

LABQUEST Minutes for Wednesday, August 13, 2025

Announcement: The next in-person LABQUEST meeting will be Wednesday, September 10, 2025 at 12:30, in the GSA Trailer.

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

Viva White Oak (VWO)

Carlos Bonner reported the following:

- MCB is working with Department of Permitting Services (DPS) to get permits for on on-site work that the Planning Board had authorized: three master planned roads and related infrastructure.
- MCB is working with State Highway Administration (SHA) concerning changes on US29 related to intersection improvements at Tech Rd and Industrial Pkwy. The major changes would be to add another southbound left-turn lane.
- MCB is working with GSA to get approvals needed to modify FDA Blvd.
- MCB has had discussions with the Planning Staff concerning their effort to identify adequate public facilities ordinance (APFO) needs. The Council had asked the Planning Board for this investigation. This is part of the council effort associated with the MCB request for Tax Increment Financing (TIF).
- MCB will make a presentation to the ECCAB on September 3 at 7:00PM. The bulk of the presentation will be on the TIF.

Dan Wilhelm reported on the following:

- As reported last month, Dan had prepared a document that identified the transportation infrastructure he recommended, largely outside the VWO boundaries That document summarized the regulatory framework that was put in place in the 2016/2017 timeframe known as the Local Area Transportation Improvement Program (LATIP), which is unique within the county. The improvements were based upon the LATIP and Master Plan designs but modified where needed, especially related to transit (i.e., BRT). The paper was sent to the Planning Department as Dan's recommendations concerning its APFO effort. Some of the improvements could be funded via the TIF and others via the County CIP. Dan understands that the Planning Board will consider the APFO issue on September 25.
- Dan reported on a Navy Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) meeting held the evening of August 12. The RAB was put in place after the former NSWC base was closed under BRAC in 1997. In the early years the Navy identified 126 sites on the facility that needed restoration. Initially they removed all the contaminated soil and started the process of treating ground water contamination. Currently there are six sites that have been treated but are still being monitored since the contamination level has not fallen to the acceptable threshold. Five of the sites are along the boundary with VWO and site 13 is actually on VWO, adjacent to the stream and bridge.

The RAB meets every two years. Dan had the minutes for April 19, 2023 RAB meeting, the last one. Carlos borrowed those minutes so he could copy them. Dan said that minutes from the August 12 meeting should be available in about two weeks and he would share them when received. Carlos indicated MCB has been attempting to contact the RAB but without success. After the meeting, Dan provided email information to both Carlos and RAB Chair. Dan wanted to

ensure that MCB was aware of this effort and that in their construction efforts it will be necessary for them to avoid the test wells.

In addition, the RAB has identified the presence of PFAS at 12 locations, which they are classifying as areas of interest. They will be investigating those areas to determine whether any action needs to be taken. One of those areas is near the stream and adjacent to VWO property.

Medical Center (WOMC)

Nichole Reilly reported the following:

- See the flyer below for the WOMC Triumph Trek and Wellness Fair on September 21. The fair will feature both for-profit and nonprofit community partners. Free screenings will be available, including hearing, vision, glucose, and lipid panels. They hope to see everyone there!
- WOMC will be participating in the Burtonsville Day Celebration on September 20.
- LABQUEST Flu Shots: Betsy indicated that we are interested in getting flu shots at our next meeting. That assumes WOMC has received them by then. Nichole will contact Janet Lutz, who will let Dan know when they have received the shipment. At that time, he will send out an email to the group so that those interested in receiving the vaccination can let Janet know.

Dan Wilhelm reported that an email had been sent to our D14, D20 and D21 representatives explaining the situation with hospitals across the state, especially at WOMC. Delegate Joseline Pena-Melynk responded (D21 in PG County). She is Chair of the Health and Government Operations Committee. The long response appeared to have been written by the Maryland Health Cost Review Commission (MHCRC). Among other things, it indicated hospitals in the state are financially sound. We then sent a follow-up email saying, among other things, that hospitals may be financially sound on the average, but some 40% are underwater. We asked for MHCRC to provide the financial margin for each hospital in the state. The cover letter also asked that they meet with us, which is being targeted for September 18 or 19.

