

**Draft Minutes of Neighborhood Meeting of the West End Civic Association**  
October 10, 2024

**Attendance**

- **WECA Officers:** Margaret Magner, President; Ajay Khetarpal, Vice President; Heidi Liu, Vice President – Outreach; Darlene Pierro, Treasurer; Angela Geer, Recording Secretary; Duane Rollins, Corresponding Secretary
- **WECA Block Captains:** Rick Mui, Chau Nguyen, Rich Panzer, Jane Pontius, Brian Shipley, Rose Slater, Jane Wood, Patricia Woodward
- **Others Attending:** Mayor Monique Ashton, Becky Batt, Patrice Davis, Brenda Dunham, Dutch Dunham, Pete Fosselman, Eric Fulton, Heather Gewandter, Anika Halota, Claire Hannan, Jeffrey Hudgens, D’Anna Jensen, Jack Kelly, Sara Kiesler, Leah Larson-Robin, Zach Larson-Robin, Louise Lovell, Peter Lovell, Eric Mahoney, Mary McEachern, Elizabeth McLaughlin, Jackie Queen, Elizabeth Rizza, Andrew Sellman, Roberta Schneider, Eric Schneider, Doris Schraft, Jeanne Shaheen, Ken Sonner, Councilmember Marissa Valeri, Arria Wilson

**Call to Order/Welcome**

The meeting took place in-person at the Rockville Presbyterian Church meeting room and online via Zoom. President Margaret Magner called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

**Business Items**

• **Treasurer’s Report**

Treasurer Darlene Pierro gave the report. We started September with a balance of \$3,820. We had ad and donation income totaling \$300 during the month, and expenses (newsletter printing, bank and email fees) of \$1,449. Our end of month balance was \$2,671.

• **Approval of Minutes from the Previous Meeting**

The draft minutes of the May 2024 and September 2024 meeting were distributed to the Block Captains in advance of this meeting. A motion to approve them was made, seconded and carried.

• **Public Safety Report from Rockville Police Department**

Lt. Matney reported on police calls in the past month. Residents raised concerns about vehicles not stopping on the four-way stops, speeding around Mannakee Circle and people driving down Anderson Avenue during no-entrance times.

• **Report from the City**

Hjarman Cordero has left the City of Rockville. Mayor Ashton gave the City update:

- It is budget season, please let the Council know what you think! There were QR codes in the back of the room and can be found on the City website to send in feedback on budget opportunities. There is a public hearing Oct. 28<sup>th</sup> on the budget and Rockville Town Center Master Plan.
- There is a Community Needs Assessment currently being done by the City. They are surveys that are sent out to residences at random. If you receive one, please fill it out.
- The City’s Taiwan Bubble Tea Festival had 12,000 visitors.
- The Gun buyback program collected around 900 firearms including ghost guns.
- Hometown Holiday will be coming back to Rockville Town Center in future.

- There are new pedestrian safety features coming to Town center.
- Maryland Housing Secretary Jake Day came to visit and did a tour of Rockville housing.
- Rockville was recognized as the top city in Maryland in Wallethub.
- Councilmember Valeri announced that October is “Walktober” in Rockville, and on Oct. 29<sup>th</sup> there will be a walk to City Hall that ends in a vigil for those that have lost their lives walking or cycling in the City.

### **News and Information**

- **Guest Speaker:**

Heather Gewandter: Stormwater Manager, Environmental Management Division of the City of Rockville

Heather presented on stormwater management, and the Flood Resiliency Master Plan. Some options to help mitigate stormwater flooding include there is a Rainscapes Rebate Program that provides incentives for small stormwater projects with a maximum of \$5,000 per property as well as a Flood Mitigation Assistance Program that offers reimbursement funds to property owners for approved flood mitigation and floodproofing projects. Keep your receipts.

For program updates you can sign up for the Environment & Sustainability newsletter <http://eepurl.com/dtJySD> or for more information please take a look at the Climate Action Plan at [www.rockvillemd.gov/climate](http://www.rockvillemd.gov/climate)

### **Upcoming Events**

- **Holiday Gathering**

- We are having a Holiday Toy Drive Happy Hour at World of Beer on Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>
- Please bring a toy or book to support the Rockville Holiday Drive
- There will be neighbors, food and discounts for those that bring a gift!

- **West Rockville Villages Doggy Halloween Costume Parade**

- Dress up and dress your dogs and come out to Welsh Park on October 26

### **Status of Pending Items**

- **Town Center Master Plan**

A new version of the draft plan was done by the Planning Commission in September 2024 and sent to Mayor and Council for their action. Key changes between this document and the earlier April draft were discussed:

- Parking: the new draft states that new developments being built a half of a mile from the metro station and a quarter mile from a Bus Rapid Transit station do not need to specify how many parking spaces are built with the building. This would cover most of Town Center.
- Building Heights on N. Washington Street: the new plan draft proposed by the Planning Commission would create a “transition character area” on west side of Washington Street between Jefferson St and Beall Ave., with 75 by-right height and a bonus additional height of up to 50 feet (for a 125-foot total limit on those

3 blocks). Projects can qualify for bonus height by including 5% additional affordable housing units and/or green public space in the project.

- This new plan draft is available at <https://engagerockville.com/towncenter>
- The Mayor and Council will hold a Public Hearing on the Town Center Master Plan on Monday Oct. 28<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at City Hall
- Additional work on the plan from the Council and Mayor will be in December 2024 and it is on track to be adopted in January 2025.
- Discussion on this proposal took place and there was a proposal to write to the Council and Mayor to oppose the parking requirement and the higher height limits in the “transition character area”.
- A motion was made, seconded and passed (16 yea, 2 nay, 3 abstentions) to have WECA write a letter to the Mayor and Council addressing the principal concerns about the Planning Commission’s new draft of the Town Center Master Plan raised by residents at this meeting, including:
  - doing away with the minimum parking requirement for development anywhere in Town Center
  - concerns over the increase in building height limits on the Town Center western border
  - discussion by the Planning Commission to potentially change Rockville’s Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) with regard to the standard for Town Center development and school overcrowding. [Although the Mayor and several Councilmembers stated that they will not make changes to the APFO standard for Town Center, several residents in attendance felt strongly that this should still be expressed as a concern.]
  - the last-minute nature of the Planning Commission’s major changes to the Plan draft, in relation to the timing of the public hearing - not giving residents enough time to process the new changes, create an opinion, and give testimony

- **Humane Deer Population Control**

- The public hearing for the Fiscal Year (FY) 26 budget before the Council and Mayor is on Oct. 28<sup>th</sup> at City Hall
- If you would like to speak in favor of inclusion of Humane Deer population control for Rockville in the FY26 budget, please testify that night at City Hall or via Webex.

### **Open Forum**

- Rockville Boards and Commissions have multiple vacancies. Please take a look at open positions at [rockvillemd.gov](http://rockvillemd.gov) if you are interested.

### **Next Meeting**

The next monthly neighborhood meeting will be on November 14, 2024.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.