

**Special Committee on the Bethesda Downtown Plan**  
**Wednesday, August 31, 2016**  
**7:00 pm, Town Hall**

**Attendees:** Cecily Baskir, Barney Rush, Deborah Vollmer, Mona Sarfaty, Dedun Ingram, Chris Files, John Freedman, Pat Burda, Karen Elkins, Jean Shorett

**Key Upcoming Dates:**

Sep 13: Public Hearing on Subdivision Staging Policy (SSP) draft  
Sept (mid): Deadline to Prepare Special Edition of the Forecast  
Oct 18: Public Hearing on Bethesda Downtown Plan (tentative date)  
Nov 15: Planning Board to rule on SSP draft

**Community Meeting:** The first order of business was finalizing the date for the Town informational meeting on the BDP. Based on the dates for the SSP public hearing and the tentative BDP public hearing, we decided to hold the Town meeting on Thursday, October 6, 2016 at 7:30 PM in the Town Hall. Because the BDP public hearing will not be held earlier than October 18, but could be moved to a later date, this will allow sufficient time to take advantage of comments gathered during and shortly after the meeting when the Town's testimony is prepared for the public hearing. In addition to the main focus on the BDP, the Town meeting will also include brief updates on floating zones. The date and time will be announced via the Town Crier, and information added to the TOCC web site.

**Draft memo on SSP from the BDP committee to the Town Council:** Guided by a memo drafted by Cecily, Barney, and Dedun, the committee then discussed specific elements in order to finalize recommendations. Some positions in the draft were either previously discussed or were not controversial, and remained as drafted (e.g., support for the draft SSP with regard to schools; oppose the exemption of Metro Station Policy Areas from LATR; not oppose making MSPAs exempt from the Transportation Policy Area Review [TPAR]), but instead focus on three measures to compensate for its elimination). After discussion, committee decided to provide the following recommendations to the Town:

- Oppose the Transportation Impact Tax reduction of the adjustment factor for residential development from 50% to 25%; funds continue to be needed to support transportation infrastructure improvements, and other important amenities like parks
- Take no position on the parking incentive issues
- Take no position on the TPAR for Orange Policy Areas

The committee also reiterated its interest in maintaining strong Local Area Transportation Reviews and collection of high quality traffic data that is used in a timely fashion.

**Town informational meeting on the BDP:** The committee then discussed goals and structure of the upcoming meeting. The meeting will be informational, and will describe options that the Town may choose to support, with specifics about the recommendations that the BDP Committee is leaning toward. Feedback from attendees may be obtained by providing a paper survey or comment sheet to be collected at the end of the meeting, and by prompting attendees to provide feedback to the Town by e-mail. The 8/30/16 draft of the materials for the special insert for the Forecast currently includes two possible recommendations, and more may be considered.

**Task Force Updates:** With regard to progress by the subgroups, the following updates were provided:

- **Jaffe Property:** A listening meeting with the attorney for the project, Stacy Silber, is upcoming.

- **Density:** More information on current development and permitted development will be forthcoming from the planning staff; when all information is available, Mona will summarize this. Because there is strong interest in the Town recommending a staged approach to BDP development, the Density task force was asked to consider what square footage stages might be recommended, and what metrics could be used to trigger a move to the next stage. John noted that having adequate public facilities and transportation being in balance are generally well-accepted metrics, and that these have roles in the White Flint and Chevy Chase Lake plans, providing precedent. John will work on a spreadsheet for staging, although the Town's testimony for the October public hearing can strongly recommend the concept without needing to include specific targets yet.
- **Parking lots:** Barney noted that there is no obvious path or tool which would allow Lots 10 and 24 to remain surface level parking. On the other hand, the designation of both lots as Priority Sending Sites is potentially a tool that would allow the lots to become parks, if the economics could be worked out. Further, there is a risk to the Town not seeking this option. Therefore Barney suggested the committee further consider this approach, although internal disagreement remains.

**Upcoming meeting schedule, leadership, and action items:** Cecily announced that she will shift from co-chairing the BDP Special Committee to leading the Jaffe team. The committee will go to a schedule of meeting every other Wednesday at 7 PM, with the next meeting set for Wednesday, September 7. Volunteers to finalize Forecast materials and plan the October 6 meeting should contact Barney as soon as possible. Small groups will meet as needed to make progress on the committee's activities.