



Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan, Implementation Advisory Committee Appointment

Leslye Howerton, Master Plan Supervisor, Area 1, leslye.howerton@montgomeryplanning.org, 301.495.4566

Elza Hisel-McCoy, Chief, Area 1, Elza.Hisel-McCoy@montgomeryplanning.org, 301.495.2115

Robert Kronenberg, Deputy Director, Robert.kronenberg@montgomeryplanning.org, 301.495.2187

Completed: 01.21.20

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Appoint one (1) new recommended resident applicant to the Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC) for the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan to fill one (1) seat that has been voluntarily vacated as of January 5, 2020.

BACKGROUND

As outlined in the *Approved and Adopted Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan*, in 2017 the Planning Department created a representative and balanced IAC to coordinate and monitor the progress of development and address implementation of the recommendations in the *Sector Plan*. The IAC is made up of representatives from the business community and residents of downtown Bethesda. The Planning Board appointed the 14-member committee in December 2017.

As of January 5, 2020, Jon Weintraub, a resident member of the IAC, notified planning staff and the IAC Co-Chairs that he would not be able to complete his term, leaving a resident seat vacant immediately.

METHOD OF SELECTION

Members must be appointed by the Planning Board and will serve three-year terms. Members are eligible for reappointment upon completion of their term.

Members are selected by representatives from the Planning Department, Bethesda Urban Partnership (BUP), Bethesda Regional Services Center (RSC), and Bethesda Green as outlined the Rules of Procedure.

Recently, in November of last year, seven residents had expressed interest and submitted letters, including two current IAC members seeking reappointment. The Planning Board reappointed these two members and appointed a third new resident member on December 19, 2019. Planning staff, along with BUP, RSC, and Bethesda Green re-evaluated the remaining resident applicants that were not appointed in December and are recommending the following resident to fill the vacant resident seat.

PROFILE OF NEW RECOMMENDED COMMITTEE MEMBER

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

Civic Associations/Homeowners/Condo Associations

Susan Wegner, Resident for almost 20 years

- Bethesda resident for almost 20 years. Lives within the downtown boundary in the Arlington North neighborhood and would represent the same neighborhood as the previous IAC member.
- Environmental and land use attorney involved with implementing and advising various constituencies on sustainable approaches to building for the future. Practice provides transactional advice on new building projects, urban design, and how to integrate the needs of residents, business owners, and civic leaders, while focusing on issues related to transportation and population density. Professional experience with renewable energy consulting and working with business leaders to ensure that projects consider the future impacts of current development.

OTHER APPLICANTS

The following is a list of other applicants considered:

Andrew T. O'Hare, Resident and current East Bethesda Citizens Association President;

Jill Benson, Resident of Bethesda for past 10 years;

Ira E. Raskin, Resident of Bethesda for past 44 years.

NEXT STEP FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Once approved by the Planning Board, staff will notify the IAC members and schedule an orientation meeting.

ATTACHMENT

- A. Implementation Advisory Committee Letters of Interest

From: [Susan Wegner](#)
To: [Howerton, Leslye](#)
Subject: Bethesda Downtown Plan Implementation Advisory Committee Interest
Date: Saturday, November 9, 2019 9:02:21 AM

Dear Ms. Howerton,

Please accept my letter of interest to serve on the Bethesda Downtown Plan Implementation Advisory Committee. As a current resident of downtown Bethesda, I am excited about the prospect to assist in implementing the *Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan*.

I bring a unique combination of qualities perfectly suited to the position. Foremost, I have been a Bethesda resident for almost 20 years – but, uniquely, I have had the pleasure of living and raising my children in a more suburban Bethesda setting, and now, as an empty nester, living in the heart of downtown Bethesda. This situation provides me with significant insight into the importance of developing downtown Bethesda in a purposeful and thoughtful manner, while bearing in mind that Bethesda is more than just downtown, and must serve those who live in the nearby neighborhoods.

