

**Prince George's Advocates for Community-based Transit, Minutes of the Meeting of Nov. 14, 2011, Hyattsville City Hall, 5:05-6:15 p.m.**

Present: Karren Pope-Onwukwe presiding; Patrick Gallaher, Norma Merritt, Bill Orleans, Gloria Swierenga, and Bill Wilson

1. While folks were gathering Deni Taveras, from the Annapolis office of Senator Victor Ramirez (District 47), was present, representing the Senator until Gallalher, a new staff member, could arrive to stay for the whole meeting. Introductions were made. It is the Senator's intention to have a staff member at our future meetings.

Those present were invited to the Senator's Open House on Wed., Nov. 16, at the Rollingcreat Center on Sargeant Road in Chillum at 7 p.m. [Wilson did attend to hear several heads of County Departments speak briefly and then the County Executive at some length.]

2. The minutes of the meeting of Oct. 10 were accepted as distributed. With the help of Laura DeSantis of the Coalition for Smarter Growth those minutes were posted on the PG ACT website under "Resources". The intention is to do that monthly.

3. Wilson reported a current checking account balance of \$71.04. By the end of the meeting with a \$5 gift from Swierenga and a \$25 gift from Merritt the balance was brought up to \$101.04.

Wilson reported on trying to find a local branch bank with which we could have a very small, no fee, checking account. The choice was the State Employees Credit Union (SECU). The Board approved opening an account there, after closing out our account with SunTrust, and now having signing privileges for Sec./Treas. William Wilson and Co-Chair Karren Pope-Onwukwe.

4. Karren reported receiving mail about the Purple Line, including a recent newsletter. Wilson had attended a Purple Line open house on Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> at the Beacon Heights Elementary School. There he picked up an invitation to a public meeting on the proposed Riverdale Road stop for Nov. 15, from 6:30 to 8:30, also at the Beacon Heights Elementary School. [Wilson was not able to attend the meeting on Nov. 15.] That was the first of five such meetings being coordinated by Bill Washburn, a planner for the Prince George's County Planning Department of the M-NCPPC. Washburn's meetings are to consider the future of transit-oriented development along the planned Purple Line light rail transit corridor. For more details of these future meetings, contact Washburn at email: [william.washburn@ppd.mncppc.org](mailto:william.washburn@ppd.mncppc.org) or 301-952-3166.

Two more such meetings have been set for 6:30 p.m.: Dec. 7 at St. Bernard's Church off Riverdale Road for the Riverdale Park stop near the intersection of Kenilworth and Rt. 410, and Dec. 13 for proposed stops at College Park and at M Square to be held at the Park and Planning Office on Kenilworth Ave.

5. Karren reported having received a copy of the BUSINESS GAZETTE for Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>, which contains several articles on growth and need for improved public transportation. “The Blue Ribbon Commission on Maryland Transportation Funding recently recommended a 15-cent gas tax increase phased in over three years, plus other vehicle fee increases, to help generate \$870 million annually to pay for transit initiatives and local road repairs” (p. B-8).

Bethesda attorney Jack Garson “...said raising the gasoline tax is only fair, ‘so that all of the costs of driving are borne by drivers. This will increase the cost of driving to an amount that more closely approximates the true expenses created by driving.’ ... ‘I would devote a large share to improving and constructing mass transit, especially subway systems. I would entirely eliminate the fee to users of the subways and run the trains on a 24/7 continuous basis,’ Garson said” (p. B-8).

On p. B-2 there is an interview with Gus B. Bauman, chair of the Maryland Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation Funding.

6. Karren reported on a Nov. 1, 2011 Purple Line Press Conference at the Stamp Student Union at the University of Maryland, College Park, at which she was the mistress of ceremonies. This well attended event was intended to show regional support for the Purple Line. The eight speakers are prepared to support the proposed increase in the gasoline tax, if the money goes for repair of roads and bridges and for the Red Line (in Baltimore) and the Purple Line

7. Karren reported that Accessible Taxi, Inc. of Montgomery County asked Prince George’s County for permission to operate their six-passenger vans in PG County. The County Council voted 5 to 4 to issue 15 medallions for these vans. The cost will be borne in part by private investors and matched with funds from Metro COG. Swierenga, who sits on a commission dealing with the needs of the disabled, augmented the discussion from her knowledge, having sat through the presentation to the Council and the discussion that followed. Seniors will be able to use their vouchers. To make the system more efficient the routing will be computerized using GPS information. The drivers will be given instruction on how to interact with persons with disabilities.

8. Karren said that plans are afoot to introduce an accessible route on Rt. 1 for The Bus, sort of like a circulator. That might go from Bladensburg to Ikea. The Bus would partner with the Anacostia Trails people.

She then reminded people that there was that night (Nov. 14) a Metrobus Hyattsville Area Meeting that had started at 6 p.m. Presentations and customer feedback was scheduled for 6:30. The purpose to that meeting was to receive feedback about revised plans to adjust bus service in Prince George’s County. Changes were made to the plans first introduced at Metro public hearings in October. [ Board member Joel Ryerson had skipped our meeting to attend this Area Meeting. Orleans and Wilson arrived by 6:30. Both Orleans and Ryerson spoke.]

9. Orleans said that there was an article in the MONTGOMERY EXAMINER that morning on Transit Oriented Development (TOD) that said that planners should look beyond trying to find federal anchors for land around Metro stops and instead seek private partners. Karren said that she had attended in October a meeting on TOD and private partnering. Given the current economic situation business men need to rethink how to do business, e.g. factoring in the cost of gasoline.

10. Karren talked about the fact that Congresswoman Edwards had secured some federal planning money to study getting rail on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. The County Planning Department and DOT are working on that, but we need Virginia involvement in the planning process. Karren said that Peterson, the developer of National Harbor, needs rail on the bridge for both employees and customers. The water taxi system is not sufficient to bring customers from Alexandria.

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON Mon., Dec. 12, 2011, at 5 p.m. at the Hyattsville City Hall.

Notes prepared by Bill Wilson on Nov. 21, 2011