

CITY OF HYATTSVILLE
PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES
OCTOBER 20, 2020

Zoom Webinar Link:

<https://zoom.us/j/98835105680?pwd=Ui91b2dic1pDeXlHbUNvTXRZajNxZz09>

1. Introduction of Committee & Guest Members (7:00 PM)
 - Nkosi Yearwood
 - Todd Dengel
 - Jonathan Mueller
 - Maureen Foster
 - D. Marshall
 - Bart Lawrence
 - Jim Chandler
 - Kate Powers
 - Sarah Benton
 - Kendra Hyson
 - Scott Rowe
 - John Bachmann
 - Stuart Eisenberg
2. Committee Business (7:05 PM)
 - Adoption of Meeting Minutes: May & June 2020
 - Minutes adopted, passes unanimously 5-0.
 - Committee Vacancies
 - Wil Maxwell and Thomas Sheffer have recently moved outside the City limits and, as a result, resigned from the Planning Committee. The Planning Committee is now comprised of five (5) total members.
 - Upcoming Reappointments
 - Current members who are up for reappointment have been contact by City Clerk Laura Reams. Clerk Reams has provided these individuals with information on how to apply for reappointment.
3. West Hyattsville- Queens Chapel Sector Plan – Focus Group
 - Introductions
 - **Sarah Benton**, *Project Manager, Planner Coordinator, Community Planning Division, M-NCPPC*
 - **Kendra Hyson**, *Deputy Project Manager, Senior Planner, Community Planning Division, M-NCPPC*
 - **Scott Rowe**, *Supervisor of Long-Range Planning, Community Planning Division, M-NCPPC*

- **John Bachmann**, *Vice President of Urban Planning (Southeast), AECOM*
- Presentation
 - Sarah Benton, project manager, introduced her team to the Planning Committee.
 - The team started gathering data in August and has employed outside consultants, including Stuart Eisenberg from the Hyattsville CDC, to assist in community outreach and plan development.
 - Before the plan is developed, the project team will work with the community and relevant stakeholders to create a vision for the area. Then the team will identify strategies to implement this vision.
 - As a transit-oriented development area, strategies will be developed in a way that will attract investment and create opportunities for public-private partnerships.
 - A map including the project boundaries was then shared with the Planning Committee. This boundary consists of approximately 15,000 people and 5,000 households. The initial demographic analysis identified the following individuals in the project area: many young adults, few children, and a large Hispanic population.
 - The team will develop different scenarios outlining various possible outcomes for future development.
 - One of the team's key issues is reaching the many corners of our diverse community. Outreach will be conducted in both English and Spanish.
 - The team will take lessons learned from the TOD center at Prince George's Plaza while also taking into consideration the unique aspects of West Hyattsville.
 - In terms of transportation, the team is looking to rebalance the transportation network, promote walkability and bike transit, as well as remain car-friendly but not car-dominant.
 - In terms of environmental aspects, there will be challenges as the area has a propensity for flooding and the cost of compensatory storage is high in the area.
 - The project manager then reviewed the timeline moving forward.
- Clarifying questions
 - Nkosi: Can you describe the project boundaries again? Will the boundary of the new plan be different than that of the old plan?
 1. Sarah: The current plan has a smaller boundary (approx. 0.5-mile metro radius) than the new plan. The new plan will expand this boundary to about a one (1) mile radius around the West Hyattsville Metro, as it is an area primed for residential development and other investment.
 2. John: The boundary will be almost two (2) square miles total.
- Comments
 - Jonathan: At the October 17 meeting, there was mention that West Hyattsville lacked a sense of place. How do you prevent bland suburban

development? There needs to be more effort in identifying – not artificially creating – a sense of place. Unique elements in West Hyattsville should guide development and planning in the future.

1. John: I am more afraid of bland urban development than bland suburban development. Anything being proposed at mero will be compact and walkable. However, this doesn't guarantee a sense of place. There needs to be a few proposals that establish themselves as good building blocks. Commercial spots, hang-out areas, and community meeting spaces create identity.
- Jonathan: Retail is important, but I want it to create a sense of place, a place where people can congregate. I think there needs to be an emphasis on community spaces – Retail can support this but not create it. I'm excited about the amphitheater idea.
 1. Sarah: We heard similar comments from our focus groups that sense of place and identity are important. We hope these elements will reveal themselves, or be created, through the community visioning workshops and focus groups.
- Maureen: When you go the D.C. border or to Avondale, there is not as much commercial development but there is a sense of place. This can be developed through the old idea of homeowner associations, active civic associations, and park services. The history of retail in the area has a story – like in Mount Rainier, Queen Elizabeth went to the Giant Food Store. Also, there are many post-WWII buildings and garden-style apartments where many educators lived – the area was a feeder for education in northeast D.C.
 1. Stuart: Point well taken. However, communities are evolving, and civic societies are dying off. Route 1 has centered around asset-based development, which leads to separate segments of community that cannot circulate and communicate easily.
 2. Maureen: There are stories out there. Another retail example is the driveby shopping center where Hamilton Street intersects with Queens Chapel, this was a big deal when it was developed.
- Nkosi: There are smaller neighborhood centers within the larger project boundary. I would suggest figuring out the overarching themes that cover the entire project area in addition to focusing in on specific areas. Housing components in the area are another aspect you will need to think about, multifamily, single-family – John indicated that a large portion of the population in the project area are renters. Existing relatively affordable housing will need to be preserved as gentrification continues at a larger scale. In addition, I'm not sure what the future of retail will look like in a post-COVID world. Neighborhood retail vacancy is less than 10% so the retail conversation will need to be unpacked. There will be both opportunities and uncertainty.
 1. John: Two-thirds (2/3) of the population in the project area are renters. And I agree, there are different communities within the boundary – Queens Chapel area is one place, while the metro is

