

Montgomery Planning

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB

Item No. 3

Date: 12-17-20

Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan, Implementation Advisory Committee Appointments



Leslye Howerton, Supervisor, DownCounty Planning, leslye.howerton@montgomeryplanning.org, 301.495.4566



Elza Hisel-McCoy, Chief, DownCounty Planning, Elza.Hisel-McCoy@montgomeryplanning.org, 301.495.2115

Completed: 12.09.20

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Reappoint six members of the Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC) to new terms for the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan.

BACKGROUND

As outlined in the *Approved and Adopted Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan*, in 2017 the Planning Department created a representative and balanced Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC) to coordinate and monitor the progress of development and address implementation of the recommendations in the *Approved and Adopted Bethesda Downtown 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 December 2020, six members' terms are set to expire. On November 6, 2019, Staff sent letters requesting nominations to participate in the Implementation Advisory Committee for the member terms that expire this December. Letters 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), the Town of Chevy Chase, East Bethesda Civic Association, Edgemoor Citizens Association, Battery Park Citizens Association, the Sacks Neighborhood, Chevy Chase West Neighborhood and various individual condominium associations within Downtown Bethesda.

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 may serve two full consecutive terms.

Members are selected by representatives from the Planning Department, Bethesda Urban Partnership, Bethesda Regional Services Center, and Bethesda Green as outlined in the Rules of Procedure. Nine individuals expressed interest and submitted letters, including six current IAC members seeking reappointment. The selection committee and planning staff are recommending that the Planning Board reappoint the six current IAC members to new three-year terms.

PROFILE OF RECOMMENDED COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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

Property Owner /Business Owner Representatives

1. **Emily Vaias, President, Ballard Spahr, LLP (current IAC member seeking reappointment)** 2019-2020 Co-chair of the IAC
2. **Jad Donohoe, Senior Vice President, The Donohoe Companies (current IAC member seeking reappointment)** former chair of the Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board, former member of the Woodmont Triangle Advisory Group, current member of the NAIOP Leadership Committee, and current treasurer of the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment Committee.
3. **Patrick O'Neil, Attorney, Lerch Early and Brewer (current IAC member seeking reappointment)** former chair of the Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce and the Bethesda Urban Partnership

Civic Associations/Homeowners/Condo Associations

1. **Naomi Spinrad, resident of Chevy Chase West neighborhood (current IAC member seeking reappointment)** 2019-2020 Co-chair of the IAC
2. **Susan Wegner, resident representing the Lauren Condominium (current IAC member seeking reappointment)** appointed in 2019 to fill IAC resident seat that was vacated prior to term ending
3. **Michael Fetchko, representing residents of Battery Lane District and Whitehall Condominium (current IAC member seeking reappointment)** appointed in 2018 to fill IAC resident seat that was vacated prior to term ending

OTHER APPLICANTS

The following is a list of other applicants considered:

1. Andrew T. O'Hare, resident and current East Bethesda Citizens Association President
2. James Boomgard, resident of Bethesda since August of 2005 and currently the President and CEO of DAI Global, LLC an international development company with its global headquarters in Bethesda since 1999.
3. Todd Taskey, resident of Bethesda since 2011 and of Montgomery County for 30 years

ATTACHMENT

- A. Implementation Advisory Committee Letters of Interest

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Emily J. Vaias
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November 20, 2020

Via E-mail

Leslye Howerton
Master Planner Supervisor
Mont County Planning Department
2425 Reddie Drive
Wheaton, MD 20902

Re: Reappointment to Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan Implementation Advisory
Committee

Dear Ms. Howerton:

This letter serves as my letter of interest regarding reappointment to the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan Implementation Advisory Committee (the "IAC") for a three-year term. I was originally appointed to the IAC in 2017, with work beginning in 2018, and have served as Co-Chair for 2019 and 2020, representing the business community. I am a land use lawyer, with an urban planning background, practicing in Montgomery County, and am a resident of the nearby Kensington community.

As you are aware, the role of the IAC is to monitor development in Bethesda and provide the Planning Board and other agencies with guidance and recommendations related to implementation of the Bethesda Downtown Plan. As Co-Chair, I have helped prepare the Rules of Procedure for the group, and identified issues and speakers for our monthly meetings. As a group, we have looked at individual projects and provided comments on them as well as on larger policy documents such as the Design Guidelines and Streetscape Standards. We discuss practical issues such as sidewalk obstructions during construction and drop-off/pick-up areas. These everyday functional operations are a large part of what makes and will make Bethesda a successful community into the future.

I enjoy being a part of the IAC and would be happy to be reappointed to continue our good work. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Emily J. Vaias

DONOHOE

Integrity and Vision Since 1884

November 20, 2020

Ms. Leslye Howerton
Master Planning Supervisor
Montgomery County Planning Department
Via email

Dear Ms. Howerton:

Please accept this letter expressing my interest in serving another three-year term on the Bethesda Implementation Advisory Committee, or IAC. I have enjoyed my role as a business member of the board, and as a senior vice president of a company active in Montgomery County real estate I hope that I have brought my knowledge of the business side of development and the “art of the possible” to the IAC.

