

Greater Colesville Citizens Association
Minutes for
March 8, 2022

Attendees: Dan Wilhelm, Marguerite Raaen, Noel Gregos, Bob Peters, Pat Corey, Ed Weiler, Ben Eng, Dr. Idong Gibson, Karlyn Walker, Evelyn and Les Hamilton, Marge Currie, Peter Myo-Khin, Barbara Buchanan, Heather Philips, Jay Hugler, Eileen Finnigan, Karlyn Walker

Approval of Minutes: February minutes approved

Approval of Treasurer's Report: Accepted. Dan noted the balance of \$14,086 less \$3,500 reserves and that the May Clarion would run about \$4,200 for printing and mailing. He also noted that Dave is trying to get money's owed from previous ads.

Dan noted that Pat Corey will form the nominating committee and have a slot in the next Clarion, which will be late in April. He also asked for input on a main topic. Peter brought up the dates for the Candidate forums that was to be scheduled in conjunction with the League of Women's Voters, Sherwood PTA, East County Cluster, etc. They were June 8 for County Executive, the week of June 6 for the at Council At-Large Seats and the week of May 23rd for the District 5 Council Seat. He emphasized that this was a non-partisan forum and that the preferred format was in person at the East County or White Oak Rec Centers. However, depending on the COVID situation the forum may have to be a zoom session.

Jay was concerned that with the Clarion not being mailed to households that the community will not be informed of what is happening in the community. He was ensured that the Clarion would still be distributed by email.

Marguerite said that the Communications committee is involved in trying to increase email contacts to hopefully improve the number of recipients. She is trying to get emails from an area 3 distribution list and another list from the Springbrook High School area. Noel is also trying to get his local neighborhood group.

Marguerite also said she was able to get access and control of our Facebook page and approved ten new members. She said that she and Heather are involved in approving the content of what is published and will try to have relevant community oriented content. No personal or business ads will be allowed and no one can publish anything or make comments unless approved.

Pat and Rob Orifici had a zoom session with Dave Michaels to address turning over the Website. Dave went over the tasks he does and Rob was very familiar with the process. A meeting will be set up to discuss what needs to be addressed on the Website. Dan wants to set the policy section and Heather wants to be involved in content approval and learn about website management.

Ongoing Business: Dan sent out the Labquest Life Science Activity Center Development Proposal. They will be meeting with Park and Planning and DOT concerning the report.

Safety Report: Ed noted that Police Officer Haggerty was killed in an off-duty traffic accident and that the cause of death has not been released yet. New procedures and laws have been passed for evictions with three police officers needing to be involved and that all the belongings of the evicted needed to be boxed and placed in storage. Lt Kim in the 3rd district reported a significant number of traffic stops for speeding. It was also reported that the shopping center in Burtonsville has police monitoring to control it being used as an excess hang-out location by youth.

Jewru Bandeh and Cicero Salles arrived about 8PM and were introduced. Jewru provided the background of Mr. Salles as the new White Oak Planning Manager who will be coordinating with the Eastern County Regional Office for all East County development including the New Hampshire and US 29 corridors.

Mr. Salles has over 35 years of public/private partnership experience locally and internationally and comes from PG County after ushering in the National Harbor and the Beech Tree Community and golf project, as well as the Brazilian highway concession program which now has twenty years of successful public private partnership.

Jewru said that they had spent several days meeting with individuals and most recently this afternoon with Jonathon Genn of Percontee. They also met with the Hillandale Citizens Association and toured Riderwood with Dan. They intend to meet with other East County Citizen Board and get to know the issues and partner with these groups to tackle and resolve transportation, housing, development and other items that need to be addressed. Mr. Salles believes the partnership with the community and developers provides the best vision for success.

The first question addressed the lack of a tax base which has caused Montgomery County to fall behind the other local counties especially Fairfax and PG Counties. Both Dan and Jewru agreed that until the last couple of years that this was ignored and that the Eastern part of the county was ignored for a couple of decades, but that it is changing. Jewru pointed out that Mr. Salles was appointed to help resolve this and that the Eastern County has more potential than any other area locally and that the focus would not just be on White Oak but also linking transportation, schools, building projects and other community improvements. The key to making this happen is the enterprise zones and other incentives.

Shoppe Rite, Sears and other businesses closings are examples discussed where development coordination and monitoring is needed. In all, bringing companies to augment Viva White Oak and the Hillandale Gateway projects is just part of the solution.

Peter pointed out that MEDC board preference is for White Flint. He is going to write a letter indicating that White Oak should be considered pointing out the biases that need to be dealt with and that since the Eastern County having been ignored needs to be given equal focus. . He also pointed out that Maplewood started as a residential project and then added the business park

The challenge of transportation was addressed by sighting the BRT and other plans being studied to resolve it.

Jewru addressed place making and place keeping as activities to help address issues. Adding sports activities, economic development, and health clinics, with increased funding to help with food and housing assistance all help to make the area better.

There are 10 BRT corridors and the New Hampshire, US 29 and Randolph are key for the East County, especially for the FDA facilities.

Jewru closed by wanting ideas for making New Hampshire the Highway to heaven pointing out how many Muslims are located here in the East County.

Submitted by Pat Corey