

MCKENNEY HILLS-CARROLL KNOLLS CIVIC ASSOCIATION
Membership meeting held via Zoom Conference Call
June 30, 2021 7:30 p.m.

Approved Minutes

Civic Association President Joshua Montgomery presided; quorum present on Zoom call

Guest Speaker - Barbara Coufal, Co-Chair of the Citizens Against the Beltway Expansion (CABE)

Full remarks shared in writing below.

Civic Association Business

Previous Minutes (December 16, 2020, April 7, 2021) were approved.

Treasury Report - Kerry Murray shared that membership has grown significantly (69 active members last year compared to 204 active members this year), all 2021 budgets items have been under budget to date.

Application for development that impacts a small part of the association area near Forest Glen Rd. Josh Montgomery will share more details on the listserv once available. Response is needed by July 29th.

Committee Updates

Membership Committee - Dave Coyne shared that we currently have 204 active/paid members. Roughly half have never joined before. A lot of folks who have not renewed have moved out of the area. Americana Finmark would like to join the association. Looking at redrawing boundaries in the coming year to include apartments/condos.

Social Events Committee - Kerry Murray and Maggie Flowers shared that the Block Party is July 3rd at the Capitol View Homewood park from 2:30 - 5:30pm. We still need help so please sign up.

Traffic and Safety Committee - Joshua Montgomery shared the following updates: 1) the white posts on Dennis are temporary to assess the impact on traffic (vehicle/pedestrian) accidents over time then determine permanent structures; 2) new island on Evans by Carroll Knolls park was installed as part of the MoCo Eats; and 3) the county is surveying the neighborhood to pave from Dennis to the metro, then Dennis to Plyers Mill - all over the next two years.

Crime Report - Larry Margasak shared that there has been hardly any crime in the neighborhood this year. Please continue to post any incidents that you experience and/or notice on the listserv. As part of the MoCo Eats program alcohol is allowed in Carroll Knolls park until July 1st, after that a permit is needed. Contact the park police (Captain Coe) if you notice any illegal behavior related to this program. National Night out is on August 3rd at the Flora Singer parking lot.

Communications Committee - Maggie Flowers shared that the website has been updated thanks to Jessica Dawson. Events continued to be shared on the website, facebook page, NextDoor, and signs throughout the neighborhood. We also purchase a banner to use at events. Joshua Montgomery plans to post the newsletter after the block party.

Nominations Committee - Pam Ficca provided an update on the status of all of the board positions. Josh Montgomery and Larry Margasak are stepping down as president and vice president respectively, Kerry Murray will run for president, Maggie Flowers will run for vice president, and Dave Coyne will run for secretary. Josh and Larry offered to chair the social events committee, Dave will continue to chair the membership committee, Pam Martha will continue with nominations, and there is an open spot for communications chair. If anyone is interested in running for treasurer or other open positions please contact Pam at nominations@mhckcivic.org

Meeting adjourned.

Reminder: next meeting is Sept. 29th

Full remarks from the guest speaker:

The Maryland Department of Transportation, or MDOT, announced in May that it was scaling back its plan to add toll lanes to I-495 and I-270. MDOT will attempt to move forward to build toll lanes on the Beltway between the American Legion Bridge and Old Georgetown Road, and on I-270 from the Beltway to Shady Grove Road.

MDOT has set aside plans to add toll lanes to the rest of the Beltway east of Old Georgetown Road, through Silver Spring and through Prince George's County. MDOT has not officially cancelled the rest of the Beltway expansion, they're just putting it aside. You can be sure that if Transurban gets a foothold in Montgomery County, they will use their resources to lobby for a contract to add lanes to the rest of the Beltway.

MDOT scaled back the plan, hoping to reduce the opposition to the project. This is a testament to the impact of the grassroots activism against the project.

MDOT will issue a supplemental draft environmental impact statement for the new plan in September. The public will then be given only 45 days to submit comments on the supplemental draft environmental impact statement.

A final environmental impact statement will be issued by MDOT next spring. The final environmental impact statement is very important. It will be the final assessment telling us the financial, environmental and social impacts of the project.

Also, next spring, the Federal Highway Administration will decide whether to approve the project, which is necessary for the project to go forward.

I think it is a hopeful sign that President Biden has issued an executive order that directs federal agencies to consider global warming in their decision making and to also consider whether the adverse effects of a project have a disproportionate impact on communities of color and low-income communities.

MDOT has negotiated a \$50 million predevelopment agreement, or contract, with Transurban to design the toll lanes. Under the agreement, MDOT will have to pay Transurban up to \$50 million for the design work and it gives Transurban the right to construct the toll lanes, if the project moves forward.

The contract has some interesting clauses. For example, if there is a future pandemic, the State would be required to compensate Transurban for the reduction in toll revenues.

In late July (probably July 28), we expect MDOT to ask the Maryland Board of Public Works to approve the predevelopment agreement with Transurban. MDOT is asking for a vote before the final environmental impact statement is done and before we have all of the facts about the impact of the project. MDOT is rushing to get the first contract signed. But it is risky to sign a design contract before the environmental review is done and we get a better understanding of the impacts of the project. MDOT waited on the final environmental impact statement before signing the first contract for the Purple Line. And that project ran into problems anyway.

It is also fiscally irresponsible to sign the predevelopment contract now, because taxpayers will still have to pay Transurban up to \$50 million if the project is not approved by the Federal Highway Administration.

Following MDOT's decision to give the contract to Transurban, one of the losing bidders, Capital Express Mobility Partners, filed a formal protest, challenging the selection of Transurban.

Capital Express argues that Transurban's bid understates the actual cost of the project. This means that Maryland taxpayers will have to pay more subsidies to Transurban. Based on press reports, it appears that Capital Express is preparing to file a lawsuit. But that's not stopping MDOT.

So, this vote by the Board of Public Works is very important and now is the time to register your opposition.

The Board of Public Works is made up of three people: Governor Hogan, State Treasurer Nancy Kopp who opposes the project, and Comptroller Peter Franchot who is the swing vote. It is critical that we make calls to Franchot's office, urging him to delay the vote on the predevelopment agreement until the Final Environmental Impact Statement is available.

The number to Franchot's office is 410-260-7801. And the message is very simple.

I'm calling to urge Comptroller Franchot to delay a vote on the I-495/I-270 contract until after the final environmental impact statement is done. I made my call today. The person who answered the phone didn't ask me any questions. My guess is that they are just keeping a tally of how many people call.

Citizens Against Beltway Expansion puts out a newsletter about once a week with updates on the project. If you'd like to sign up for our newsletter, please go to cabe495.com. Scroll down to the bottom of the page to join our mailing list.