

Greater Colesville Citizens Association
Minutes for
April 12, 2022

Attendees: Dan Wilhelm, Marguerite Raaen, Bob Peters, Pat Corey, Ed Weiler, Ben Eng, Dr. Idong Gibson, Marge Currie, Peter Myo-Khin, Barbara Buchanan, Heather Phelps, Bill Backoff, Ray Rye

Approval of Minutes: several corrections were made and the March minutes were accepted.

Approval of Treasurer's Report: Accepted. Dan noted that there was not a lot of activity. There was a fifty dollar charge against a returned check. He also noted that Dave is trying to get money's owed from four advertisers for previous ads and that April 15 was the deadline for submitting final ad for the last printed Clarion.

Dan asked about the Communication Committee zoom meeting that took place. Marguerite let him know that the meeting resulted in a telephone conversation because the zoom didn't work out. The website was turned over and both Pat and Rob had the passwords and logon information for access. We noted that there was a need for an off line discussion to set up the titles of tabs for content. It was also pointed out that we needed to know what our service level was and the storage amount to determine the content and how much can be posted. Pat and Rob will set up the initial tabs, but policy will still need to be defined for putting up and taking down content. This policy will also determine short and long term cycles on issues that will tracked by GCCA, as well as how to archive issues in some sort of repository that can also be accessed. It was also noted that Heather would like to be trained in addressing both content and access to and on the Website.

Marguerite discussed the Facebook articles and that the East County Newsletter and other item that were cut and pasted into Word which changed the HTML and that doing it that way created a better version to view. She and Dan agreed that Facebook would have a much larger audience and would be better for viewing general community issues.

Safety Report: Ed noted that Sharif Hibayat is retiring and that he has for 17 years successfully worked with him on community issues. He pointed out a number of awards he had received over the years and how much he will be missed. He also learned that 60% of Montgomery Police Officers are eligible for early retirement and that we continue losing them to Howard and PG Counties. He became aware of the fact that a number of police activities are not listed on their website and in a discussion with the two police officers that they were unable to attend Officer Haggerty's funeral because the 3rd District is currently so understaffed. Other major events were the arrest for fraud and impersonation of a person making several bank withdrawals, charges of reckless driving and criminal negligence from speeding in the death of an elderly person, an attempted purse snatching at Chick fil a, and a second degree murder charge against a dentist for providing drugs in an overdose death.

Local Issues: Not much new on Thrive except that the Council has hired a consultant to review racial impacts and look at minority issues while addressing where we will be in 2050 with regard to land use, transportation, employment, housing, etc. with the goal of finishing off the study before the end of

summer. Then a discussion of where the \$6Billion budget would be spent including schools, immigration, other historic problems.

The BRT/US29 study is still ongoing. The DOT asked for letters of support to get Federal funding for vehicles and for the installation of a training simulator in Howard County and we would like to see BRT extended into Howard County. This also has to do with Infrastructure plans and us ensuring East County gets its fair share.

A question was asked about \$5 million being available for the Burtonsville Shopping Center and the East County Advisory Board decided that it needs to have a contract signed for a grocery store replacing the closed Giant. The entire plan would also include a multi- family housing project, transit center and refurbished the shopping areas. It would entail a complete plan to rebuild and refurbish the entire area. This has been going on for a decade. A question was asked about the Sears White Oak and determined that it can't be addressed because Sears still controls the lease.

New Hampshire Ave BRT Citizens Advisory Committee met about the FDA and White Oak Shopping Center having a direct connection. Peter, Dan, and Rob Richardson of Labquest met with County DOT about connection between FDA Research Center and the White Oak Transit Center. This was followed by a discussion of the three routes into the FDA Center and the county appropriation of \$30 Million to help cover \$80 million for those three roads. Jonathon will start with building roads when he starts getting tenants. Most of the problem to getting all of this started has been county related. There are billions of dollars that are at issue with the building of roads, and associated infrastructure with 10 years before ROI. Then the Stewart Lane to Cherry Hill Road extension was discussed, which needs to redo the old Columbia Pike Bridge that is being evaluated and hopefully will be abandoned while the trail going to Maydale will approved. Parks Dept. DOT, WSSC and Jonathon all need to approve it before all the roads, bridges, and trails get started and getting the tenants at Viva White Oak is the first step. There is no news on White Oak Medical Center except they may need to add more parking, as well as adding Ride-On services possibly to Greenbelt. The White Oak Town Center has been approved and now needs to start getting permits. White Oak Apartments is also planned and needs permits. An unneeded road and sewer system may still be in the plan. The Fairland community still is in talking stages.

WSSC has a number of water and sewer line projects planned and the schedules are changing because of \$130 million budget cuts even with systems being 50 to 100 years old. The FDA and GSA are looking at returning some workers to the campus and currently working out details. Rezoning at East Randolph and Old Columbia building 114 town houses with 120 other senior housing units, as well as a small grocery store is in the early stages of all the approvals needed. The Adventist Church owns all of the land and brought in a developer to utilize it. We understand that there may be some conflict within the church about selling it. There will be a traffic study and evaluation and it was pointed out that this is a preliminary plan and some or all of it could be kicked back. A suggestion was made to give testimony opposing the plan because of traffic issues while it was looked at by others as not that much of a problem and should help with housing shortages and revenue for the county. A short discussion then took place about local grocery stores openings and closings which says that those companies may see growth in this area.

Finally, Peter said that the East County Citizens Coalition will be having forums on June 6th for County Executive, on June 8th for the at large seat and May 8th for District 5 Council member in person if possible or by zoom.

Meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by Pat Corey