

Baltimore Casino Local Development Council – Meeting March 18, 2021  
 5:30-6:45PM –  
 Meeting Minutes

Attending:

Name First	Name Last	Title/Reference
<u>LDC Members:</u>		
Alexandria Warwick	Adams	Elev8 Baltimore
James	Alston	Westport Neighborhood Association
Sandra	Brennan	Citizens of Pigtown Community Association
Randy	Conroy	Horseshoe Casino Baltimore
Jill	Donaldson	MedStar Harbor Hospital
Chris	Firehock	Barre Circle Community Association & Ridgely's Delight Associations
Mark	Foster	Second Chance
Michael	Murphy	South Baltimore Neighborhood Assoc.
Willie	Pack, Sr.	Cherry Hill Community Clergy Coalition
Beth	Whitmer	Federal Hill Neighborhood Association
<u>Guests:</u>		
Bill	Carnes	Mayor's Office of Employment Development
Abby	Cocke	Baltimore Office of Sustainability
Brent	Flickinger	Baltimore Department of Planning
Tyler	McCurdy	Office of Senate President Bill Ferguson
Davi	Peterson	Mayor's Office of Employment Development
Jeffrey	Zwillenberg	Reading Partners

Minutes prepared by Ethan Cohen, Senior Program Coordinator, Mayor's Office, Community & Economic Development ([ethan.cohen@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:ethan.cohen@baltimorecity.gov))

1. Meeting started at 5:35 PM. Ethan Cohen announced this is the second LDC meeting of 2021 and is intended to be a review and working session on the FY22 Spending Plan proposed by the City.
2. Introductions by LDC members and guests.
3. Ethan Cohen reported on requirements for Baltimore City Ethics Law–
  - a. All members are required to submit 2020 Financial Disclosure form online by April 30, 2021.
    - i. Link is here: <https://ethics.baltimorecity.gov/financial-disclosure>
    - ii. LDC members should select to register as an “employee/official.”

- b. New members will be required to take Ethics Training and Affidavit. Email information will follow once training dates are set.
- 4. Ethan opened discussion on the budget review process.
  - a. The narrative description of the spending plan was circulated on March 17.
  - b. The deadline for LDC responding with comments is extended to April 23.
  - c. A survey has been provided in Microsoft Forms for LDC members to respond on individual budget items. See survey link here: [Survey](#)
- 5. Presentations by guests and discussions on individual projects or programs were as follows:
  - a. **Reading Partners** – Presentation by Jeffrey Zwillenberg, Executive Director, highlighted transition made by program from in-school volunteer tutoring model for K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade, to setting up students and tutors for online interaction, due to COVID-19 and school closure in spring 2020.
    - i. Challenges have been in enrollment, helping families make this transition to ensuring students’ participation from home, whereas typically the referrals to the program come from teachers, as a pull-out program.
    - ii. Alex Adams asked if program interacts with Community Schools coordinators. Jeffrey responded that Reading Partners are starting to work with the coordinators now to reach families.
    - iii. Willie Pack reported on his positive experience tutoring through the program at Cherry Hill Elementary.
    - iv. Michael Murphy asked if there will be an upside or benefit in innovations developed in response to COVID-19. Jeffrey confirmed that they expect long-term benefits from a future model that is a hybrid of offering in person and virtual contact between students and tutors. Increased family engagement in and awareness of the program is also a benefit.
  - b. **Environmental Education Programming** – Presentation by Abby Cocke of the Baltimore Office of Sustainability (Department of Planning), and Andrea van Wyck of the National Aquarium in Baltimore (NAIB), highlighted work in 13 South Baltimore schools helping them become “Maryland Green Schools” certified, and supporting teachers in developing projects for the City’s Green, Health Smart Schools Challenge Grants.
    - i. Alex Adams asked how in this program we measure success, for example can students receive service-learning credits?
    - ii. Andrea reported that the goal is having all schools certified (“Green Schools”) and increase participation in the challenge grants.
    - iii. Ethan suggested that this program should also interact with the Community Schools coordinators to ensure they are aware of this

opportunity as part of the overall landscape of programs and resources in each school.

- iv. The next steps is for NAIB to provide an updated scope restarting work with schools after the suspension in 2020, with plans for 2021-22.

