The Chamber also plans to feature member profiles in the coming months using this format.

b. Westfield Wheaton: Stuart Amos, Westfield Manager, updated WUDAC on operations at the mall. Most businesses are still closed except for a few like Costco and Target. Most of his staff is laid off. They are working on a ReOpen strategy. Some of their properties in Europe are opening and that will provide valuable feedback. Looking for an update from Gov. Hogan on Friday. The predicted curbside pickup announcement will be a good way to ease back into business.

c. Wheaton Revitalization Project: Luisa Montero-Diaz gave a brief update to announce that the P&P Building was 98% complete and June 30th is the expected completion date. The ability to use the garage and also tenant move-ins are still up in the air.

d. Mid-County RSC/WUD: Luisa continued with a recap of Wheaton Urban District news. They need everyone's help in promoting the Census. Please put it in your announcements. The Taste of Wheaton

has been canceled; however they are planning a “virtual” Taste to replace it. The County’s Take-Out initiative is showing some success, with businesses reporting increased sales.

She explained that the Urban District team are developing protocols for our new Town Plaza. They are discussing with Silver Spring on Best Demonstrated Practices learned from their development. There are discussions with the Planning Dept. for a mural

Old Business and Action Item Updates

a. FY21 Budget: Luisa then turned to results from the Council’s budget work. It was submitted March 16. The Council froze everything in the FY21 budget. Any increases were not approved but there could be appropriations later. There is potential for lower spending than in FY2020. Wheaton got \$300,000 for Town Plaza for operations but no additional money for staff, an A&E manager or administrators. There is nothing at this point for WUDAC to push for.

b. SBAP Update: Justin Stone reviewed the status of SBAP. There is \$248,000 in processing. One disbursement is for \$120,000. PHEG grants have also been approved for several businesses. A total of \$414,000 in SBAP assistance so far this year

c. Georgia Ave Pedestrian Barrier: John Hoobler from MCDOT shared a slide show on possible designs for the pedestrian barrier to be installed on Georgia between Reddie and Fern Street. Members weighed in on their preferred choice. A company named Pinnacle 33 has been selected to supply the barrier. They did a similar project in Arlington. Should be ready in mid to late August. He also mentioned that work continues with a pedestrian HAWK light at Fern but there are some issues with a PEPCO vault and driveways in the area

d. Operational Improvements related to traffic mitigation Plan: Michael Paylor, MCDOT, led a discussion of traffic flow work related to the Wheaton Revitalization. No increases to budget for FY21, only continuity of service. Money and Co-Vid cost are big concerns. Level of effort programs are not defined due to Co-Vid. He then went on to various traffic improvement needs and their projected costs. Total cost for everything is \$2 million but it is in peril due to Co-Vid. WUDAC will have to collaborate with MCDOT to set priority levels for those improvements.

MD. Delegate Jared Solomon was online and stated his support but noted the General Assembly was out of session now but maybe there could be a special session

New Business:

a. Wheaton Marketing/Promotion Plans:

Sidney Cooper introduced Rachel Wojnilower from Clark Concepts and announced that they were teaming up for a marketing campaign for Wheaton. Sidney explained the process that led to Clark Concepts being chosen. They hope to build excitement for the new Town Plaza and the tenants in the new P&P building. The main theme will be reDiscover Wheaton and it will kick off with a Virtual Taste of Wheaton. They then presented a slide show of their plans and members weighed in.

Other:

a. Chamber Community Awards Nominees:

Luisa noted that the virtual Community Awards Program was fast approaching. We will need to vote on nominees at our June 9th meeting.

b. Misc:

Jim Epstein mentioned to Luisa about a meeting CE Elrich had with county-wide CABs on how they could be more active. Luisa hoped to do the same for WUDAC and noted it may be easier for him to attend since our meetings are now online

Adjourn: 8:20pm