

## **Minutes LABQUEST Meeting of Wednesday, August 14, 2024**

**Announcement: The next in-person LABQUEST meeting will be Wednesday, September 11, 2024 at 12:30 in the trailer.**

The LABQUEST meeting was held in-person on Wednesday, August 14, 2024 beginning at 12:30 p.m. Chairperson Betsy Bretz presided. Everyone introduced themselves.

### **Amenities**

#### **Viva White Oak.**

Carlos Bonner reported the following relative to Viva White Oak:

- The Sketch Plan and Preliminary Plan for the roadways has been submitted to the planning staff. The staff has not yet accepted the plans, largely because of staff being on vacation, but he expects it will be accepted next week.
- MCB continues to work with several possible anchor tenants and those discussions continue to move in a positive direction.
- Their next public meeting is October 24 with Hillandale Citizens Assn.
- MCB is working with GSA concerning the alignment of FDA Blvd at the planned circle near the entrance to the FRC property.

#### **White Oak Medical Center (WOMC).**

Nichole Reilly reported the following:

- They continue to work toward a December 2024 target to complete the construction and outfitting the 30 additional beds on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor.
- Covid is on the rise again. They currently have 10 covid patients with this disease.
- On October 10 they will be holding a “Got Talent” show, which will be held at Riderwood.
- The Maryland Health Care Review Commission will visit them next week to discuss emergency department wait time progress.
- John Sackett has begun as the replacement for Terry Ford, president of Adventist Health Care. John joined Adventist HealthCare in 2013 as President of Shady Grove Medical Center and was named Chief Operating Officer in 2014. After serving six years in these concurrent roles, John focused exclusively on his position as COO. His extensive experience and leadership within the organization have prepared him well for his new role as President and CEO. Betsy invited him (via Nichole) to attend a future LABQUEST meeting
- On July 23<sup>rd</sup>, WOMC received the Pathway to Excellence® designation from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC)! Fewer than 220 organizations worldwide have this designation, placing WOMC among the elite! This designation recognizes healthcare organizations for demonstrating a commitment to fostering a positive practice environment that empowers and engages team members through a

culture aligning with six key standards: shared decision-making, leadership, safety, quality, well-being, and professional development.

## **Science Report.**

Charles Warr reported on the following:

- FDA and USDA have joined forces to address the spread of Avian Flu. USDA works with the farmers, and FDA undertakes the testing. Some 500 herds have tested positive for the flu. They also tested milk and confirmed that pasteurization always inactivates it. Thus, people should not drink unpasteurized milk. (8/9 science report)
- A study has shown that getting the shingles vaccination delays the onset of dementia. The reason for this delay is not known but this is an area to study. (8/9 science report)
- FDA approved a blood test for colorectal cancer which will provide an early warning sign. It will not replace colonoscopies. (8/9 science report)
- A first-ever artificial heart has been developed and implanted in a patient. With further improvements, this will begin to address the backlog of patients needing a transplant. (8/9 science report)
- Howard University has received a \$100M federal grant for its medical school. (8/9 science report)
- A weight loss drug from Eli Lilly has been found to reduce heart failure. The reason for this reduction is not known but indicates that further study is needed to understand this result. (8/9 science report)

## **Misc.**

Betsy raised the following:

- She indicated that police have increased their patrols on FDA Blvd and as a result the number of auto races on that road has diminished.
- She asked about plans for the Transit Union property in Hillandale. The group indicated that a developer from South Carolina is developing plans and meeting with the residents in Hillandale. Residents are concerned about the traffic volume that would use the intersection at Powder Mill Rd and New Hampshire Ave, especially considering the ongoing Hillandale Gateway development construction. The residents are also concerned with traffic from the residential section on the north side of the drainage “stream.” Those houses would use Royal Rd and Xaveria Dr., which feeds into Royal Rd (therefore it has a single choke point.)

## **Government**

### **FDA.**

Andrew Dempster reported the following:

- No change in arrivals, which is not unexpected, considering many people are on vacation.
- FDA vacated two buildings in Calverton and one in downtown Silver Spring after relocating staff to the main campus. They are working to vacate the NRC building in Bethesda (FDA used three floors of that building). When complete, FDA will save approximately \$12M annually. GSA will need to decide what action to take with the vacant facilities, such as housing other government agencies, or letting the leases expire.

## **Montgomery College.**

Aly Kedron thanked Dan Wilhelm for giving her a tour of the area and sharing with her several important documents, including the White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan, Thrive Montgomery 2025, and a vision document that LABQUEST had prepared several years ago. She continues to meet with people and attend meetings to understand the needs and desires of the community. She asked to be invited to meetings that could help her in this regard.

## **Montgomery County**

Jewru Bandeh, Regional Director, reported that:

- The County Executive will be holding a forum on Sept 9 at the White Oak Recreation Center to collect recommendations from the public for the next Operating Budget.
- The Council is holding a listening forum in east county on September 17 concerning the proposal from the Planning Board on Attainable Housing.
- Burtonsville Day is September 21.

Submitted by Dan Wilhelm