**c. Employment Connection Center** – Presentation by Davi Peterson, Director, and Bill Carnes, Business Services Representative, Mayor’s Office of Employment Development (MOED):

- i. Following closure of the Center for in-person contact due to COVID-19, staff pivoted to online and remote (phone) services for jobseekers and employers. Employers have been holding recruitment events online (Facebook Live, e.g.). Bill Carnes joined the ECC in 2019 and has organized approximately 40 recruitments in 2 years.
- ii. Center staff hope to reopen soon. Businesses report need for new hires. Goal is to reconnect with businesses and community groups to get the word out. Since the February LDC meeting, Ethan and MOED staff have met with Carroll-Camden Business Association, Horseshoe Casino and MedStar Harbor Hospital.
- iii. Ethan asked if additional space will be needed to reopen to the public, in order to hold events with proper social distancing. Staff reported that they can use the union hall in the AFSCME building where the Center is located.
- iv. James Alston requested a report that would show the impact and expenditures of the ECC programs. Brent Flickinger stated it would be interesting to know how many businesses within Carroll-Camden Industrial Area use the Center’s services.
- v. Bill Carnes reported that COVID-19 created a setback in the momentum that the ECC was seeing in increasing walk-in traffic. Ethan encouraged outreach to small businesses in Pigtown Federal Hill through the Main Street organizations.

**d. Warner Street Entertainment District** -- Horseshoe Casino Baltimore’s General Manager and LDC member Randy Conroy gave a presentation on plans for the Warner Street Entertainment District and the proposed allocation of FY22 and future LIG funding for capital costs related to the project.

- i. The overall development represents an \$250M in future private investment for the main new components of the district: Topgolf, Paramount Baltimore, a hotel and site “1301” (use/program to be determined). Horseshoe and its development partners to date have spent over \$14M on the assembling properties plus pre-development costs.

- ii. The request for LIG funds is to cover improvements to the public right-of-way (within the street bed) on Warner and Stockholm Streets. This will involve moving and in some cases eliminating curbs to create a pedestrian-oriented environment with seating, lighting and landscaping; accommodating a multi-use trail, separated from vehicle traffic for the route of the Gwynns Falls Trail, which runs through the district, and extensive sub-grade infrastructure for relocating and upgrading utilities within the street bed.
- iii. The estimated cost of the street upgrade project is \$10 to 11M including engineering, with \$1-2M to come from the property owners, \$3M pledged by the state in the FY22 budget, and \$400,000 committed from City general funds. The FY 22 LIG spending plan proposes \$600K for engineering/design, and \$2.5M each in FY23 and FY24 for construction.
- iv. Discussion:
  - a) Sandy Brennan and others raised the question as whether this was a valid use of LIG funds.
  - b) Willie Pack asked how the City and Horseshoe are addressing trash, particularly in the water of Ridgely's Cove in this area, and public safety (security). Ethan highlighted current services contracted with LIG funds for capturing and removing trash from the outfalls around Ridgely's Cove and the installation of trash wheel at the Gwynns Falls expected to next month. Randy referred to BPD's casino sub-district currently serving the area around the casino; a service that will continue and could be expanded as more venues/activities area added.
  - c) Michael Murphy asked about how the traffic to be generated by these developments has been studied for its potential impacts on the neighborhoods of South Baltimore, especially for the aggregate effects during stadium events.
  - d) Chris Firehock asked about how the development will seek to take advantage of public transit via the Hamburg Street Light Rail station.
  - e) Ethan stated that LIG funds had been used in the past for repayment of major infrastructure investments in the area around the casino, leveraging this funding source to support the ultimate buildout of the entertainment district, which was cited as a priority initiative in the 2015 South Baltimore Gateway Master Plan. This is the next/final phase in that plan. Also, the trail

connection and creating a destination here as the Warner Street Entertainment District is part of the overall Middle Branch Master Plan vision.

- e. Brent Flickinger stated that the South Baltimore Gateway Master Plan is the guide for how LIG funds are to be deployed over multiple years.
    - i. James Alston acknowledged the Master Plan but recommended we start a process to evaluate outcomes of past investments and look at updating funding priorities where appropriate based on community needs today.
6. Discussion of next steps
- a. Ethan asked that members review the budget and the survey in the next two weeks, and suggested we meet again in three weeks. (Note, please include your name, so that we can follow up with you on questions/comments) Link: [Survey](#)
  - b. Subsequent to the meeting, Senate President Ferguson asked that the next meeting be held after the end of the General Assembly session during the week of April 19. Two timeslots to hold are Wednesday, April 21, from 5-6pm and Thursday, April 22, from 5:30-7PM.