

# Economic and Business Development Committee Annual Briefing

Mayor & City Council Work Session  
Monday, November 28, 2016

# Committee Members

- Don Fatzie, Co-Chair
- Tracie Seward, Co-Chair
- Henry Bernstein
- Scott Friedman
- Vishal Gupta
- Jeffrey Hines
- John Lin
- Matthew Markiewicz
- Erik Morrison
- Laurie-Anne Sayles
- Colleen Sico
- Tony Salah
- Dileep Thatte
- Phil Usatine
- Chandra Wright
- Council Liaison: Ryan Spiegel

# Strategic Direction: Guiding Principles

- ◉ The City needs a growing and sustainable tax base
  - › A larger tax base provides the resources to achieve its vision
  - › Pays for services and programs
  - › Provides a diversity of employment opportunities

# Strategic Direction: Guiding Principles

- Key Approaches
  - › Focus on retaining businesses currently in the City and helping them grow and prosper
  - › Attract new businesses in growing industries that provide stable, well paying jobs
  - › Outreach and ombudsman role to build strong relationships with businesses and other economic development groups & agencies

# As Ombudsmen, We Highlight Our Strengths...

- ◎ Well Educated Workforce
- ◎ Strategic Location
- ◎ Public Transit Options
- ◎ Local Incentives
- ◎ Municipal Zoning and In-House Permitting & Inspections

# And Help To Address Our Challenges

- Soft Office Market
- Dwindling Lab Space Inventory
- Frederick Avenue Corridor & Olde Towne
- Suburban Image
- Competing Priorities
  - Historic Preservation, Affordable Housing

## 2016 Meeting Topics:

### *Committee Breakfast: Bob Buchanan*

- ❖ Bob Buchanan, Chairman of the newly-established Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation, provided the keynote address for the 2016 Committee Breakfast
- ❖ Discussed ongoing county economic development challenges, as well as potential new approaches to be undertaken through this private/public partnership model

## 2016 Meeting Topics:

### *Height Restrictions Text Amendment*

- ❖ Greg Mann, Planner II, led a presentation and discussion of a proposed Zoning Text Amendment to increase the maximum building height in E-1 (Urban Employment) and E-2 (Moderate Intensity Industrial Park) zones
  - Amendment would increase the maximum building height the above-mentioned zones to 85 feet.
  
- ❖ Committee supported modifying the maximum allowable building height in the E-1 and E-2 zones to 85 feet citing that such a change will:
  - Encourage redevelopment of properties within these zones
  - Support denser development of land, which is a limited resource within the City
  - Create opportunity for greater job creation

## 2016 Meeting Topics: *Watkins Mill Interchange*

- ❖ Discussion followed on the MD Department of Transportation's suspension of the bid process, and possible reconfiguration of, the Watkins Mill interchange.
- ❖ Councilmember Spiegel described the City's response, to date, and staff provided background information on economic development activities affected by the project.
- ❖ Staff agreed to draft a letter to the Governor and other appropriate parties on behalf of the Committee, supporting prompt construction of the full-access interchange as previously planned and funded.

## 2016 Meeting Topics: *700 Quince Orchard Road Rezoning*

- ❖ Attorney Eric Leatham (Ballard Spahr) and representatives from Rock Creek Capital (owners of 700 Quince Orchard Road) presented information on a rezoning application and proposed redevelopment of the former DRS building and two adjacent parcels.
- ❖ Discussion followed on the opportunity for new investment in the properties and the potential impacts of the proposed uses.
- ❖ Members expressed general support for mixed use projects, but were concerned about the condition and future of the former DRS building, particularly once its parking fields are developed into new housing

## 2016 Meeting Topics: *Fishman*

- ❖ Loren Pope from Ellisdale Construction, presented a plan to redevelop the City-owned "Fishman" parcel at 315 East Diamond Avenue.
- ❖ The company is evaluating the site for a potential mixed-use development that would include ground floor retail, 105 upper story apartments, and structured parking.
- ❖ Enterprise Zone benefits and conveyance of the parcel by the City at no cost to the developer will be critical for the project to proceed.
- ❖ Members indicated eagerness to finally develop the long-vacant site, but voiced concerns about an urban-scale project's compatibility with the surrounding commercial district.

## 2016 Meeting Topics: *Park Plaza Update*

- ❖ Staff shared the concept plan for Park Plaza improvements in Olde Towne, which was at 30% design.
- ❖ Discussion followed on integrating the plaza with the Ellisdale/Fishman project.
- ❖ Also discussed was the elimination of surface parking from the project and the balancing of neighborhood business preferences and parking demands.

## 2016 Meeting Topics: *Lakeforest Mall*

- ❖ Staff provided Committee members with a general briefing on the state of Lakeforest Mall, including leasing activity, redevelopment challenges, and the general ways by which distressed commercial properties change ownership.
- ❖ Committee members suggested the composition of a letter to the ownership expressing concerns about the state of the property.
- ❖ Staff was unsure about how effective such a letter would be, and learned shortly thereafter of 5 Mile Capital's debt transferring to special servicing.

## 2016 Meeting Topics: *Johnson Annexation*

- ❖ Rob Robinson, Long Range Planning Manager, presented an overview of the pending Johnson Annexation application for property at the northwest quadrant of Darnestown Road and Quince Orchard Road.
- ❖ Seeking a resolution, there was a motion to recommend that the City annex the property. Discussion followed.
- ❖ Motion was amended to support annexation following appropriate resolution of traffic impacts upon Quince Orchard High School morning traffic, and pedestrian and bicycle access. Approved unanimously.

# 2016 Meeting Topics: NIST

- ❖ Paul Zielinski, Director, Technology Partnerships Office at NIST shared a presentation on the resources available to entrepreneurs and industries at NIST.
- ❖ Discussion followed on ways to promote public-private partnerships between the facility, its employees and associates, and the local business community.
- ❖ A future tour of the campus was proposed.

# 2016 Meeting Topics: CBD/ Automotive Uses

- ❖ Planning staff met to discuss potentially accommodating certain automotive uses as a Special Exception within a portion of the Central Business District (CBD) Zone, along East Diamond Avenue, east of the Grainery (401 East Diamond).
- ❖ Automotive uses are explicitly prohibited within the CBD Zone.
- ❖ Discussion concentrated on the prevalence of auto related businesses currently operating in this portion of the CBD, strong market demand, and various site constraints within this area which make residential and/or mixed use projects challenging.

# 2017 Priorities

- ◉ Lakeforest Mall
- ◉ 355 Corridor Revitalization
- ◉ Olde Towne Revitalization
- ◉ Website Maintenance & Improvements
- ◉ Further Diversifying Local Economy

Questions?