



## Bethesda Downtown

# Implementation Advisory Committee

Est. 2017

Jack Alexander  
Co-Chair  
Commercial Rep

Amanda Farber  
Co-Chair  
Residential Rep

Jad Donohoe  
Commercial Rep

Dedun Ingram  
Residential Rep

Matthew Gordon  
Commercial Rep

Joyce Gwadz  
Residential Rep

Patrick O'Neil  
Commercial Rep

Naomi Spinrad  
Residential Rep

Michael Fetchko  
Residential Rep

Christopher Smith  
Commercial Rep

Andy O'Hare  
Residential Rep

Andrew Saul  
Commercial Rep

Stacey Wolf  
Residential Rep

David Yampolsky  
Commercial Rep

## Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC) Meeting Minutes

Friday, March 7, 2025 @ 8AM

Notes Taken By: Naomi Spinrad

Hybrid Meeting (Microsoft Teams and in-person)

Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce, 7910 Woodmont Ave., Suite 1204

### IAC MEMBERS AND OTHER PARTICIPANTS PRESENT:

IAC Members: Jack Alexander, Dedun Ingram, Amanda Farber, Andy O'Hare, Dave Yampolsky, Naomi Spinrad, Joyce Gwadz, Michael Fetchko,

Other Participants: Henry Coppola (virtual), Elza Hize-McCoy (virtual), Lisa Govoni (virtual), Cindy Gibson (virtual), Darcy Buckley (virtual), Kristin Nelson (WMCCAB, in person)

### I. WELCOME

II. Meet and Greet and Discussion of Shared Interests with Kristen Nelson – Chair of the Western Montgomery Citizens Advisory Board

- A. The WMCAB comprises community representatives appointed by the County Executive and advise County government. Their territory includes the BCC area, Rockville, Glen Echo, Cabin John, and up to Shady Grove west of 355, encompassing parts of D1 and Kate Stewart's district.
- B. They meet the third Monday of the month at 7pm at the BCC Regional Services Center and invited IAC members to their meetings.
- C. A recreation center is a high priority for them, and they've found CMs Friedson and Albornoz to be supportive.
- D. IAC co-chair Amanda Farber said that CM Friedson and others want to work with us on language in the Bethesda Minor Master Plan Amendment regarding periodic check-ins to ensure that amenities like the rec center are moving forward. The IAC also heard from GSA's Greg Ossont about the process.
- E. The Housing Opportunities Commission is pursuing redevelopment of the Avondale properties and Waverly House. A consultant has been hired.
- F. Kristin Nelson noted that the Aldon properties on Battery Lane (now owned by HOC) were also a potential location for a rec center.

### III. Brief Introduction to the Pipeline Project by Planning (Lisa Govoni)

- A. The existing page to view the pipeline is [montgomeryplanning.org/pipeline](https://montgomeryplanning.org/pipeline).
- B. The total unbuilt unit count for the county is approximately 30,000 in 278 projects.  
1986-2005: 3,270 unbuilt units in 65 projects  
2006-2015: 8,002 unbuilt units in 62 projects  
2016-2020: 12,958 unbuilt units in 68 projects  
2021-2025: 5,224 unbuilt units in 83 projects
- C. 80% of unbuilt units are in large residential mostly rental buildings, which diminishes opportunities for generational wealth.
- D. In Bethesda, about 80% of projects have been built, in North Bethesda only 20%.

- E. Scope of work includes getting insight on why projects don't move forward, better tracking progress through the pipeline, effectively communicating findings and recommendations.
- F. Deliverables include identifying the issues, developer questionnaire and interviews, updating data collection and developing solutions.
- G. This will be done in-house and a report provided to the Planning Board in late summer.
- H. Q&A
  - 1. Projects get into the pipeline when they have preliminary plan approval.
  - 2. This covers any project, not just housing.
  - 3. There is no database of built housing, although Planning does a survey every year for COG, working closely with DPS. They hope to automate it more.
  - 4. They are aware that the number of permits does not equal the number of units. Previously, mixed use development counted as commercial.
  - 5. There is no data on when a building is considered built. It should be the use/occupancy certificate rather than permits, although adding permits could be helpful.
  - 6. It would be good to look at how the county can work with developers.
  - 7. The solution for dealing with 30-year-old approvals would be different than newer proposals. Regulations have changed; approvals may not align with county needs. Planning must understand the circumstances first.

#### IV. Status of Bethesda MPPA

- A. We need to figure out how to do a more comprehensive and realistic check-in than annual reports without it being too burdensome. Amanda will share Planning's White Flint report at 10 years for a possible model.
- B. We discussed whether to require it at regular time intervals (4-5 years) or development intervals (by permits/approvals at particular square feet totals) or both. This will be sorted out as the language is drafted.
- C. The IAC should include in its recommendations, relying heavily on the Plan, bullet points about regarding closing the gap between development and amenities, and a timeline.
- D. Co-chairs will prepare a draft and send it out.
- E. Planning expects the Council will act in late April.

#### V. Parks Discussion (con't.) (Henry Coppola)

- A. Parks continues to look at the facilities available to them. These are the two already-purchased properties adjacent to day care centers. Parks hopes to persuade the day care owner to relocate so that her properties are available for purchase, but there are major renovations needed to make those properties conform to various regulations.
- B. The IAC and WMCCAB share concerns about parks in communities adjacent to the Plan area - Norwood, Lynbrook, and Lawton. The cooperative nursery school's lease at Norwood Park is not being renewed and the three-floor activity building's basement and second floor are closed off. Parks has been asked for information about lease agreements and usage for the past two years.

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

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