



BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
February 18, 2020 7:45 AM
BUP Conference Room

AGENDA

- 7:45** **Welcome** (*Debbie Michaels*)
- 7:45** **Approval of Minutes**
- 7:45 - 7:55** **Marketing/Arts & Entertainment** (*Stephanie Coppula, Jane Fairweather*)
- 7:55 – 8:00** **Maintenance** (*Jeff Oyer*)
- 8:00 – 8:10** **Mobility** (*Kristen Blackmon*)
- 8:10 – 8:15** **Financial Report**
- Financial Statements – January 31, 2020 (*Sarah Wolek*)
- 8:15 – 8:40** **Executive Director Report** (*Jeff Burton*)
- 8:40 – 8:50** **Chairman’s Report** (*Debbie Michaels*)
- Committee Updates
- 8:50– 8:55** **Other Updates/New Business**
- 8:55 – 9:00** **Executive Session - Personnel**
- 9:00** **Adjourn**

BETHESDA URBAN PARTNERSHIP, INC.

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting

January 21, 2020

Board Members Present: Debbie Michaels, Greg Rooney, Jane Fairweather (via conference call), Sarah Wolek, Robert Donohoe, Andrew Jones (via conference call), Heather Dhlopolsky (via conference call), Marian Block, Katya Marin and Brian Wynne

Staff Present: Jeff Burton, Stephanie Coppula, Kristen Blackmon and Jeff Oyer

Guests Present: Ginanne Italiano – Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce
Dan Schere – Bethesda Beat

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 7:45 a.m. by Debbie Michaels

Debbie Michaels welcomed Brian Wynne as a new board member representing the Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce.

Minutes:

Debbie Michaels asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the previous Board meeting. A motion was made and seconded to approve the November 19, 2019 Board of Director's meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Marketing Report:

Stephanie Coppula reported on upcoming events. Play in a Day will be held on Saturday, Feb. 22nd at 8pm at Imagination Stage. Six area theater companies are participating and the event kicks off on Friday, Feb. 21st when the writers come to downtown Bethesda to learn their assigned prop and line of dialogue and writer overnight to then turn their scripts in on Saturday morning to the directors and actors who rehearse until the 8pm start time on Saturday evening. Tickets are only \$15 and Stephanie encourages everyone to attend.

The Bernard/Ebb Songwriting Awards will be held on Friday evening, March 13th at the Bethesda Blues and Jazz Club. Finalists have just been selected and Stephanie noted the local youth finalists – one from Holton Arts in Bethesda another youth finalist who is a 7th grader.

The finalists for the Bethesda Film Fest will be selected this week.

The RFP for a mural on Garage 35 (Woodmont & Rugby Avenues) will be issued within the week for local artists to submit their designs for this project.

Members of the A&E Board are also working on a temporary art installation of colorful pool noodles on the pedestrian bridge located above Old Georgetown Road.

Bob Donohoe also asked about the Capital Crescent Trail pedestrian bridge over Bradley Boulevard and the status of that project for a public art mural. Stephanie stated that we are also interested in that project and are hoping to receive funding from a developer working on a new project as part of their amenity package in order to complete this mural.

Maintenance Report:

Jeff Oyer reported that approximately 15 dead trees have been removed and replaced within the last month.

J. Oyer noted that most of the winter work now is dedicated to the pruning and maintenance of the 1,200 trees within the urban district.

J. Oyer reported that the Ambassador Team was busy in December having been in contact with or assisting approximately 1,200 urban district residents or visitors.

BTS Report:

Kristen Blackmon reported that the County Council passed the new TDM bill expanding transportation management from the current TMD areas to all parts of the County. Council still needs to develop Executive Regulations and fees for the office and multi-family residential buildings.

K. Blackmon stated that MCDOT is editing a final “Bethesda Unified Mobility Program” (BUMP) document that will prioritize transportation engineering projects in and around Bethesda. This will be sent to stakeholders, including the Board for review and feedback to MCDOT. The Board would like to make sure that items in the Program document will specifically help downtown Bethesda achieve the 55% mode share goal.

