

Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee (WUDAC)
Tuesday | September 10, 2024 | 7:00 pm-8:30 pm
Hybrid Meeting

In Attendance:

WUDAC: Jim Epstein, Tanya Baskin, Kit Wood, Riana Cole, Nina Koltnow, Philip Daley, Ali Oliver-Krueger, Andrea Hernandez, David Jarrett, Pedro Matamoros, Rob Fox

County Officials: WUD Operations Manager Crystal Ruiz; Community Projects Manager for Mid-County Regional Services, Talia Beaulieu-Hains

Guests: Kathia Chévez (Office of Natali Fani-González), Sophie Kotzker and Jessica McVary from Montgomery Planning

Public: Adrienne Moumin, Dan Obrzut

- I. 7:00 pm Call to Order - Jim Epstein, Chair
- II. 7:02 pm Review and Approve July Minutes - Approved
- III. 7:05 pm Community Concerns -
 - Wheaton Arts Parade is Sunday, September 29 from 10 - 5. [Info Here](#)
 - What is the status of the Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center? *It is a 2-part process, Montgomery Housing Partners is working on the housing aspect and County Dept. of General Services is building out the Arts and Cultural Center itself. Construction is expected to start in 2026-2028. A managing/ operations entity will have to be selected by then.*
 - Glenmont Forest Block Party Oct 5 10-4; Hispanic Heritage event Oct. 6 at Marion Fryer Plaza
 - Kens Fire Dept is sponsoring family movies - see their website for details.
- IV. 7:11 Elected representatives in attendance -
Kathia Chévez for Council Member Fani-González -
 - The Council is back from recess. Upcoming events to note:
 - 9-25 Public Safety Town Hall w/ MD state delegation - 6PM Wheaton Rec Center. [RSVP Here](#) »

- 10-10 Wheaton Urban District Community Conversation co-sponsored by WUDAC, 6PM at Park and Planning Headquarters on Reedy Dr. [RSVP Here](#). *A member of the public requests to make that meeting hybrid.*
- Council Member Fani-González was recognized for her public leadership by the Washington Area Bicyclist Association.
- Will WUDAC receive an agenda ahead of time for the Oct. 10 meeting? *Yes.*
- Jim: That meeting needs to start with education, not just opinions.

V. Presentations - 7:20 PM -

1. Wheaton Placemaking Initiative - Jessica McVary (Midcounty Planning Supervisor) and Sophie Kotzker (Midcounty Planner II) from Montgomery Planning .

This project is an opportunity to help Wheaton live up to all it can be. Presentation link can be found on this website.

- Wheaton Downtown study was completed in 2023 with near- mid- and long-term strategies. The Wheaton Triangle was the focus. Connectivity, public amenities, and art are priorities. This set of placemaking initiatives will be installed for 3 - 6 months in spring of 2025 (through fall events).

This is one small piece of all of the work going on to improve Wheaton. It will include:

- Pedestrian pathway through Core.
- Activated public space - for relaxing, eating, etc.
- Brochure with info re: getting around the Core.

The project has recently started with community feedback; expecting to evolve. Consultants have been activated.

Currently, the Core lacks a central focal point, connectivity, and gateways.

Community engagement events are planned for the next few months.

Questions/Comments:

Who was at the consultants meeting? Property owners, Jim, SHA. We want to hear from anyone who interacts with this space.

Will the Triangle parking lot be used for placemaking activities (not parking)? Yes, it is central, so we will probably try using it for outdoor seating, etc. There is a large parking lot right there under the P&P building.

The Streeterly has not moved forward in terms of pedestrian access/throughways. I hope this project will prioritize pedestrian access.

Crystal - this winter, the crossing/traffic signal on Georgia Georgia at Price should start construction. Hopeful that it should be finished in the spring/summer.

Why is the focal point the Triangle Parking Lot, not Marion Fryer Plaza? Is there a budget to include artists or other community participants? Partnering with artists is possible. Stay tuned. There is a budget; we are working with a consultant, which might get artists involved. We are happy to get additional input.

This is an opportunity to have a situation like Ellsworth in Silver Spring.

Reminder: Ellsworth is owned by private developer. We are dealing with government ownership and scattered private ownership.

But remember that the government DOES have the capacity to be creative, so ASK! For instance, Price Ave could be closed on weekends, etc.

