






Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan, Implementation Advisory Committee Appointment

MCPB
Item No.5
Date: 09-06-18

 Leslye Howerton, Planner Coordinator, Area 1, leslye.howerton@montgomeryplannng.org, 301.495.4551
 Robert Kronenberg, Chief, Area 1, robert.kronenberg@montgomeryplanning.org, 301.495.2187
 Michael Brown, Master Plan Supervisor, Area 1, Michael.brown@montgomeryplanning.org, 301.495.4556

Completed: 08.29.18

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Appoint two recommended resident applicants to the Implementation Advisory Committee to replace outgoing members for the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan.

BACKGROUND

As outlined in the *Approved and Adopted Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan*, the Planning Department is seeking to create a representative and balanced Implementation Advisory Committee to coordinate and monitor the progress of development and address implementation of the recommendations in the *Approved and Adopted Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan*. This committee will replace the Woodmont Triangle Action Group (WTAG) established by the 2006 *Woodmont Triangle Amendment* to the 1994 *CBD Sector Plan*.

On October 23, 2017, the Planning Director approved the distribution of letters to interested parties requesting nominations to participate in the Implementation Advisory Committee. Letters of interest were sent out to various property/business owners and community groups soliciting nominations, including but not limited to the Coalition of Bethesda Area Residents (CBAR), the Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce, the Commercial Real Estate Development Association (NAIOP), Bethesda Green, the Town of Chevy Chase, East Bethesda Civic Association, Edgemoor Citizens Association, the Sacks Neighborhood, Chevy Chase West Neighborhood and various individual condominium associations within Downtown Bethesda.

On December 7, 2017, the Planning Board appointed 14 members to the Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC) as described above and for the past nine months the IAC has been meeting once a month.

DISCUSSION

As of August 2018, two of the resident members of the IAC have resigned due to upcoming relocations out-of-state. The two residents, Steve Groh (Christopher Condominium) and Drew Morrison represented the Arlington North District and the Battery Lane District plan areas. Staff reached out to

three residents that expressed interest last year but were not selected at the time for the IAC to gauge their interest in volunteering for the two-open positions. Staff received interest from all three residents in participating in the group. Planning staff convened a meeting with the IAC Co-chairs and IAC staff to review the applicants. Staff recommends Jon Weintraub and Michael Fetchko to fill the open IAC positions as both residents represent the same districts/neighborhoods as the previous two resident members. Both residents are recommended to serve three year terms.

PROFILE OF RECOMMENDED COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The following provides a brief profile of each recommended member. Letters of Interest are attached.

Civic Associations/Homeowners/Condo Associations

1. **Jon Weintraub:** Resident of the Edgemoor Condominium in the Arlington North District of downtown Bethesda and served on the Woodmont Triangle Action Group, member of the Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board, and previous Bethesda Urban Partnership member and chair.
2. **Michael Fetchko:** Resident of the Whitehall Condominium in the Battery Lane District and active community member participating in the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan process.

OTHER APPLICANTS

The following provides a brief profile of the other applicants. Letters of Interest are attached.

1. **Cristina Echavarren:** Past President of the Sacks Neighborhood Association and resident of Downtown Bethesda for about 40 years, actively involved in Sector Plan process.

NEXT STEP FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Once approved by the Planning Board, the staff will notify the Implementation Advisory Committee members and an orientation meeting will take place during the next IAC meeting on Friday September 7, 2018.

ATTACHMENT

- A. Implementation Advisory Committee Letters of Interest

From: Jon Weintraub
To: [Wright, Gwen](#); [Howerton, Leslye](#)
Subject: Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan Implementation Advisory Committee nomination
Date: Tuesday, October 24, 2017 10:26:55 AM

Below are my qualifications to serve on the Bethesda Downtown Section Plan Implementation Advisory Committee:

- Member of the Woodmont Triangle Advisory Group [WTAG]
- Member of the Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board [WMCCAB]
- Previous member [6 years] and chair [1 year] of the Bethesda Urban Partnership [BUP]
- Organized the Downtown Bethesda Condo Association [11 bldgs and 830 units] and serve as its chair
- Member of the Bethesda Metro Task Force organized by the Bethesda Chamber of Commerce
- Served 3 years as chair of the Edgemoor Condo [4821 Montgomery Lane] Association and 6 years on its board
- Worked for 12 years at the National Association of Counties [NACo]
- Served as a subcommittee staff director for the House Education and Labor committee
- Served on the Presidential transition committees for Presidents Clinton and Obama