another, northern communities are different than southern communities within the boundary. In a general sense, there are a limited number of spaces that would be considered for entire redevelopment. We want metro to be well-used, as WMATA is currently not getting its return on investment. The area will likely see new mixed-use development, which may not always be vertical. We will need to look at different types of projects to connect the outer edges to the inner core.

- Jonathan: I echo Nkosi's thoughts – we need to keep in mind housing and affordability in this plan. Expansion of housing and facilities for people is necessary but development should not be solely for the top of the market. Affordability is why I moved here. It is part of the character of the area and needs to be preserved.

1. Maureen: I used to live in Queens Town Apartments which were affordable before I bought a house in Hyattsville.

4. Development Update

- City of Hyattsville Affordable Housing Strategy – *Phase 2 City Council Workshops*
 - The Affordable Housing Strategy will be wrapping up at the end of the calendar year, possibly in early 2021. Tools identified in this Strategy will be actionable as soon as next fiscal year. As the Council settles on overall priorities, Enterprise will bring in specific tools to address these issues.
- Countywide Sectional Map Amendment – *Joint Public Hearing on November 19*
 - Prince George's County CMA has been sidelined for the last few months due to COVID but the District Council has now scheduled a Joint Public Hearing on this item in November. Council is reviewing language to submit to District Council concerning alcohol facilities and adaptive/existing uses. We want to ensure language in the new zoning ordinance is not easily misinterpreted. A map amendment process only happens every 20 – 30 years, so it is important we provide feedback.
- Jamestown Road Development – *CSP forthcoming*
 - In the coming weeks, we expect an application for a mixed-use building on Jamestown Road. The property was acquired a few years ago as part of a joint venture project. The application is currently being prepared and we believe it will come before the Planning Committee before the end of this calendar year. The project will rely on the trail system and help fill out the TOD picture around West Hyattsville.
- Federalist Pig – *DSP forthcoming*
 - The tire place on Baltimore Avenue will be redevelopment as Federalist Pig's first Prince George's location. The concept for this project was presented to Staff around 1.5 years ago but was put on hold. Now, the applicant is moving forward. They will come before the Planning Committee either at the end of 2020 or in early 2021.
- Kaiser Permanente Medical Facility – *DSP approved by M-NCPPC Planning Board*

- The Kaiser Permanente Facility as part of the Riverfront at West Hyattsville project was approved, with construction starting in early 2021 and delivery scheduled for early 2022. Gilbane Development has built Kaiser facilities in the past and are comfortable contracting with them. This parcel was never well-connected to the rest of the residential site, so this is a win for both Kaiser and Gilbane.
- Other Projects
 - The UIP project on Baltimore Avenue has been delayed due to personnel turnover.
 - The developer of Magruder Pointe has completed all work allowed under their demo permit and cannot move forward without a finalized decision regarding the lower lot.
 - The new Teen Center has a \$500,000 renovation budget. We have applied for a \$150,000 Community Legacy grant to help cover costs.
 - In the past couple months, minor modifications have been made to the Trolley Trail design as CSX is unwilling to allow access easements to support the trail connection. There was also an issue with funding which has delayed the project advertisement and will likely push completion to mid-2022. Sidewalks along the west side of Route 1 will be a separate project from the Trolley Trail.
 - The dispute between Metro III and the Dewey Property owner is ongoing, as Metro III is claiming use rights to the property. A Nine Ponds stormwater facility is set to be constructed on Parcel 4 of the property which will benefit long-term development and reduce some of the flooding issues. It was conceived roughly ten (10) years ago as part of the zoning plan.
 - Miller's Ale House recently had a soft opening, and they are currently training staff.

5. Additional Questions & Discussion

- Jonathan: I would just like to comment on the uptick in homelessness I've seen in the area. I've seen unhoused individuals in parks, wooded areas, and along storefronts. Housing affordability is essential in our area – people should be able to afford housing and we need more opportunities to keep focus on that.
- Maureen: Thank you to Public Works for all their help after the floods, especially with the bulk pickup. They have been working hard and doing a great job keeping the City clean!

6. Adjourn (9:00 PM)