

# Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC)

## Agenda

Friday, March 1, 2019

- I. COUNCILMEMBER ANDREW FRIEDSON
- II. DISCUSSION OF DRAFT LETTER ON BETHESDA MARKET DEVELOPMENT
- III. NEXT MEETING – Friday April 5, 2019

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

### **Meeting Notes and Attendees:**

Present at meeting on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019:

Committee Members: Amanda Farber, Michael Fetchko, Dedun Ingram, Naomi Spinrad, Anna Fierst, Greg Rooney, Ramsey Meiser, Jack Alexander, Elza Hisel-McCoy, Patrick O’Neill, Jad Donohue

Hyojung Garland and Cristina Sasaki, Presenters for Energized Public Spaces’ Functional Master Plan

Andrew Friedson, Council Member for Montgomery County Council (District 1)

Cindy Gibson, Chief of Staff to Councilmember Friedson

1. Meeting was opened by Amanda Farber at 8:20. It was noted the proposed discussion on the Amenity Fund will be postponed.
2. Recap of Andrew Friedson’s presentation: Councilmember noted in his self-introduction that he is hosting on-line chats every Wednesday at noon as well as informal “Fridays with Friedson” at different area coffee shops. He sits on the PHED Committee and serves as lead for the Council on parks. He also noted that the Council has passed his first bill, dealing with small business issues.

In the Q & A period, a query was posed on the subject of ZTA 19-01, Accessory Dwelling Units. Friedson reply was that he supports the goals of greater aging-in-place and more affordable housing options. He is open to amendments that will change the current situation but his goal is “how to make these work” and not to stop change.

Jad Donohue asked the Councilmember about big projects and Transportation Impact Taxes and how to get in front of projected higher levels of traffic. Friedson noted that Impact taxes are



coming in at a lower rate than was anticipated and will net out at about \$120 million less than expected.

A residential member asked about where these Impact taxes are directed, and answer is that revenues are not always applied to the immediate neighborhood where the development is located. Cuts to the CIP and Transportation committees haven't been completed but estimate for cut to the CIP is around \$100 million.

Amanda Farber asked about the Urban Mobility Plan as it was supposed to be in place by now. She also asked about the previously-stated goal for greater transparency regarding the use and application of Impact Taxes. Cindy Gibson replied that this issue is being addressed but is taking time to resolve.

Before leaving, Councilmember Friedson spoke about the Council's Vision Zero Master Plan which is designed to reduce accidental pedestrian deaths. This involves restructuring engineering plans and would apply different safety standards to different areas of pedestrian/vehicular density.

3. Regarding the Farm Women's Market (FWM), Naomi Spinrad noted that the residential members of the IAC had prepared a draft letter to the Planning Board and Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) and the commercial members had provided a response, but the committee (Amanda Farber and Jad Donohue, outgoing co-chairs, and Emily Vaias and Naomi Spinrad, incoming co-chairs) had not yet had a chance to discuss the two views. EYA and Bernstein requested a delay for sketch plan until May or June; Elza said it might be later than that. The Historic Preservation Commission has met this past January and they have expressed at least several major concerns. Jad D. recommended that the HPC come to an IAC meeting where these concerns can be aired. On this subject, the HPC is due to meet soon with residents who seek a more up-to-date view of potential sticking points and showstoppers.
4. Hyojung Garland, Supervisor for Energized Public Spaces and Cristina Sasaki presented the latest version of the Design Guidelines for public spaces. She pointed out that the plans are not specific to any one particular area, and that Bethesda will be governed by the Bethesda plan. However, these guidelines can be applied county-wide to such areas as privately-owned public spaces, schools, county parks, etc. A pilot project is currently underway in Silver Spring's CBD. More plan documents to be reported out by the end of spring (2019).  
As part of the process, location of shortages is surveyed. EPS's Design Guidelines include references to context, place, comfort, variety and connections. Establishment of Civic Greens is important and Hyojung used examples of Crown Park in Gaithersburg (.23 acre) and Rockville Town Square as a Civic Green/Plaza. Bethesda is to be included in the study plan, and *Bethesda Magazine* has indicated they will publish a report on the results in the summer.

#### **New Business – none**

**Old Business** – Elza Hisel-McCoy commented on Sector Plans (any further details on this?) Dedun Ingram commented that The Bethesda Design Guidelines, which are supposed to be the main tool for controlling building massing and sculpting, were not mentioned in the Implementation Guidelines except in the section on Design Excellence. She urged that they be given a page in the Implementation Guidelines. She also mentioned that MCDOT is purportedly considering re-opening Strathmore St, the



connector road between Woodmont Ave. (right before Wisc. Ave.) and Bradley Blvd. The developers of 700 Wisconsin Ave. stated at their community meeting that Aldon Management Company is pushing to make this a more accessible road. It was pointed out that Aldon is currently more focused on Battery Lane where it will take 10-20 years for full development of six sites. There will be one sketch plan presented for all six sites. Sketch plan may happen sometime in summer of '19.

Both Dedun and Amanda commented that sketch, preliminary and site plans are getting crunched together into very short time frames which doesn't allow enough time for community feedback. Elza commented that this is rare.

Many thanks to Emily Vaias for helping Bethesda Chevy Chase HS find a site for their Spring Art Fair.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 am.