K. Blackmon stated that BTS hired a new Employer Outreach Representative, Brandan Stuckey to replace the previous Employer Outreach Representative who is now BUP’s Special Projects Manager.

K. Blackmon encouraged Bethesda employers to fill out an online nomination form on their employee transportation program to win a regional award from the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, Commuter Connections.

Financial Report:

Sarah Wolek presented the financial report for the six months ended December 31, 2019 noting that things are looking quite strong financially over the first half of the year. S. Wolek reported that revenues are \$34,000 over budget due to high Taste of Bethesda sponsorships. S. Wolek also noted that expenses are \$74,000 under budget. A large portion of this variance is in the salaries and benefits categories. These variances will continue to fluctuate throughout the year due to the restructuring that was done in the fall. Most of the other variances can be attributed to timing. J. Oyer noted that due to the restructuring, the monthly financials will continue to show some unusually large variances. The important numbers will come from year-end projections which we will start to put together in the next month or two.

Executive Director Report:

Jeff Burton thanked everyone for their help and attendance at BUP’s 25th Anniversary celebration, and commented that all of the feedback from staff and partners that attended was overwhelmingly positive.

J. Burton reported on the results of the Bethesda Circulator ridership survey. All feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and in all 4 categories of service the scores were 85% or more

with marks of 4-5 on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being not satisfied and 5 being highly satisfied. In the additional comments to improve the service section there was no overwhelming theme as was evident in the last survey when a majority of riders asked for a route expansion.

J. Burton reported that he had reached out to about 25 of his colleagues with IDA to see if other downtowns had downtown Apps. He indicated that none of the downtowns had Apps, and that all of the downtowns advised against them as long as we have a robust mobile website, which we do, as they both function the same.

J. Burton reported that BUP's efforts to go "Green" by becoming chemical free and by using battery powered equipment instead of gas powered continues. BUP is developing a partnership with Bethesda Green and the local schools to form teams that will be assigned specific areas and will pull weeds beginning in the Spring.

J. Burton reported on BUP's meeting with the new Urban District and PLD Budget Analyst for OMB that was attended by Ken Hartman, Derrick Harrigan and Jeff Oyer. In the meeting BUP explained their desire to be in agreement with the County Executive's recommended budget when released, and asked that BUP be treated equally with the other urban districts in requests for increases for fixed overhead costs like compensation adjustments, rent increases and insurance increases. The analyst seemed to agree with our opinions, and was going to take the message back to OMB for consideration.

J. Burton updated the board on the status of the staff's 2020 enhancement plan for programs and events, and indicated that the plan would be ready for presentation and discussion at the February Board meeting.

Chairman's Report:

Debbie Michaels thanked the staff for their hard work in hosting a very successful 25th anniversary celebration with the entire BUP family in attendance. It was a great success with much positive feedback.

S. Coppola gave a update on the branding committee noting that the current focus will be on updating the Bethesda Urban Partnership logo to place a stronger emphasis on the "Bethesda" in the logo as well as get updates on the corresponding brands, Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District and Bethesda Transportation logos. Additionally, the RFP will also ask for a tagline to go along with these logos. An RFP will be drafted, reviewed by the Branding Committee and sent to local as well as national companies with expertise in branding and downtown marketing. Long term, branding is a multi-faceted project to fully address all of Bethesda and its current and future growth while reaching far beyond our boundaries.

D. Michaels thanked Kristen for the most recent BTS meeting and bringing in Michael Paylor, Division Chief, Division of Traffic Engineering and Operations. M. Paylor discussed pedestrian safety, crosswalks and hawk systems. Advised they are looking at areas to install, working with SHA and are involved in mid street crossing on Wisconsin Avenue. He advised at this point they are in reactive mode and would like to be moving into proactive mode. He encouraged residents to reach out with problem areas that need to be addressed.

The BTS meeting also engaged in the Draft CIP budget and encouraged residents to comment to planning on their thoughts and concerns, especially regarding the Trail Tunnel which was unfunded in the current Draft CIP.

Other Business:

No new business.

At this time a motion was made and seconded to adjourn the Board meeting and move into executive session to discuss personnel issues. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Next Meeting: February 18, 2020