I am pleased to have served in a variety of volunteer roles in Montgomery County over the last fifteen years and to carry the resulting institutional memory, including former chair of the IAC, former chair of the Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board, former member of the Woodmont Triangle Advisory Group, current member of the NAIOP Leadership Committee, and current treasurer of the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment Committee. I look forward to the possibility of continuing to serve on the IAC.

Sincerely,



James A. “JAD” Donohoe, IV
Senior Vice President
THE DONOHOE COMPANIES, INC.

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Bethesda, MD 20814

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Patrick L. O'Neil
Attorney
301-657-0738
ploneil@lerchearly.com

November 20, 2020

Via E-mail Communication

Ms. Leslye Howerton
Master Planner Supervisor
Montgomery County Planning Department
2425 Reddie Drive
Wheaton, MD 20902

Re: Reappointment to Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan Implementation Advisory Committee

Dear Ms. Howerton:

Please accept this letter as my expression of interest in being reappointed to the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan Implementation Advisory Committee (the "IAC") for a three-year term. I was appointed to the formational IAC in 2017 as a business representative recommended by the Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce and am interested in continuing the Committee's productive work.

I am a land use and zoning attorney with Lerch, Early & Brewer, located in Bethesda, Maryland, and am very interested in the successful growth of Bethesda over the next twenty years of my career. As the former chair of both the Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce and the Bethesda Urban Partnership, I know how important it is to work with a wide variety of partners to ensure that Bethesda remains an attractive destination for businesses, residents and visitors. I was also involved in the Bethesda Downtown Plan approval process and value the role of the IAC to monitor development in Bethesda and provide relevant guidance to the Planning Board and other agencies on the Implementation of the Plan.

I have enjoyed the work of the IAC and hope that I will be able to contribute to it. Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

Patrick L. O'Neil

From: [Naomi Spinrad](#)
To: [Howerton, Leslye](#)
Subject: Reappointment to Bethesda IAC
Date: Monday, November 9, 2020 10:10:10 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear Leslye,

I'm writing to request reappointment as a residential member of the Bethesda Implementation Advisory Committee.

As you know, I'm a resident of Chevy Chase West, adjacent to the South Bethesda area of the Bethesda Downtown Plan. I've been on the IAC for three years, the last two as residential co-chair. In that role, in coordination with the commercial co-chair, I've worked on an update of the Rules of Procedure that I believe will foster collegial problem solving among IAC members, and planned IAC meetings to include presentations of development projects as well as issue-oriented briefings and discussions. With the challenges of Covid-19 now facing us, it's important that the IAC and its members continue to focus on the best ways to keep Bethesda resilient, vibrant, and attractive to current and prospective residents, businesses, workers, and the various organizations that contribute to life here.

My familiarity with Bethesda extends to my involvement as the Plan was created starting in 2014, and as a resident of the BCC area since 1993.

This request has the support of my civic association, the Chevy Chase West Neighborhood Association. If there is any additional information you need, please let me know.

Thank you for considering me yet again for the IAC.

Best regards,
Naomi Spinrad

From: [Susan Wegner](#)
To: [Howerton, Leslye](#)
Subject: Re: IAC terms expiring
Date: Thursday, October 22, 2020 1:30:36 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Hi Leslye,

Per your instructions below, please find below my letter of interest. I assume this is somewhat in advance of when you will ask for these, but I wanted to get it off my to do list.

Given that I was filling a term that was not completed, coupled with the strange and challenging year due to Covid, I would love the opportunity to be reappointed and extend my involvement on the BDIAC. As a current resident of downtown Bethesda, I am enthusiastic about the continued chance to assist in implementing the *Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan*. Particularly with the monumental challenges that lie ahead to areas like Bethesda as a result of the pandemic, I am incredibly motivated to be part of the advisory committee.

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 ツ

On Oct 21, 2020, at 3:30 PM, Howerton, Leslye
<leslye.howerton@montgomeryplanning.org> wrote:

Hi Susan,
I believe for the reappointments last year, we requested the members submit a letter of interest. You can also submit they you were filling a term that was not completed.

Thanks

Leslye Howerton
Master Planning Supervisor, Downcounty Planning Division

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 on the 'y'.

Andrew (Andy) T. O'Hare

From: [Todd Taskey](#)
To: [Howerton, Leslye](#)
Subject: Bethesda Sector Plan Advisor Committee
Date: Tuesday, November 10, 2020 10:30:03 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Leslye,

I am a 30 year resident of Montgomery County and have lived on Manning Drive in Bethesda since 2011.

I am a fan of the development in Downtown Bethesda and also value the mix of residential within walking distance of a nationally respected mixed use environment. I believe there should be a balance between these two factors that encourages development and property value appreciation.

If you think my experience and perspective will be valuable to the committee, I will be happy to contribute my time.

Thanks for your consideration.

Todd Taskey, Principal

Office: 202-567-7151

Mobile: 301-529-1100

[Website - LinkedIn](#)