Please let me know if you have any questions...I am supported by my condo association....Jon

Jon Weintraub
4821 Montgomery Lane
Bethesda, MD 20814
H] 301-664-9437
F] 301-664-9439

Ms Gwen Wright
Director, Montgomery County Planning Department
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Ms Wright:

I thank you and Leslye Howerton for the invitation to submit a letter of interest to serve on the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan Implementation Advisory Committee. As an owner in the 300 unit Whitehall Condominium Association on Battery Lane, I am keenly interested in confirming that the BDP will maintain Bethesda generally and the Battery Lane District specifically as a properly-developed, pedestrian- and bicyclist-friendly, lively urban area with adequate and adequately-maintained parks and greenspace among well-designed, mixed-use buildings.

Since my first introduction to the new Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan (BDP) in June, 2015, I have closely followed its development through announcements from the your office, the Planning Board, and the County Council and participated in its development through attending Planning Board and County Council meetings, delivering testimony at some of those meetings, and sending emails to you, the Planning Board, and the County Council. I, with my Whitehall Condominium neighbor Holly Clemans, also hosted the Planning Board Staff – including Leslye – twice at Whitehall to discuss issues in the BDP with fellow Whitehall and other Battery Lane condominium owners.

In the early days of the BDP, Holly and I spearheaded an effort of many Battery Lane District neighbors to remove a plan for a road to cut through Battery Lane Park. Through outreach to Planning Board and Staff, emails, petitions, and finally direct testimony, we convinced the Planning Board of the need to maintain the park as it is: an uninterrupted swath of park space that allows multiple, different daily uses without the concern for cars driving through it.

As I was then, I believe that I can be a representative voice of the Battery Lane District – which sometimes seemed to be a forgotten or misrepresented part of Bethesda in some stages of the BDP's development – on the Implementation Advisory Committee. Also, as a member of Whitehall's Board of Directors, I can communicate quickly with my fellow owners both to provide and to solicit information about the effects of the BDP on our property.

While I do not have development or planning training or expertise, I believe that my 20 years of living on Battery Lane and working at NIH provide me an insightful view of how the BDP can and should affect the lives of those who also live and/or work in Bethesda.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my interest, and I hope that you will find me an asset to the committee.

Sincerely,

Michael Fetchko
4977 Battery Lane #915
Bethesda MD 20184

I am interested in serving on the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan Implementation Advisory Committee.

I have been a long term resident of the Bethesda/Chevy Chase area for about 40 years. After I retired from the Inter-American Development Bank as a budget analyst, I pursued volunteer work for the County. I occasionally do consulting work in finance-related fields for UN agencies located in Rome, Italy.

I have served on several committees formed by the County Executive and the County Council:

The Right to Vote Task Force of Montgomery County (2013-2015)

Montgomery County Compensation Committee, Chair (2013)

Organizational Reform Commission (2010-2011), the members of this Commission were awarded the Sentinel Award, for “significant contribution to good government at the local level” (May 2011)

I am also a graduate of the Montgomery County Senior Leadership program (2014).

I have served as President of the Sacks Neighborhood Association for a total of about 15 years. While living briefly in Annapolis, I also served as President of the homeowners’ association, the Watergate Improvement Association (2016-17).

I am aware of the sometimes divergent interests of developers, Bethesda area homeowners, and the County government. Throughout my leadership of the Sacks community, transparent communication and a willingness to listen to others has allowed me to gain the respect of most members of the community. I represented the Sacks neighborhood during the difficult period in which the County drafted and approved the Bethesda Sector Plan. As a leader of the community, I was aware that within my community there were strong and conflicting opinions regarding the proposed heights of new construction adjacent to our neighborhood. This required that I refrain from supporting a particular position regarding development in the Bethesda area and to focus on common interests such as traffic density and crime.

I would be delighted to serve on the Advisory Committee.

Cristina Echavarren
c.echavarren@gmail.com