

## **Minutes LABQUEST Meeting of Wednesday, September 11, 2024**

**Announcement: The next in-person LABQUEST meeting will be Wednesday, October 9, 2024 at 12:30 in the trailer.**

The LABQUEST meeting was held in-person on Wednesday, September 11, 2024 beginning at 12:30 p.m. Chairperson Betsy Bretz presided. Everyone introduced themselves. Betsy announced that Andrew Dempster was unable to attend because he was sick. The group wished him a speedy recovery.

### **Amenities**

#### **Viva White Oak (VWO)**

Carlos Bonner reported that the sketch plan for the roadways had been submitted to the planning staff and was accepted for processing yesterday (Sept 10). The plan number is 320240080 and review period ends on December 17, 2024.

Drew Gorman indicated that Ashlie Bagwell has been hired to help communicate with public officials. She will be joining us at the LABQUEST meetings, starting next month. Drew provided an overview of ongoing activities and current planning:

- The mass grading of the entire 280-acres will be the initial component of the horizontal construction. The underground utilities will be installed during this phase of construction. Those utilities include high-speed communications, stormwater management, and new/expanded WSSC sewer and water mains. The WSSC projects include those that were added to the WSSC Capital Improvements Program over a year ago. The WSSC sewer main will cross the FRC and Army Adelphi sites almost to Powder Mill Rd (in PG County) as discussed at prior meetings. WSSC plans to install a new water main in Cherry Hill Rd/Gracefield Rd starting next year. Also, as pointed out at prior meetings, the WSSC expansions will benefit other developments in the area, including the WOMC and Montgomery College.
- The road construction is planned to be undertaken in two phases.
  - The first phase will be to build the traffic circle near the back entrance to the Federal Research Center (FRC), then from there build the new road out to the existing Industrial Pkwy and US 29. It will include improvements on the existing Industrial Pkwy and Tech Rd, especially at US29. They are working with GSA (federal Gov't) concerning the traffic circle and the entrance into the FRC.
  - The second phase is to rebuild FDA Blvd from the traffic circle to Cherry Hill Rd. Technically this road is owned by GSA and maintained by the county. The reason for the two phases is that access to the FRC must be maintained. This phase also includes changes to the Cherry Hill Road/FDA Blvd intersection and extending Healing Way from the White Oak Medical Center (WOMC) to FDA Blvd.
- The cost of the above construction will be approximately \$250M, which doesn't include the final site improvements for each individual site plan. MCB must finance and build the mains, which WSSC will reimburse over a period of years. Also, the county will reimburse MCB \$40M for its share of the roads. Even with these reimbursements, MCB will still be

responsible for the majority of the infrastructure costs. MCB has been having discussions with the County Executive and all council members about a public/private financing package where MCB would remain responsible for the payments, not the county. The early steps of this effort have been started, and the Executive will need to prepare and submit the package to the council for their action.

- The construction of the roads will allow for residential and commercial development to occur on VWO. The plan is to build from the outside in towards the middle, starting at both ends at the same time. Townhouses will be built at the US29 end, and Viva town center will be built at the Cherry Hill end. The first step for the town center is to identify the anchors. Presently, MCB has three grocery stores and three fitness centers interested (but not yet committed). The town center will include multifamily housing that WOMC nurses and other staff could afford. (Many of them today drive an hour one way to work.) Restaurants will follow.
- The first buildings to be occupied are targeted for 2028.
- MCB has had conversations with DOT about BRT/Flash for the area. Dan Wilhelm reminded everyone that people living elsewhere will need to access VWO and residents in VWO will need to access other areas. The LABQUEST proposed BRT concept will provide such premium transit on three corridors: US29, New Hampshire Ave and Randolph/Cherry. The need for transit is critical for many people living in the White Oak and Briggs Chaney areas because of their financial limitations.
- MCB emphasized the need to keep the qualified opportunity zone (QOZ) impact tax exemption in the Growth and Infrastructure Policy (GIP). The council held a hearing on the GIP yesterday (Sept 10). The impact tax provisions will be included in Bill 16-24, with an October 1 hearing date. The Planning Board recommendation is to retain this exemption, even if the federal program is not extended past its current expiration in 2027/2028. MCB, Dan Wilhelm (for GCCA), and two other developers supported retaining this exemption at the hearing (it benefits multiple properties throughout the county.)

