

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMERCE CABINET
JANUARY 13, 2023
MEETING MINUTES**

Attendance

Commerce Cabinet Members:

Keith Miller
Kelly Groff
Aseem Nigam
Avinash (Ash) G. Shetty
Chris Conklin
David Dise
Rich Madaleno

Guests:

Carson Henry
Judy Costello
Carrie McCarthy
Grace Denno
Jake Weissmann

MCEDC Staff:

Bill Tompkins
Christy Blake
Ben Siegel
Patty Simonton
Nadia Khan
Brad Stewart
Phil Singerman

MCEDC President & CEO Bill Tompkins, the Commerce Cabinet Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:08 pm. Ms. Blake was designated to take minutes.

Call to Order: Bill Tompkins, Commerce Cabinet Chair

Mr. Tompkins noted a change and addition to the agenda to provide an brief update on County Council ECON Committee. Mr. Tompkins also acknowledged a new Commerce Cabinet member, Mr. Keith Miller, CEO of the Montgomery County Revenue Authority.

Review and Approval of July 15, 2022, Meeting Minutes

Mr. Ash Shetty moved for approval of minutes; Rich Madaleno seconded the motion.

Update on County Council ECON Committee

Mr. Tompkins reported that he attended a meeting with Councilwoman Natali Fani-González to review upcoming meeting agendas for ECON committee discussions.

Mr. Tompkins also stated that the March Commerce Cabinet meeting would be held on Friday, the 17th.

Update of County Economic Development Strategic Plan

Mr. Tompkins stated that the MCEDC team is working on producing an effective way to track the implementation of the County Economic Development Strategic Plan (EDSP) and ask that the Commerce Cabinet members review the RACI chart outlined in the EDSP and find areas of responsibility for implementation.

MCEDC staff, Patty Simonton, begin the presentation of the EDSP by outlining MCEDC progress on the strategy for the MoCo Innovation Hub and an opportunity for federal funding through the SBA Growth Accelerator Fund Competition (GAFC) to expand the Innovation Hub efforts with a focus on Wheaton.

Rich Madaleno and Jake Weissman expressed some confusion concerning the presentation format and suggested some changes to the presentation verbiage.

MCEDC staff, Nadia Khan, continued the EDSP update to give an overview of an MOU MCEDC is working on with various academic partners. Ms. Khan stated there is a desire on behalf of the academic partners to work on activities related to workforce. There is an expectation by the middle of February to have partners to identify key initiatives to focus the partnership on. MCEDC will convene resources and communicate and aggregate the resources for Montgomery County businesses.

Mr. Tompkins stated that the Montgomery County workforce is not staying in the County, citing that the Universities at Shady Grove (USG) is still not as well-known as it needs to be. Mr. Tompkins further stated that the County must also look at all institutions in the region to pull workforce from those institutions as well.

Mr. Tompkins continued to present on the EDSP by highlighting a collaboration with the Black Business Collective to offer webinars for various business expansion opportunities, working with bank partners and work to expand with other institutions, as well as direct marketing to small and minority owned businesses with various partners. Ash Shetty inquired if there was an opportunity to funnel businesses participating in this collaboration to procurement opportunities with the County.

MCEDC staff member, Christy Blake, continued to present on the EDSP highlighting an official Partnership Intermediary Agreement (PIA) with the National Center for Cybersecurity Excellence (NCCoE), Maryland Department of Commerce and Montgomery County Executive Office. MCEDC will implement the PIA in conjunction with the County Executive Office to kick off a Cybersecurity Connections Initiative connecting small businesses with research and expertise at NCCoE. Ms. Blake also gave an overview of the Wheaton Sustainable Innovation Zone (WSIZ) MCEDC is collaborating on with Bethesda Green (BG) and One Montgomery Green (OMG) for which the group received funding from the Department of Energy (DOE) to implement.

Mr. Tompkins closed out the presentation by stating that MCEDC would keep the Commerce Cabinet up to date on the implementation of EDSP and asked the Commerce Cabinet members for insight on effective ways to aggregate additional updates on the EDSP not related to MCEDC purview.

Update and Transition of Silver Spring Showcase Project

Mr. Tompkins introduced members of the Commerce Cabinet that may not have met Ben Siegel, citing that Mr. Siegel has been working on the creation of the Silver Spring Showcase Project for which he was able to secure a HUD earmark of \$300,000 for implementation of the project. Mr. Siegel will be leaving MCEDC as a consultant to take a full-time position with the Maryland Comptrollers Office. MCEDC staff, Christy Blake, will take over implementation of the project in collaboration with the Silver Spring Regional Center.

Mr. Siegel stated that the Silver Spring Showcase Project has a timeline of 18 months to implement with some work already in progress, including work with Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) with parking at Astro lab as well as targeted marketing to coordinate with Visit Montgomery.

Silver Spring Regional Service Center staff, Carson Henry, was also present to provide an update on progress of the project. Mr. Henry stated that there have been various events in Downtown Silver Spring to offer an opportunity to gain some feedback on the project. Mr. Henry also stated that there is a desire on behalf of the team not to lose momentum on the project during the transition.

Mr. Tompkins stated that this is a success story, a great example of collaboration, and expressed a desire to replicate projects like these.

Commerce Cabinet Member Updates and New Business

Mr. Tompkins highlighted once again the importance of the Commerce Cabinet to implement the EDSP, more specifically the transportation and housing components of the plan. Mr. Tompkins further stated that ECON committee meetings specifically related to transportation and housing will be forthcoming.

Mr. Weissman stated that the council is still trying to figure out parameters between economic development and other areas, such as housing.

Multiple Commerce Cabinet members engaged in a discussion concerning regional tax and incentive comparisons with regard to economic development.

At the suggestion of other Commerce Cabinet members, Mr. Tompkins requested to add Ms. Kathie Durbin, Director of the Montgomery County Department of Alcohol Beverage Services, to the Commerce Cabinet distribution.

Mr. Tompkins reminded the Commerce Cabinet that the next meeting would be moved to March 17, 2023.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:45 pm.