

Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC)

Agenda

Friday, February 2, 2018

- I. **RECAP OF JANUARY MEETING MINUTES** (10 mins.)
- II. **APPLICATION/PROJECT PRESENTATION** (20 min. presentation/10 min. questions or comments)
4 Bethesda Metro Center – Bob Harris and Applicant Team
- III. **MONITORING AND TRACKING PROGRAM WEBPAGE REVIEW** (20 min.)
- IV. **NEW BUSINESS** (5 min.)
- V. **NEXT MEETING – Friday March 2, 2018**

<http://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/communities/area-1/bethesda-downtown-plan/bethesda-downtown-implementation-advisory-committee/>

Meeting Notes and Attendees:

I. Brief Recap of January Meeting and Minutes:

1. At the January meeting the 4540 Montgomery Avenue project was briefly presented. The committee's questions and concerns were documented in the January meeting minutes but the committee did not decide during the January meeting whether to provide comments to the planning staff and the applicant. The committee made the decision at the February 2, 2018 meeting to provide the comments documented in the January meeting minutes to planning staff and to ask the planning staff to forward the comments to the Applicant.

2. To catch up on the development applications that have been submitted to the Planning Department prior to the Implementation Committee being formed, Leslye will send an email to the committee with the links to the Planning Department DAIC system so that the committee members can review the project applications in more detail (Leslye sent this link to the committee members on February 2, 2018).



II. 4 Bethesda Metro Center project

- How flexible can you be with making improvements to WATA owned land? Brookfield stated that they have a ground lease agreement with WMATA and can make and pay for improvements if WMATA is involved.
- Will there be elevator access closer to the station entrance and will it be maintained as part of the new project along with the escalator? Brookfield stated that current elevator and escalator access will be maintained and that they are looking at providing another elevator along the west side of the building.
- Concern with the public spaces being interior to the block. Generally, these types of open spaces do not work in the long term as programming gets lost, lack of visibility and accessibility. How are you going to make sure the interior open spaces work?
- Concerned with the lack of visibility to the public open spaces from Woodmont, Montgomery Lane and Edgemoor Lane.
- Do you know what types of uses are going into the building at this point? Residential or Office? Brookfield stated that they are still evaluating this and would know in the next few months. It will need to be decided prior to Site Plan submission.
- How many square feet will the building be when it is completed? Brookfield stated that they are estimating approximately 400,000-500,000 square feet.
- Will the bus bay remain open during construction of the new building? Will construction be phased? Brookfield stated that the project will likely be phased to maintain the bus bay functionality during construction.
- Do you know what type of retail you are looking for on the ground floor to activate the public spaces? The type of retail should be functional to the residents and workers in the area. Brookfield stated that they do not have a specific tenant in mind now, but they wanted it to be useful to the residents and workers in the community, not simply a Starbucks type retailer.
- Will you be improving access for families with strollers, wheel chairs and bicycles coming up from the metro to the public spaces at street level? Right now, you must use the elevator. Brookfield mentioned they have seen escalators that can accommodate bicycles and strollers and they would consider this.
- How much open space is being provided with the new project? It looks like by adding a building in the middle, the amount of open space will be reduced. Brookfield noted that the amount of open space would remain the same as what is there today.
- There should also be open space areas that are more passive and not just active recreational space.
- What happens with the narrow areas along the north and west sides of the building? Seems to create a dead space. How much space in between the buildings do you need? How will they be treated? Bethesda Lane is a very different scale than what is envisioned here with the height of this building and the ones next to it.
- Good public art concept shown. How many programs for the public open space do you envision here?
- Brookfield illustrated in their presentation that they are active supporters of the arts in downtown Bethesda.



- It was mentioned that the success of the public spaces in the project will be heavily dependent on supporting retail and arts uses as active programming.
- Wayfinding will also be important due to the location of the public open spaces proposed in the project.
- Concerned about the height of the building and the wind factor? Will you provide a wind study or solutions to minimizing the effects tall buildings have? Will you provide a shadow study? Brookfield stated that would be looking at the wind and sun studies as part of the process.
- This location lends itself to an iconic feature.

III. Monitoring and Tracking Program Review

- Leslye will be providing responses to the committee's comments on the draft monitoring and tracking program webpage using the excel document provided by Jad.
- Planning staff will begin updating the webpage based on the comments received from the committee as appropriate.
- Planning staff will be giving the Planning Board an overview of the draft webpage on February 15, 2018. This will be a 30-minute item to update the Board on the development of the tracking program webpage.
- Once the updates to the webpage are completed the committee should review the changes during the March committee meeting or at an earlier date if the committee is available.

IV. New Business

- Community Advisory Team (CAT) for MTA/Purple Line would like a representative from the IAC to attend future CAT meetings and report back to the IAC. The committee nominated Amanda Farber to attend and represent the IAC at future CAT meetings.
- ZOM Bethesda represented by Heather Dishopolsky has requested time on the March agenda to present the ZOM Bethesda project to the IAC.
- Upcoming Planning Board Public Hearings:
 - 7359 Wisconsin Avenue (Sketch/Prelim/Site Plan) – February 8, 2018
 - Bicycle Master Plan, Work Session #1 – February 15, 2018
 - Public Hearing, Technical Update to the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways – February 15, 2018

Meeting Attendees:

Amanda Farber, Anna Fierst, Dedun Ingram, Naomi Spinrad, Steve Groh, Steve Long, Emily Vaias, Jack Alexander, Jad Donohoe, Matt Gordon, Patrick O'Neil, Greg Rooney, Ramsey Meiser, Ken Hartman, Veronique Marier, Rick Ammirato, Leslye Howerton, Bob Harris - Lerch Early & Brewer, Simon Carney – Brookfield, Richard Fernicola - Brookfield, Cindy Gibson



**NOTE: If you have comments on the meeting minutes please advise Leslye Howerton within three days of receiving the meeting minutes.*