We are working toward proof of concept by implementing placemaking ideas on a short term basis so that they can be experienced, evaluated, and potentially become long term. Consultant is Yard and Company out of Cincinnati, and are working with local groups, too.

The project description can be found at <https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/placemaking/wheaton-placemaking/>, where you will also find a questionnaire.

The presenters are happy to be contacted about the project:

Sophie Kotzker, Sophie.Kotzker@montgomeryplanning.org and

Jessica McVary, Jessica.McVary@montgomeryplanning.org.

VI. Reports and Updates

2. Wheaton & Kensington Chamber of Commerce - Ali

Personnel changes: The former administrator and president have retired. Laura-Leigh Palmer has stepped in as interim administrator. New president is Omar Lazo. Ali will be Vice Chair.

Working on Chamber of Commerce Community Guide: will be available at Arts Parade and around town, including at the Chamber office.

There will be a Hispanic Heritage Month joint Chamber event with the MC Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the Great Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce on October 6.

3. Committee Reports -

- *Economic Development: Ali, Kit, Pedro*
- *Public Safety (Youth Crisis): Kit, Dave, Nina*
- *Arts & Entertainment: Ali, Jim, Riana*
A&E Ad Hoc Board has worked over the past year to establish a long-term board to start a 501c3 to carry forth the work of bringing the A&E District to life.
- *Transportation and Pedestrian Safety: Nina, Rob*

Martin Lane meeting just concluding.

Master Plan of Highways and Transitways Technical Update hearing is this Thursday.

- *Outreach And Communications (Social Media Presence): Tanya, Riana, Pedro, Dave, Rob, Jim*

4. Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board (MCCAB) - Rob Fox

See: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/midcounty/boards/mccabindex.html#meeting>

5. Mid-County Regional Services Center/ Urban District Report -

Request: can we put topic or presenter for upcoming WUDAC meeting in the Mid-county Newsletter? Yes.

Upcoming Events:

Attainable Housing Initiative – Planning Dept

September 12th from 7-9PM: Wheaton Community Recreation Center(11701 Georgia Avenue, Wheaton, MD 20902) Sign-up here <https://mcgmd.wufoo.com/forms/z1x6zubk1qub83c/>

Small business meeting with CE Marc Elrich

September 16 12:30pm Mid County Meeting Room 2nd floor MNCPPC Bldg

FY26 Operating Budget Forum – Mid County

Monday September 16 7 – 8:30p Wheaton Rec Center

Public Safety Community Town Hall

Wednesday September 25 6 -8 p Wheaton Rec Center w/ Councilmember NFG and D18/D19 state delegations

Wheaton Arts Parade and Festival - Sunday September 27: 10 a – 5p

Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration - Sunday October 6: Marian Fryer Plaza

Wheaton Urban District Community Conversation - Thursday October 10 6 - 8 p Wheaton Rec Center - regarding how Wheaton Urban District is funded.

Presidential General Election Early Voting - Thursday October 24 – 31 7a – 8p Wheaton Rec Center

Hallowheaton Bar Hop 10/26, Hallowheaton 10/27

Trying to be innovative on how citizens can connect with county, in addition to 311. Working on a phone app.

Could we use some part of the inside of a ground-level window of the Parks and Planning building as a bulletin board to announce public events? It may be possible. We will ask, either in conjunction with placemaking or perhaps via a TV screen inside the building. *If we do that, let's be sure to track effectiveness in terms of participation numbers.*

There is a hotline that exists during the hours the Safe Team is working. It is for any emergency in the Wheaton area. We need to publicize the number.

Other Announcements:

- Early Voting will be at the Wheaton Rec Center Oct. 24 - 31 from 7am to 8pm. Election Day is November 5.
- If we continue to be concerned about the County making decisions for Wheaton, should Wheaton consider being a municipality? *What is their tax structure?* The effort to reorganize the WUD funding structure begs the question of what we want to be/do, and where that money will come from.
- We need to start thinking about our budget letter now. *Could we get a 5 minute presentation about that at our retreat?*

VII Adjourn 8:21 pm

NEXT WUDAC MEETING: Thursday, October 10, 6 - 8pm at Parks and Planning Headquarters on Reddie Dr. This meeting will be in conjunction with the Community Conversation about the Wheaton Urban District's future and funding sponsored by County Council Member Fani-González.

WUDAC will have an executive session Tuesday, October 8 from 7 to 8 PM.