

LABQUEST Minutes for Wednesday, June 11, 2025

Announcement: The next in-person LABQUEST meeting will be Wednesday, July 9, 2025 at 12:30, in the GSA Trailer.

Betsy Bretz thanked everyone for coming and asked everyone to introduce themselves. Dan Wilhelm facilitated the remainder of the meeting since Rob Richardson was on vacation.

Viva White Oak (VWO)

Carlos Bonner reported that the Planning Board approved the Sketch Plan, Preliminary Plan Amendment and Forest Conservation Plan on June 29. The first two plans were for the roads and related infrastructure while the Forest Conservation Plan was for the former WSSC site. The Forest Conservation Plan related to the Percontee site will be submitted upon the reclamation completion. The next step is the certification of the plans, followed by permits and the start of construction late this year.

Theresa Stegman, MCB, reported that the Tax Increment Finance (TIF) hearing before the council on June 10 went well with all 13 speakers supporting it. However, two speakers indicated that the transportation infrastructure needs to be provided concurrent with the VWO development. The Council agenda includes a tentative approval of the Development and TIF Districts on June 15. Once they are approved, the council can start to focus on the financial aspects.

At the TIF hearing, Council President Stewart indicated that they were going to ask the Planning Board for an Adequate Public Facilities (APF) evaluation. At the LABQUEST meeting, Dan Wilhelm and Jonathan Genn both commented on the APF evaluation. Dan noted that a decade ago the council created the Local Area Transportation Improvement Program (LATIP) for the White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan area, which replaced the process used everywhere else in the county. Elsewhere, the Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) is required, but under the LATIP it is not required. Rather, each developer pays a fee and can go ahead and build or can build one or more of the council's identified 25 projects and receive a credit against the fee. In addition, Jonathan indicated that there was no staging requirement for VWO, a must for development to be viable.

The thinking behind the council request to the Planning Board concerning APF is not known. When the LATIP was created a decade ago, the council assigned needed improvements into three categories:

- Developer funded (within the project)
- LATIP funded (within the master plan area and not used primarily by development outside the area) and
- CIP funded (outside the master plan area or projects that benefit the wider community)

All of the BRT projects and some of the road improvements were assigned to the CIP category. Some of the allocations split projects between LATIP and CIP. Old Columbia Pike is the prime example but not the only one. The road upgrade with sidewalks and bikeways are in the CIP, while the bridge replacement and intersections at Tech Rd and Industrial Parkway are in the LATIP. Is the council considering adjusting this construct or addressing funding for some the LATIP and/or CIP projects? Dan indicated we should suggest to the Planning Board and council

that those projects we recommend be funded sooner rather than later, as two speakers requested at the TIF hearing.

Dan Wilhelm indicated that the Council T&E Committee will be considering the proposed improvements to Old Columbia Pike on June 23. The Planning Board recommended DOT study alternative 3, two lanes and rebuilding the bridge over the Paint Branch plus bikeways and sidewalks. Dan sent a memo to the Committee pointing out that the DOT design for the intersections at Tech Rd and Industrial Pkwy did not provide capacity needed by VWO and did not address longstanding safety issues. He pointed out that MCB has indicated that they plan to design and build improvements to those intersections under the LATIP program and thus any decision on that part of the proposal should wait for MCB's undertaking. Partway through the meeting, Carlos had to get on a call with State Highway Admin (SHA) to kick off discussions on these intersections.

White Oak Medical Center (WOMC)

Nichole Reily represented the WOMC at the meeting and reported the following:

- In April the hospital received an award from the state for efforts by the nurses to reduce patient falls. It is named the Minoque Circle of Honor Award for Patient Safety and was given by the Maryland Patient Safety Center.
- The Ambulatory Surgery Center is still in the planning stages. As previously reported, it will be a separate building with its own parking on the other side of the property from the hospital proper - along Plum Orchard Rd (toward Broadburch Rd.)
- There will a ribbon cutting event on June 17, from 2:30-4:00, for the new 8th floor beds. See the attached flier.
- The WOMC staff has been volunteering at the Shepherds Table, where they serve breakfast and lunch. This is outside the WOMC.
- They have started to plan for the Community Wellness Fair, which will be in the fall.
- Also in the planning stages is a mission trip to the Amazon in 2026.

Dan Wilhelm reported that he, along with Rob Richardson and Peter Myo Khin, are working with Anthony Stahl and Katie Echert (the Adventist Healthcare expert on this subject) on two state issues: Total Cost Of Care (TOCC), where the state controls the budget for each hospital; and the lack of authority to add more beds, even if the budget allows. We have contacted state delegates from Montgomery legislative Districts 14 and 20 to set up discussions on these two issues. We will also likely ask Delegate Pena-Meinyk from District 21 in PG County to attend, since a large number of hospital patients are from her district and she chairs the Health and Government Operations Committee, which would address these issues. See the April minutes, where the TOCC was the major topic of the meeting.

Science Report

Charles reviewed several items from his May 13 science report. Those items are specifically identified in that report and everyone is encouraged to review it. Charles also reported that the company called Rocket Lab has had multiple successful launches and thus they will be competing with SpaceX.

FDA

Andrew Demster, FDA, reported that 6000 to 7000 people are now back working on campus, which is close to the number from before the pandemic. Immediately after the order for everyone to work on-site, the number was about 10,000, but that many people presented problems related to parking and work space. FDA now has 240 van pools, which is higher than the 180 van pools they had before the pandemic. FDA is still considering relocating people from leased sites to White Oak, but are also waiting to see if new directions are received that will affect the number working on site.

Andrew reported 75 people participated in the Bike to Work Day, a record. The 5K run event in the fall will likely happen once again.

Other

Jonathan Genn reported that the first class graduated from the Martha Gudelsky Child Development Center in downtown Silver Spring. The class was limited to about 100 children because of cuts in state and federal aid. Some 75% of the students are on the Free and Reduced Meal (FARM) program. They could accommodate 120 students.

Dan Wilhelm passed along the following information:

- Montgomery College will give a presentation to the East County Citizens Advisory Committee tonight about their effort to build a new campus in east county.
- County DOT is undertaking a 35% design for the US29 BRT Phase 2 to operate in a median dedicated lane, rather than the current mixed-traffic mode. At the last public meeting, DOT collected opinions about how the public values planned bikeways and enhanced sidewalks, since it is not possible to build everything and in some cases it is too expensive. DOT considers bike/sidewalk changes as a different construction project from the road transitway.
- County DOT has developed alternatives for dedicated BRT lanes in sections of New Hampshire Avenue inside the beltway.
- County DOT is designing a bikeway along Cherry Hill Rd from Old Columbia Pike to FDA Blvd (just before the county line). MCB has committed to building the segment from FDA Blvd to Gracefield Road, in front of the VWO property.

Submitted by Dan Wilhelm

You are Cordially Invited to the

Ribbon Cutting & Official Opening

of our New, State-of-the-Art 30-Bed Unit

Join us in celebrating this important milestone as we expand our commitment to delivering compassionate, high-quality care to our patients and community.

Tuesday, June 17, 2025
2:30 – 4 p.m.

Adventist HealthCare
White Oak Medical Center
11890 Healing Way | Silver Spring, MD 20904



 **Adventist HealthCare**
White Oak Medical Center

The ribbon cutting will be followed by light refreshments and a tour of the unit.