

**Parkwood Residents Association
Member Meeting
October 19, 2009**

MINUTES

Attending:

Officers: Bailey Condrey, President
Julie Tierney, Vice President
Maryann Dillon, Secretary

Directors: Gail Condrey, Chair, Beautification
Kira Lueders, Chair, Block Captains
Peter Mansbach, webmaster

Attendees: Approximately 40 PRA Members and 15 Guests

Guest: Marc Elrich, County Councilman-at-large

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by President Bailey Condrey at 7:33 PM.

2. **Old Business:**

Approval of the minutes of the July 14, 2009 meeting was tabled as printed copies of minutes were not available.

Peter Mansbach reminded members that the PRA website (www.parkwoodresidents.org) is no longer hosted by Yahoo Geocities.

Bailey updated members on the status of the sidewalk installation requests. Both the Franklin Street sidewalk (supported by PRA) and Parkwood Drive sidewalk (no official action taken by PRA) were put before public hearings in August 2009. Jan Melvin is the County contact at Dept. of Transportation. Residents are unlikely to hear of any decisions before next summer. Liz Brennan suggested posting information on status to the PRA website.

3. **Coalition of Military Medical Center Neighbors Update:** Bailey reported that County Executive Leggett, Lt. Governor Brown, and Congressman Van Hollen hosted a community meeting re: status of road improvements at four intersections near the Naval Medical Center:

Rockville Pike/ Cedar Lane: partially funded improvements to turning lanes
Connecticut/ Jones Bridge Rd: create dedicated single lane south from Beltway to Jones Bridge
Rockville Pike/Jones Bridge Rd: sidewalk improvements
Old Georgetown/ W. Cedar Lane

Rockville Pike/Cedar Lane improvements are partially funded; Connecticut Avenue/Jones Bridge Road is targeted for a second phase. Many other improvements remain unfunded. Cong. Van Hollen obtained \$45 million to fund pedestrian tunnel under Rockville Pike connecting Metro with to east side of Pike. Naval Medical Center and NIH have been considering a separate, \$40-million tunnel concept that envisions moving both vehicles and pedestrians.

CMMCN has succeeded to date in getting more focus on improving bike and pedestrian access to the base and raising the level of awareness of these issues among stakeholders. Only \$28 million is appropriated to date for all improvements. Impact of White Flint sector plan on roads is not being considered at Medical Center; County, State and Federal government have "stovepiped" process, according to Bailey, who is PRA liaison to CMMCN.

Members expressed concern about any future plans to convert Cedar Lane back to a 4-lane road, and that improvements to Cedar Lane/Rockville Pike corridor may create more pressure to do this. Bailey noted that this

would require a public hearing, and Liz Brennan stated that she had reminded Van Hollen that neighbors want Cedar Lane to remain 2 lanes.

There was a motion to oppose any improvements to Cedar Lane and Rockville Pike. Motion was not seconded, and therefore did not pass.

There was a motion that PRA go on record supporting Cedar Lane remaining a 2-lane road. Motion was seconded and carried.

4. **White Flint Sector Plan:** Liz Brennan, PRA liaison to Coalition of Kensington Communities (CKC) handed out a list of concerns that CKC had identified regarding the proposed White Flint sector plan. She introduced guest speaker County Councilman-at-large Marc Elrich.

Councilman Elrich shared his perspectives regarding plan, stated that this is the most organized campaign by developers that he has seen, and he stated that he does not accept campaign contributions from developers. He said the plan is "challenging". The "good parts" are that it's a better layout for Rockville Pike, making it a destination rather than a series of strip malls. Developers have done a good job arguing that the Pike needs bus rapid transit and that it can't be serviced only by cars.

The "bad parts" are that it needs to address the transportation infrastructure. The County's spending very little on transit and there's a backlog for schools and road maintenance. Most letters he receives share the same ambivalence; people like the concept, but have concerns about whether infrastructure will get addressed.

Another criticism the State has had is that the County is approving a series of master plans, but has no comprehensive analysis of the overall 355 corridor. Phil Andrews and several other Council members asked Park & Planning (P&P) to conduct a transportation study from Friendship Heights to Germantown, but they declined.

Next were a series of questions and answers summarized as follows:

Q Can approval be contingent upon an infrastructure plan?