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

Anthony Stahl sent an email indicating he was detained at a meeting and thus was unable to attend the Labquest meeting. He sent the following update:

- A ground-breaking event will be held early next year for the medical office building (Planning has already approved this development.).
- The 8th floor construction is ahead of schedule (was scheduled to be complete by year end).
- Everyone is invited to “White Oak’s Got Talent” on October 10 at the hospital at noon.
- They continue to work on the strategic planning for Vision 2030.

## **Science Report**

Charles Warr reported on the following from the September 6 report.

- FDA and USDA have completed a second round of testing milk and the results continue to confirm that pasteurization always inactivates the bird flu.
- Free At-Home Covid Test kits will be available again from the government in late September.
- A new calculator is available to determine your Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR). (BMR is the minimum number of calories your body burns at rest for basic functions like breathing,

circulation, nutrient processing, and cell production.). After getting the BMR, one can consult the exercise table to see how many calories you can consume daily without gaining weight or what steps to take to lose weight.

- FDA has approved the Janssen Biotech treatment 'azcluze' (lazertinib), in combination with amivantamab, for the first-line treatment of patients with locally advanced or metastatic non-small cell lung cancer.
- FDA granted last year a Marketing Authorization for a sound beam device that targets cancerous liver tumors to HistoSonics (Minneapolis MN). A clinical trial is now underway to extend the use of the authorized system to *kidney* tumors.
- The European Union has granted marketing approval for the Johnson & Johnson treatment of Balversa (erdafitinib) for metastatic urothelial carcinoma (UC), the most common type of bladder cancer. FDA had granted accelerated approval (requires continuing clinical trial) in 2019, and granted full approval January 2024.
- FDA has authorized Germitec UV-C Chronos for high-level disinfection of surfaces of transvaginal, transrectal, and *external* ultrasound probes.
- Superior Fresh became the first indoor Atlantic salmon farm in the US in 2018. Since the farmer controls everything, there are no antibiotics or pesticides, they eat organic feed, swim in filtered and recycled water, and fish waste water is used to fertilize greenhouse-grown leafy greens.

## Government

### FDA and GSA

Allen Zawatsky, FDA, reported the following:

- They are still experiencing 2800 to 3200 arrivals on average per day. Rudy Ramirez, GSA, reported the peak is somewhere around 3800.
- Allen reported that they are in the process of moving 2500 personnel administratively from other buildings in Beltsville and Rockville to the FRC. That will mean that some 13,500 employees are assigned to site (work on site and telework). Some of the new 2500 personnel will telework.

Rudy indicated that GSA is working to close out existing service contracts, as the end of the fiscal year is September 30, and prepare for the next fiscal year,

### Montgomery College

Aly Kedron reported that a Request for Proposal (RFP) has been developed to retain an architectural firm to develop a Master Plan for the College's Fourth Campus. A determination has been prepared for the college's Board of Trustees to authorize issuance of the RFP and then award of a contract "without delay". While it was hoped that the Board would be presented the package at its September 16, 2024., it was not presented at that meeting. This contract will help the College make significant progress on this development.

### Montgomery County

Jewru Bandeh, Regional Director, reported that:

- The Council is holding a listening forum in east county on September 17 concerning the proposal from the Planning Board for Attainable Housing.

- Burtonsville Day is September 21.
- His office is working with Montgomery College concerning public engagement.
- The County Executive held a public forum on the operating budget in East County on September 9. This was the first of 11 such forums around the county.
- The Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) will host a ground breaking for the Hillendale Gateway Project on September 18, 2-4 PM. (As a reminder, this project is a partnership between the HOC and The Duffie Companies and is located on New Hampshire Ave at the Beltway. It will consist of two 11 story buildings with a 691-car parking structure between them. The buildings will have 155 age-restricted units, 288 non-age restricted market-rate dwelling units, and 20 non-age-restricted Moderately Priced Dwelling Units)

Submitted by Dan Wilhelm