

# Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC)\

## Notes

Friday, January 7, 2022, 8:00 AM (Virtual Meeting)

Notes taken by Joyce Gwadz

### I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS

Stacey Band and Andy O'Hare were introduced as the two new members appointed to the Committee by the Planning Board, and were welcomed by IAC Members.

### II. PRESENTATION – BETHESDA HOC UPDATE -- Zach Marks, Chief Real Estate Officer, Housing Opportunities Commission.

Zach Marks explained that in his role as the Chief Real Estate Officer of the Montgomery County Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) he runs the day-to-day activities of acquisition and development. Mr. Marks noted that HOC is the public housing authority for Montgomery County, and also provides financing for residential projects and owns interests in properties that aren't all public housing. HOC is the largest landlord in the County, with approximately 8500 units. The Metropolitan, one of the properties owned by HOC, which has 2/3 of the units at market rental and 1/3 affordable, is an example of HOC's mixed income approach. HOC now leans toward having properties with a majority of units market rate, striving for properties that can be self-sustaining with assurance of funds for maintenance and payment of building expenses.

HOC is also focused on preservation of what is now unrestricted "naturally occurring affordable housing" (NOAH), and in July of last year purchased approximately 400 units along Bradley Boulevard from Aldon. These properties clearly offer commercial redevelopment opportunities, and HOC's purchase is intended to assure that affordable housing will not be lost.

Questions and discussion followed, mostly focused on the purchase of the Aldon properties. In response to a question on timing of redevelopment, Mr. Marks responded that HOC is first looking at the property on the north side of Chevy Chase Drive, that redevelopment would be in phases, and that the earliest redevelopment would not begin before three to five years, and more likely five to ten years. HOC believes the properties offer the opportunity to "do things right" with redevelopment, preserving affordable housing, and including green space and other desirable amenities. Some of the buildings are likely to remain as they are indefinitely. Mr. Marks stated that Aldon sold the properties to diversify, but would continue to manage the properties for

a year to assure continuity and allow time to find new property management. Regarding other NOAH properties in Bethesda, owned by Aldon or others, Mr. Marks stated that HOC remains interested in Bethesda.

**III. PRESENTATION – 8001 WISCONSIN AVENUE** -- Vince Burke, Vice President, and Mary Beth Avedesian, Senior Vice President, B. F. Saul Company; Matt Gordon, Partner, and Bob Dalrymple, Partner, Selzer Gurvitch; Trini Rodriguez, Parker Rodriguez; Jeremy Sharp, Tori Gallus + Partners [Matt – Please add the two others whose names I did not fully catch.]

The project at 8001 Wisconsin Avenue is a B.F. Saul project. B.F. Saul’s approach to development is a long-term hold approach, not to build and sell. Its area projects include the Kennedy-Warren, Clarendon Center, Twinbrook, and Hampden House, several with Tori Gallus. The project at 8001 Wisconsin had a positive meeting with the Design Advisory Panel, and is engaged in finalizing details with staff. The project is presently at sketch plan and looking to go to the Planning Board in 2022.

Jeremy Sharp noted that 8001 is an important point along the Eastern Greenway as contemplated by the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan. The property is bordered by Highland Avenue, West Virginia Avenue, Tilbury Street, and Wisconsin Avenue. Trini Rodriguez explained that the project contemplates being one link in a series of parks making up the Greenway, with its portion also serving as a buffer and transition to the single-family neighborhoods. The concept is that the property’s Greenway space will provide places to gather and places for social interaction, with the entire property providing opportunity for attractive streetscape. The planning envisions a neighborhood scale place, serving residents of both the building itself and the surrounding area. The building will step down from Wisconsin Avenue, with the commercial and retail space facing Wisconsin, serviced off West Virginia Avenue. Underground parking will be provided for residents, with some additional for the retail.

Discussion and questions followed. In response to the question whether it would be possible to include evergreens in the project, Ms. Rodriguez responded that the landscape design is in the preliminary stages, and that generally a layering approach is taken, with evergreens, ornamental plantings, and canopy trees, a wide range. Regarding the parking lot owned by the Department of Transportation at Highland and Maple, expected to be a park, the developer of 8001 is working with the County on plans. The timeline for the project is still being worked out, with the sketch plan and preliminary plan to come. On parking, one space per unit is planned for the market-rate units; the building will have 15% MPDUs.

**IV. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION -- LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR PARKS ON LOTS 10 AND 24 AS PROPOSED IN THE BERNSTEIN/EYA FARM WOMEN'S MARKET PROJECT** -- IAC Members

The Members discussed the draft letter of support for the parks on lots 10 and 24 that had been circulated before the meeting, including changes made to the draft circulated and discussed at the December meeting. The letter was unanimously approved as presented. The letter from the IAC will be finalized and delivered to the County Executive and County Council, with copies to others as indicated, following the meeting.

**V. ELECTION OF NEW CO-CHAIRS**

Following discussion, Michael Fetchko was elected Residential Co-Chair by the Residential Members, and Matthew Gordon was elected Property Owners / Business Community Co-Chair by the Property Owners / Business Community Members. The letter of support for parks on Lots 10 and 24 (Item IV) will be prepared and delivered by the new Co-Chairs.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS – FUTURE AGENDA IDEAS**

Stephanie Dickel reported that the Planning Board expects to consider 4900 Battery Lane within the next few weeks, with 4725 Cheltenham and 8100 Wisconsin expected to be on the agenda for February 17. Ms. Dickel also reported that Adam Bossi has joined the Down-County regulatory team, and that Larissa Klevan has joined the Planning staff as a Planning Supervisor. In response to a question, Ms. Dickel indicated that she had nothing to report from the Design Advisory Panel (DAP). Ms. Dickel will send a listing of new personnel and matters coming before the Planning Board to the Co-Chairs.

**VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS (5 minutes)**

The next meeting will be Friday, February 4, 2022.

Meeting Attendees:

IAC Members. [Mike and Matt – Please ask Emily Balmer to confirm this list]

Jack Alexander  
Stacey Band  
Vince Burke  
Jad Donahoe  
Amanda Farber  
Michael Fetchko  
Matt Gordon  
Joyce Gwadz  
Dedun Ingram  
Andy O'Hare  
Patrick O'Neill  
Christopher Smith  
Kristi Smith

Naomi Spinrad

Staff to the IAC:

[Mike and Matt – Please ask Emily Balmer to add]

Others:

Mary Beth Avedesian, B. F. Saul Company

Bob Dalrymple, Selzer Gurvitch

Trini Rodriguez, Parker Rodriguez

Jeremy Sharp, Tori Gallus + Partners

[Matt – Please add the two others whose names I did not fully catch.]