I am an environmental and land use attorney who is involved, on a daily basis, with implementing and advising various constituencies on development projects and sustainable approaches to building for the future. My practice provides transactional advice on new building projects, urban design, and how to integrate the needs of residents, business owners, and civic leaders, while focusing on issues related to transportation and population density. I also have professional experience with renewable energy consulting and working with business leaders to ensure that projects consider the future impacts of current development.

Finally, I have experience serving on an Environmental Planning Commission at a time when a community was in full-growth mode. That community, Mountain View, California, was then similarly situated to Bethesda now, and being involved in the massive development projects there in the mid-late 1990s provides me with significant and useful proficiency to serve Bethesda today. I look forward to speaking to you and can provide my resume if you'd like.

Cheers,

Susan Wegner
301-254-9151

8002 Kentbury Drive
Bethesda, MD 20814

November 8, 2019

Ms. Leslye Howerton
Master Planning Supervisor
Montgomery County Planning Department
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Re: Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan Implementation Advisory Committee

Dear Leslye,

I am writing regarding the request for nominations for the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan Implementation Advisory Committee ("Committee"). I would like to nominate myself to fill one of the vacancies for local residents on the Committee.

As you know, I have a long history of involvement with the implementation of planning in Bethesda. My engagement has come from my involvement in several development related constituencies, including:

- **Bethesda Urban Partnership:** I was Board Chair and a Board member, for two and six years, respectively
- **Woodmont Triangle Advisory Group:** I was a founding member and advised the Planning Board on implementation on an amendment to the prior Bethesda plan
- **East Bethesda Citizens Association:** I presently serve as President, but was previously President and Vice President of the organization during a period when the prior Bethesda plan was implemented
- **Purple Line Community Advisory Team:** I presently represent the East Bethesda community on this group which advises the Purple Line concessionaire on construction related matters.

In addition to these directly relevant experiences, I have also been a member of the Board of the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail, a member of the Board of the Bethesda Arts and Entertainment District, a member of the Citizens Advisory Board at the National Institutes of Health, and was a prior Chair of the Montgomery County Solid Waste Advisory Committee.

My engagement in these various organizations has provided me with a unique collection of perspectives on development in and around Bethesda. I believe this knowledge and experience could be valuable to the Committee as it works with you and your colleagues to implement the new Bethesda plan.

Thank you for your consideration. I may be reached at (202) 270-0094 or andy.ohare@yahoo.com to address any questions you may have regarding my candidacy for a position on the Committee.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'A' and a long, sweeping tail.

Andrew (Andy) T. O'Hare

From: bensonjdk@aol.com
To: [Howerton, Leslye](#)
Subject: Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan Implementation Advisory Committee
Date: Thursday, November 7, 2019 8:30:48 AM

Dear Leslye,

I am writing to express my interest in serving on the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan Implementation Advisory Committee. As a resident of Bethesda for the past ten years, I have seen many changes and seek to become involved in the successful implementation of future plans. My experiences include over ten years of employment in the banking/finance arena, several masters degrees and varied volunteer work. In addition, having lived in Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco and London my perspective is broad. I have the time, interest to contribute and would love to become more involved in our community.

Thank you,

Jill Benson
202-368-2848

Mrs. Leslye Howerton
Master Planning Supervisor
Montgomery County Planning Department
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

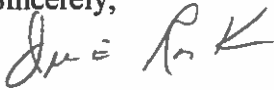
November 7, 2019

Dear Mrs. Howerton:

I would like to participate as a **local resident** member of the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan Implementation Advisory Committee. My wife and I have lived in Bethesda for 44 years. My background is primarily program development, analysis, and evaluation for both the Federal and private sectors. I have expertise in statistics, and in survey and quantitative evaluation, including cost-effective analysis. My education includes a Ph.D. in economics, and I have authored books and published articles. I am retired.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ira E. Raskin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "I" and "R".

Ira E. Raskin
5120 Wilson Lane
Bethesda, Maryland 20814-2436
(301)-802-5745