A Developers support doing infrastructure upfront, but P&P left it for a later stage since they don't believe there's funding available. "Once you approve density you can't later take it away without looking like a public "taking" of private property rights. Land owners won't do anything until they have certainty. " County Executive Leggett is opposed to dedicated taxes such as Tax Increment Financing (TIFs) which could pay for improvements specific to White Flint.

Q Why approve zoning without infrastructure?

A Pushback from P&P is that there's a long timeline, new development will be built gradually over 20 years, "what are you worried about"

Q Concerns re: impact on Walter Johnson cluster and potential overcrowding?

A MC Public Schools (MCPS) issue, not addressed by P&P or County Council.

Q MCPS Board of Ed supports not opening any schools for White Flint outside Walter Johnson cluster, wants site by White Flint Mall. Predict 400 elementary and 300 middle school students.

A Additional taxes to be generated at White Flint after build-out is \$50 million/year which can support some improvements. But if it creates retail jobs, County will have to find a way to subsidize jobs and housing if retail workers are to live at White Flint.

Q Plan recommends new elementary school on Rockinghorse Road outside of White Flint. Concern re: having seven elementary schools feeding into Walter Johnson. Is there risk of Kensington Parkwood ES being redistricted to Einstein?

A WJ will not stay the same size, but the question is can we manage the scale? This is MCPS issue, but if KP were moved to a different cluster, then we would have 7 schools in that new cluster, so this would not necessarily be what would drive MCPS to make such a decision.

Q Aren't mostly apartment buildings proposed? Don't these mostly attract single people and not generate more families with school age children?

A Under "New Urbanism" concept, more families will choose to live in apartments. A real city has to have

a mix of housing types.

Q Will revenue generated by project support the rest of the County?

A Yes because revenue will not be dedicated to White Flint.

Q What are the 3 main issues we should be concerned with?

A (1) Ability of Rockville Pike to carry traffic.

(2) Staging: need a financing mechanism to put infrastructure in place.

(3) School issues.

Marc is "agnostic" regarding any concerns about building heights.

Q What's the "chain of command" in making decisions about White Flint?

A Council members make the decision. Letters are effective, but saying "don't do anything" is not credible. Instead ask members to be thoughtful re: infrastructure, environment, etc.

Q What about storm water management? Will it flow into Rock Creek? Why no State Highway Trust Fund dollars?

A State has no funds. ICC has taken everything. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a lot less onerous on developers, but Montgomery County has not done TIFs in the past. (Elrich supports looking at other ways such as TIFs to raise funds). "If you can give me a plan (for infrastructure) I can vote for this".

Q Who's responsible for Park & Planning?

A Board appointed by County Council, but don't report to us. Planning Board has no staff of its own and relies on Planning Dept. staff. Sector plans have a narrow focus so stakeholders are property owners in immediate area.

Q There were similar concerns re: mall that had been proposed for downtown Silver Spring (prior to current development plan) about infrastructure, timing, financing, etc.

A Show up at public hearings. Stay constructive. Don't just say no. Say what you need in order for this to move forward. Say what you like and how you could get comfortable with the plan.

Q Is there market demand for office that won't take away from downtown Bethesda?

A There's very limited land in Bethesda. White Flint is the logical place to go.

Julie Tierney suggested that PRA join the White Flint Coalition of Civic Associations which is working closely on the plan. Liz Brennan stated that it was not necessary as PRA is part of CKC which already participates.

Mr. Elrich suggested opening up to developers re: how to stage and pay for infrastructure. Email is effective. At approximately 8:45, Mr. Elrich left the meeting and members continued to discuss the plan.

Julie Tierney moved (seconded) that PRA join the White Flint Community Coalition. Motion carried 10 votes to 9.

There was a motion that PRA write a letter to council members touching on the issues that Councilman Elrich outlined (i.e. infrastructure, financing, timing and schools), stating what PRA expects to be accomplished. Motion carried.

There was a motion that PRA conduct an email campaign to encourage members to email Council members. Motion seconded and carried.

Gail Condrey moved that PRA should organize meetings with Council members in conjunction with CKC, WFCC, or independently. Motion seconded and carried.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Maryann Dillon
Secretary

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