

**Minutes LABQUEST Meeting of
Wednesday, January 10, 2024**

The next in-person LABQUEST meetings will be February 14 and March 13, 2024 at 12:30 in the trailer.

Government Meeting

GSA.

New management at GSA HQ toured the area to become acquainted with it. Sahour Edadi is retiring from GSA; he was very involved with the construction of the FDA campus.

FDA

Alan Zawatsky and Andrew Dempster reported they continue to work on which employees will work on site, at least part of each week. Some skills FDA needs are in short supply and one way of attracting them entails working from home. There are some 2800 to 3200 people on-site typically at least part of the week. Currently the number of people is down a bit since people must use or lose their leave.

An MCPS science fair will be held April 5-6 at the FDA under the large FDA atrium.

Montgomery County Government East Regional Office

Jewru Bandeh has been working within the executive branch to get the items needed by East County into the upcoming operating budget. The Executive will submit his proposed six-year Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to the Council on January 15.

The Sprouts Farmers Market will open in Burtonsville on January 19 with the ribbon cutting ceremony starting at 10:30.

Amenities Meeting

Viva White Oak

Jonathan Genn was at the meeting with Drew Gorman and Dori Farley with MCB. Nick Over of Potomac Development Group (part of the MCB team) also attended. Jonathan indicated that the attorneys had finished “dotting all i’s” and “crossing all t’s” and that Dave Bramble and John Gudelsky fully signed, sealed, and delivered the MCB-GLDC agreement just before Christmas.

Drew introduced Carlos Bonner as the new MCB member of the team as Senior Managing Director. He will be full-time in managing the day-by-day Viva White Oak effort. He started work on Monday January 8. Drew indicated that he will be focusing more on getting tenants. At a request from Carlos, Andrew Dempster will provide a tour of FDA and Cicero Salles will arrange a tour of east county.

Drew indicated that the team of consultants is on board. So far in January they have met with the County Executive, DOT and Planning Department. They plan on meeting with all the council members. For off-site improvements, they are currently focusing on the road design for Industrial Parkway and Tech Rd (including the intersections with US29). MCB indicated to DOT that they would build those off-site improvements, which would presumably mean that they would ask for Local Area Transportation Improvement Program (LATIP) credits. DOT and Planning Staff informed them that requirements had changed over the last few years, especially concerning complete street requirements and the designation of Viva as a large activity center in the Thrive Montgomery 2050 Plan. On the topic of BRT, the county is not sure what they want.

MCB has had multiple conversations with Montgomery College. One issue may be the possible need for ballfields. Apparently, the college has multiple sports teams but each sport is provided at only one campus. Drew indicated MCB may need to help the college to focus on those actions they need to take, relative to the property development.

Drew reported that they are also talking with state and federal members to let them know that the team will be asking for financial support with the infrastructure and that the list of those needs is now being developed. He indicated that the initial list will be shared with LABQUEST, which should happen later this month. Jewru Bandeh indicated multiple times how important it is for Cicero Salles and him to be involved in working with the county. Jewru and the LABQUEST team (Dan Wilhelm, Peter Myo Khin and Rob Richardson) also indicated they have a lot of expertise and have good relations with County officials and therefore the LABQUEST team also needs to be involved.

Science Report

Charles Warr referenced his 1-5-2024 science report which has more detail. One of the items he talked about was not having metal on a person when going through an MRI test, unless the material was designed to be safe in that testing environment. He indicated that pending FDA action on revising the definition of “healthy” will be controversial (to industry organizations) and that LABQUEST will likely need to submit testimony on it.

WOMC

Anthony Stahl reported that two development efforts are underway: the buildout of the 8th floor to add 30 beds and the addition of a second medical office building (MOB). The existing MOB is so close to the hospital that state rules limit services to one building or the other. That rule doesn't apply to MOB2 because it is far enough away. As a result, some of the surgical units will be moved from the hospital to MOB2.

The WOMC typically operates at 102% of capacity and some 70% of the ambulances are diverted to other hospitals. Anthony does not like being in either situation. By federal law, they do not turn away anyone who is at the hospital. WOMC and Holy Cross Hospital briefed state delegates and senators earlier this month about the status of hospital service in the area.

In May 2023, the Maryland state legislature made a formal request to the Maryland Hospital Association (MHA) to assemble a workgroup dedicated to addressing the issue of prolonged wait times in emergency departments in the state. This request was prompted by the

consideration of Senate Bill 387 (HB274), Establishing the Task Force on Reducing Emergency Department Wait Times. Although the bills did not pass, both House and Senate Committees emphasized the importance of addressing this matter urgently. The MHA, in collaboration with the Health Services Cost Review Commission (HSCRC), has taken the lead in spearheading efforts to identify potential solutions for improving the efficiency of emergency department services. MHA was requested to provide a report to the legislature that contained its recommended actions. Anthony is not aware if that report has been delivered.

Anthony indicated their employee survey showed that their staff is highly engaged, which is a very good rating. WOMC has a doctor wellness committee to address doctor burnout and suicides (both of which are national problems).

WOMC welcomes housing that Viva will provide next door since they have 500 nurses, many of whom could use close-by, affordable housing rather than long-distance drives to work.

Anthony indicated that much of their management staff comes from promoting non-management staff but that doesn't mean that they have acquired management skills. To address that skill deficiency, WOMC is kicking off the 2024-2025 Leadership Institute with six classes, and a reflection session following each class. The classes are scheduled from February 28, 2024 through May 22, 2025.

Hillandale Gateway

Shane Pollin provided an overview of the Hillandale project history. See the December minutes for a summary of the project.

Area Development

LABQUEST member Pat Myers, who is president of the neighboring citizens association in PG County, provided updates about additions to the Calverton Shopping Center:

- A Panera Bread Restaurant with a drive-thru will be built at the Powder Mill Rd entrance
- The "GroceryOutlet" will replace the old Giant
- The "Tacos A LA Madre" restaurant will replace Sierras Grill

Submitted by Dan Wilhelm