The two major issues are

- Some 40% of the hospitals across the state are under water financially. (That number came from a federal study that referenced a survey of Maryland hospitals.) More than likely those in Baltimore are doing fine. WOMC is operating with less than a 1% margin, which is not healthy. MHCRC controls the budget of each hospital, including whether funds are available for facility modernization or expansion.
- The long ER wait times are up to 24 hours due to the shortage of beds, at least for two hospitals. (Staffing is the other possible reason.) Maryland has by far the longest wait times of any state. WOMC has operated at over 100% of capacity since they opened in 2019. They need 70 more beds to meet current demand and will need even more to support VWO when it opens in some four or five years. WOMC needs to start taking action now to support that expanded need but the state must first take action to allow that. We asked in the letter for the occupancy for each hospital to verify that the lack of beds is a common problem across the state.

While we have collected insight from searching the web, we verify that our understanding of this very complex state regulatory system matches Adventist HealthCare experience by working with Katie Eckert and Karmen Brown of their organization. Jewru Bandeh requested copies of the above communications, which was provided after the meeting.

Join us for the Triumph Trek and Health Fair



Move your way to wellness
as we build community, make friends,
test our limits, share successes and
have fun!

When: Sunday, September 21, 2025

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

Time: 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.



Food, Fun and Health for the Whole Family!

Join us for the Triumph Trek and Health Fair at White Oak Medical Center. This event honors individuals who have overcome serious injury or illness—and the loved ones and caregivers who support them.

Activities Include:

- Walk celebratory laps on a beautiful lakeside path
- Participate in free health screenings
- Fun children's activities like a bounce house and face-painting
- Enjoy delicious food from diverse food trucks
- Connect with Adventist HealthCare's generous corporate partners

Don't miss this family-friendly and uplifting day of community, wellness and celebration!

Register Today!

Registration is free! Register early to be guaranteed a t-shirt. All who register have the opportunity to help us raise awareness and funds, which benefit those served by Adventist HealthCare Rehabilitation and Adventist HealthCare Home Care Services.



AdventistHealthCare.com/TriumphTrek



Science Report

Charles Warr indicated he had purchased an AirPods Pro 2 that he can use both as a hearing aid and for talking on the phone. After programming it for his hearing situation, he can hear conversations across the room much better.

Charles highlighted the following items from his science report:

- The first non-hormonal birth control pill for men has completed Phase 1 testing and it is more effective than various types of birth control used by women.
- Our bodies make 1-2 quarts of mucous each day, which acts as a biofilter. Your doctor should be consulted if excess mucous is produced that is yellowish or greenish.
- Researchers found microplastics in human follicular fluid (liquid that surrounds an egg in an ovarian follicle).
- A cardiologist recommends replacing six kitchen tools to avoid plastic microparticles and the toxic fumes that can be created by scratched/heated PFOA and PTFE coatings.
- A Tufts University cardiologist recommends avocados for its fiber and antioxidants.
- The average half-life of caffeine in the blood is about 5 hours, so caffeine should not be taken after noon to avoid disturbing sleep.
- Building new wind farms is now discouraged in the US but still encouraged elsewhere in the world. At some point, the situation in the US will change.
- Which is better: sourdough bread or whole wheat bread? Whole wheat is best for fiber while sourdough is best for being digestible.
- Rain gardens can help reduce flooding from intense rainstorms which have become more common.
- A radioactive wasp nest was discovered at the Savannah River Nuclear Waste Storage Facility in Aiken SC. The wasps were bagged and disposed of as radiological waste.
- A military drone with 17,000 solar cells can stay airborne for 3 months. It has a 236-foot wingspan, wider than a Boeing 747.
- LA expects to use 100% renewable energy by 2035.

Montgomery County

Jewru Bandeh reported the following for the East County Government Center:

- The County's Executive's community conversations for the FY27 operating budget will begin in September, with two scheduled in East County.
- He will monitor the development of the MCDOT's component of their budget related to East County.
- The \$2M in state funding which had been appropriated to redevelop the Sears building has been redirected for use in the general White Oak area. This was done to avoid losing the funds.
- Montgomery County officials are anticipating an increase in homeless people coming to the county from Washington, D.C., after President Donald Trump placed the city's police under federal control and is removing sites used by the homeless.
- Montgomery College was ranked Maryland's No. 1 community college in a WalletHub study released Tuesday, that identified the best community colleges for 2025 in the U.S.
- Montgomery County opened the Federal Workforce Career Center (FWCC) in Wheaton. This is part of WorkSource Montgomery. There are some 70K federal employees and another 50K federal contractor employees living in the county.

Submitted by Dan Wilhelm