

Corrected Minutes LABQUEST Meeting of Wednesday, July 10, 2024

Announcement: The next in-person LABQUEST meeting will be Wednesday, Aug 14, 2024 at 12:30 in the trailer. Betsy advises that Mark Bloom plans to attend the August meeting.

Minutes

The LABQUEST meetings were held in-person on Wednesday, July 10, 2024 beginning at 12:30 p.m. Chairperson Betsy Bretz presided. Everyone introduced themselves.

The group welcomed Aly Kedron as a first-time attendee. She was recently hired as the first Montgomery College Real Estate Management Director. A large part of her job is to oversee the site selection and the construction of the new east county campus.

Amenities Meeting

White Oak Medical Center (WOMC).

Anthony Stahl, President, reported the following:

- They continue to work toward a December 2024 target to construct and outfit the 30 additional beds on the 8th floor.
- He expects that Planning Board approval for the second medical office building (MOB) will be given soon. (And this just received from the Planning Board: it is scheduled for July 25.)
- He also indicated they had an internal conference/Board/MEC retreat to identify their facility needs through 2030. When the plan has been put together, he will share it with LABQUEST.
- An estimated 3500 people attended the joint WOMC and WGTS 91.9 Health & Wellness Fair and Concert that was held on June 21.
- He indicated a new, widely-recognized structural heart physician had been added to the staff - Dr. Homam Ibrahim



- He indicated that the state limits the number of Transcatheter Aortic Value Replacement Surgeries (TAVRS) they can perform to 100 per year, even considering that the demand

exceeds 200. TAVAS is a minimally invasive procedure and it an alternative to open-heart surgery.

- They will be participating in a “Got Talent” show on October 10. It will be held at Riderwood and include residents from Riderwood.

Hillandale Gateway.

Shane Pollin indicated the following:

- They are studying alternatives for the issue he reported last month about the soil being different than expected (too spongy.)
- They are making improvements to Powder Mill Rd at New Hampshire Ave and next to their project to accommodate the improved transit station design and turn lanes.
- He indicated that the Electric Vehicle (EV) charger that had been specified only a year ago is already technologically outdated since the industry has decided to go with the one developed by Tesla.

Viva White Oak.

Drew Gorman reported that the sketch plan for the roadways had been presented to the planning staff. The preliminary plan for the roads will be presented next week. Drew indicated they would start submitting plans for buildings by the end of the year. They will also have a conference in September for possible bioscience tenants.

In response to a question, Drew acknowledged that MCB had purchased a shopping center in Takoma Park next to the Purple Line. This was a relatively small investment and should prove to be a good investment once the Purple Line opens. This project will not distract from Viva.

Rob Richardson brought up the letter that Jewru Bandeh had received from MCDOT concerning the ECCAB request to fund the Randolph Rd BRT study, which would include connections to Viva, Montgomery College, and WOMC. MCDOT basically stated that funds were not available to do that study at this time since the county is focusing its BRT efforts on other corridors. MCDOT did indicate that the transit re-imaging study is nearing completion and that will result in improved transit.

Drew indicated the future of transit is not clear, with the expected development and availability of autonomous vehicles. This would also apply to questions about how many parking spots are needed. How many people will own a car and if they do will it be used to commute to work and then will it be leased for others to use during the day? (Since a driver would no longer be needed, the car can drive itself to another person leasing it for the day.) Another question is whether it will be better (cost, convenience, upkeep, etc.) for people to call for the use of these vehicles rather than take transit. Another wildcard is the EV issue – time to charge, and charging locations.

Science Report.

Charles Warr reported on the following:

- A male birth control gel is undergoing human trial. It lowers the sperm level from some 2M per milliliter (ml) to 1000 per ml. The gel is rubbed on the shoulders after showering in the morning and takes about 6 weeks to become effective. If the gel is not applied, the sperm count will return to normal in about 6 weeks. While the treatment will not prevent all pregnancies, it will be more effective than measures women currently use.
- Tirzepatide, an Eli Lilly, the weight-reduction medication, was recently approved by FDA also reduces the number of times a person with sleep apnea will stop breathing by about 50%.
- The recently approved drug for the treatment of Alzheimer's has only a modest reduction rate of 3-to-4-months. A new technology is being tested in mice that uses a 40 KHZ sound to open the blood/brain membrane barrier to allow the natural cleaning process to work. That is the process that occurs during deep sleep.
- Studies are underway to develop a treatment for bird flu. Today, it is assumed that all cows have it, but pasteurization. deactivates the virus. While only several humans have contracted the disease, it is only a matter of time before more humans and other animals are affected.

We Achieve

Rob Richardson indicated the sign had been installed for We Achieve and he asked if anyone knew details of how the long-delayed approval had come about. No one had any information.

Government Meeting

FDA

Neither Alan Zawatsky or Andrew Dempster was able to attend the meeting, so Alan provided the following email report:

FDA is still averaging approximately 3000 people a day on campus.

Relative to facilities, the biggest question/concern on everyone's mind is "what happens if federal government employees are asked to come to the site 4 to 5 days per week?" If this were to take place the FDA feels that it would hurt employee recruitment and retention. This question is predominately a work/life balance concern. Many people enjoy the remote or telework lifestyle.

Everything else is good on campus. They are holding a monthly farmers market, which includes approximately nine vendors and a variety of fruits, vegetables, and prepared foods.

USAF Wind Tunnel

Joseph Coblisch reported that they continue to be very busy. For the benefit of everyone, he provided a summary of the transfer of the hypervelocity facility from the Navy to the Air Force. He indicated that they are one of many test and validation sites around the US operated by the Arnold Engineering Development Complex. Publicly available information is accessible on the internet. Each test center provides unique capabilities. No other wing tunnel in the US (free world) can test at the MACK 18 level available at White Oak.

Montgomery College.

Hamrawit Tesfa, Interim Director, East County Education Center (ECEC), indicated they are very busy with classes and getting the newly opened center fully functioning. The ECEC will have an open house on September 27.

Aly Kedron explained that her position was recently created and that she started it just several months ago. She indicated that the college wants the new campus to be integrated into the community. She appreciated the opportunity to meet everyone and learn about the community.

Montgomery County

Jewru Bandeh, Regional Director, reported that:

- The new fiscal year budget is now effective.
- The CIP budget included funds for school construction in east county: New Burtonsville ES at a different site, replacement of the Jo Ann Leck ES and a major addition is at Greencastle ES.
- MCG remains committed to the CIP allocation dedicated to VIVA infrastructure improvements

Relative to the schools, Dan Wilhelm indicated that when MCB starts planning to add housing to Viva that discussions need to occur with MCPS (Jewru Bandeh and LABQUEST also need to be involved). Although an elementary school pad will be provided by MCB, funds would still need to be appropriated to build it. MCPS would also need to address school boundaries. There is also the question of which school should receive MS and HS Students: Briggs Chaney MS is at 98.5% of capacity, and Paint Branch HS already exceeds 100% capacity (Tier 1, which means there is UPP fee that Viva will need to pay). There was also a study before the pandemic which demonstrated school boundaries throughout the Northeast Consortium are out of date, since many students had to travel long distances and even pass one school to access their assigned school.

Submitted by Dan Wilhelm