

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMERCE CABINET
FRIDAY, MAY 13, 2022
MEETING MINUTES**

Attendance

Commerce Cabinet Members:

Mitra Pedoeem
Benjamin Wu
Christopher Conklin
Ash Shetty
Grace Denno
Anthony Featherstone
Richard Madaleno

Guests:

Cicero Salles
Jake Weissmann
Tom Lewis
Nadia Clute
Chuck Kines
Luisa Cardona
Luis Estrada
Crystal Ruiz

MCEDC Staff:

Bill Tompkins
Christy Blake
Ben Siegel
Philip Singerman

MCEDC President & CEO Ben Wu, the Commerce Cabinet Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:06 pm. Ms. Blake was designated to take minutes.

FY22 Year-End Economic Development Activities: Continued Discussion

Mr. Wu opened the meeting by inviting Commerce Cabinet members to share information concerning any programs/initiatives to be finalized in the next two months prior to the end of the fiscal year on June 30, 2022. Mr. Wu asked the Commerce Cabinet members to also raise programs within their department that would benefit from other agency support.

Mr. Shetty reported that the Office of Procurement team will be hosting an event for minority businesses at the Grey Courthouse Office Building. It is expected that a 100 people will be in attendance and his team could use the assistance of the Commerce Cabinet to help to get the word out. Mr. Wu encouraged the Cabinet members to share the news about the Office of Procurement minority business

event and noted that MCEDC will be participating. Mr. Shetty also reported that his team will be hosting four quarterly events around various business-related themes in the coming year.

Mr. Featherstone shared with the Commerce Cabinet information on the WorkSource Montgomery Grant Relief for Onboarding Workers (GROW) program, which is aimed at serving minority businesses in the county to provide a grant for hiring. Mr. Featherstone stated that he would like to connect with Mr. Shetty regarding this program.

Mr. Conklin reported that the Department of Transportation is working on several business-related projects, and he plans to reach out to the Commerce Cabinet more often to assist with moving projects forward.

The Montgomery County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Plan

Mr. Tompkins noted that the County Council had ratified the Montgomery County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategic Plan on April 5, 2022. Now that the strategic plan has been approved, the MCEDC team will be further engaging stakeholders and constituents concerning implementation of the plan in the upcoming months.

Mr. Tompkins also reported that MCEDC has hired a marketing firm to create an economic development marketing and branding campaign. On June 28-29, 2022, MCEDC will be inviting stakeholders to a briefing regarding the work of the marketing firm. MCEDC will be using the marketing and branding campaign to enhance the ability to attract to and retain businesses in Montgomery County.

Mr. Wu stated that the Montgomery County Strategic Economic Development Plan is now the public document and roadmap for our strategic priorities. MCEDC will seek to begin the discussion of how to take deliverables from the Plan as projects for collaboration with Commerce Cabinet members and/or is open for discussion or private conversations concerning Plan deliverables.

Ms. Hochberg offered a Commerce Cabinet collaboration example of the Department of Environmental Protection working with MCEDC on the DEP High Road for Economic Development project stating that MCEDC was helpful and engaged.

Noting a quorum, Mr. Wu asked for approval of the March 2022 Commerce Cabinet meeting minutes. Ms. Hochberg motioned; Mr. Conklin seconded at 1:46 pm.

Commerce Cabinet Initiatives Update

Mr. Wu introduced Mr. Seigel to discuss the activities of the Commerce Cabinet Downtown Silver Spring Project.

Mr. Seigel gave a quick update on the Downtown Silver Spring Project, stating that the project received \$300,000 in federal funding from a congressional appropriation requested by Congressman Raskin. Mr. Seigel further reported that he has been working closely with the Silver Spring Urban District to finalize budget and priorities for the funding including wayfinding signage and public art, as well as job training for breweries and other hospitality industries.

Mr. Seigel reported that the Commerce Cabinet will next move to focus on Wheaton. Mr. Seigel has begun some preliminary outreach with community stakeholders in Wheaton and solicited Commerce Cabinet input and suggestions to help identify needs in Wheaton.

Mr. Seigel then asked Wheaton community representatives to offer background of some ongoing projects.

Mr. Kines gave a presentation on the Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan which focuses on how to better link the park with downtown Wheaton.

Mr. Estrada stated he is working on the Wheaton Downtown Study, stating that the County would like to expand upon open spaces in the urban core, citing that access to the core is important, as well as access to open space.

Ms. Ruiz reported that Wheaton is “coming back to life” stating there are Streeetry location opportunities and that the County is looking at Circulator Bus ideas to connect the various communities to the center of Wheaton. Ms. Ruiz also reported that creating connections between businesses for their refuse/waste is an issue and Wheaton and suggested that concept could be a promising idea for a pilot project in Wheaton because of the business population and the desire on behalf of the business community to address refuse issues in the area.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Wu stated that the Commerce Cabinet will continue working to support Wheaton projects for the rest of the calendar year and is excited to get started to support the community.

New Business

Mr. Wu asked the Commerce Cabinet members whether there was interest in meeting in-person. The newly renovated Grey Courthouse Office Building was suggested as the meeting venue next meeting. Mr. Shetty indicated his willingness to have the Office of Procurement serve as the host agency.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 pm.