

Howard County Economic Opportunity and Prosperity Task Force

Economic Development Subcommittee Meeting

C. Vernon Gray Room – Howard Building – September 6, 2018

Minutes

The meeting began at 3:10 p.m. The following individuals were in attendance: Ali Abidi, Roger Barnes, Melissa Metz, Peter O’Neil, Jay Parekh, and Jeff Meyers (Council staff).

The subcommittee discussed possible areas for recommendations.

Mr. Ali suggested that the County was appropriating insufficient funds to meet the housing needs of lower-income workers and job seekers. Ms. Metz indicated that the County should encourage housing be built for these individual near transit hubs and employment centers. Mr. Parekh noted that it is important to have a balance between residential and non-residential development. Non-residential should be sited so it is convenient to the needs of both employers and employees. Mr. Barnes noted that, to avoid concentrations of poverty, affordable housing should be part of mixed-use developments. Mr. Parekh and Mr. Barnes recommended that County’s plan for transportation systems should be designed to serve the needs of the workforce and employers. For the County’s current Transportation Plan, see Council Resolution 48-2018, <https://apps.howardcountymd.gov/olis/LegislationDetail.aspx?LegislationID=3025>. See also <http://www.kfhgroup.com/centralmd/transitplan.html>.

Mr. O’Neil reminded the subcommittee that it should also consider long-range plans, for example, master plans for Gateway and similar commercial districts. Ms. Metz suggested that the subcommittee should recommend a study of taxes and fees associated with development and a study of the economic costs and benefits of different kinds of development. The results of the studies will illuminate future decisions on how to manage development.

The subcommittee discussed the County’s approach to promoting local businesses through the County’s purchasing policies. Those policies merely set vague goals and should be strengthened. The subcommittee noted that the surrounding jurisdictions have more concrete procurement initiatives for their local businesses.

The subcommittee discussed the need for coordination and outreach among the non-profits in the County and how the County government contributes to that sector. For more information about the County’s Community Service Partnerships, see: <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/Departments/Community-Resources-and-Services/Office-of-Community-Partnerships/Community-Service-Partnership-Grants-Program>.

The meeting ended at 4:10 p.m.