

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: John L. Fitzwater
Acting City Manager

SUBJECT: *Status Report*

DATE: September 22, 2016

Status Report

1. Traffic Calming Improvements

Construction to install traffic calming improvements to Jennings Mill Drive in the Hamptons at Woodmore community is scheduled to start on October 3rd. These improvements include: a center island median located at the Church Road intersection, a center island median and crosswalk located just east of 801 Jennings Mill Drive, edge lines along the length of the street between the two new center island medians, and required traffic signs.

These traffic calming measures are being implemented in accordance with the City's Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP) in response to a request from the Hamptons at Woodmore Homeowners Association. As required by the NTMP, the proposed measures were endorsed by more than 60% of the residents on the affected section of the street.

A letter (attached) providing notification to residents of the planned construction start has been mailed to those residents in the area of work on Jennings Mill Drive (between 711 and 921 Jennings Mill Drive).

2. Foam Free in PGC

The City's Sustainability Planner has been coordinating with the County to host a "Foam Free in PGC" Webinar. It will be on Oct. 4th from 10 - 11 a.m. and will be an opportunity for Bowie Businesses to learn about the new Prince George's County Foam Ban. Register for the webinar with this link: goo.gl/1GtLuH or contact FoamFreePGC@co.pg.md.us. As of July 1, 2016, polystyrene (commonly referred to as "Styrofoam"), polystyrene loose fill packaging (also known as "packing peanuts") and other foam articles are not permitted for sale or use in Prince George's County. The County is requiring the use of non-foam food packaging products that are environmentally-friendly. There are many non-foam food packaging alternatives (such as recyclable and compostable containers that are rigid plastic or paper-based). This ban will help to reduce the amount of foam waste entering the landfill and local waterways.

3. Fall Plant Sale this Saturday

Plant now for spring. The annual Fall Plant Sale sponsored by the Bowie-Crofton Garden Club and the Bowie Green Team will take place this Saturday, September 24th from 8 a.m. to noon at the Bowie Library. The sale will be held in the library parking lot. There will be a wide selection of nursery-grown and member-grown plants including natives, perennials, and pollinator attracting plants. Proceeds support Bowie schools and other local programs.

4. Watershed Plan Update

In accordance with Objective 5, Complete a Watershed Plan by June 30, 2017, in the Planning Department's FY 2017 budget, staff have been in contact with National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's approved Technical Assistance Providers. Biohabitats will be submitting a grant request on behalf of the City for \$50,000 to supplement the City's budgeted \$20,000. If awarded in November, the plan would consist of a spot stream assessment, neighborhood characterization for pollution prevention, and an analysis of the existing stormwater retrofit inventory to provide comprehensive recommendations for watershed improvement.

5. Melford Assisted Living Facility Questions

At the September 19th City Council meeting, Ms. Martha Ainsworth raised several questions regarding the Assisted Living Facility proposed by Thrive at Melford, which is scheduled for a hearing before the Prince George's County Planning Board on September 29th. At Council's request, staff is providing responses to the points made by Ms. Ainsworth:

1. ***The 140 suites will NOT be counted against the residential cap at Melford.*** Staff Response: In its April 21, 2014 public hearing decision regarding the CSP, Council determined that the residential component should be revised to include 1,000 senior multi-family units (which may include assisted living facility units), 1,000 non-senior multi-family units and 500 townhome units. The Council stated that this change will provide more opportunities for seniors, reduce the high number of market rate multi-family units and generate less traffic overall. The proposed Preliminary Plan of subdivision for Melford Village requests approval of 205 townhouse units, 1,500 multi-family units and 88 two-family units, resulting in a total of 1,793 dwelling units. As an institutional use, the 140 assisted living facility units are not considered separate dwelling units; however, they will be almost exclusively occupied by seniors, and those units will be credited toward the 20% minimum senior units required by the Annexation Agreement. Even if these units are counted as separate dwelling units, the overall development would not exceed the 2,500 dwelling unit cap.
2. ***The proposed parking spaces in the Detailed Site Plan (50, of which 4 are handicapped), are only a little more than half the number that would be found at other Thrive communities.*** Staff Response: The minimum parking requirements of the Zoning Ordinance are met for this use and several extra spaces have been provided, including additional handicap spaces as requested by Council. 47 spaces are required, including 2 handicap spaces. 50 are provided, of which 4 are handicap

spaces. During both the BAPB hearing on April 12th and the Council hearing on April 21st, the amount of parking was discussed. It was pointed out that residents of the facility do not typically own cars or drive, and that on-street parking will also exist on the adjacent streets.

3. ***Structured (under the building) "platform" parking was recommended by the Planning Board and the County Council's PZED Committee and agreed to by Mr. Antonetti when CB-56-2014 was passed to add assisted living as a permitted use at Melford.*** Staff Response: At the PZED Committee hearing, the Planning Board asked for clarification on the number of levels of podium parking that could be built (if it was included in a project at all). The concern was that too many levels of parking might result in the building being out of proportion and scale of the surrounding residential neighborhood. The discussion at the Committee about the determination of podium parking ended with Council Member Ingrid Turner expressing a desire to ensure that the question could be addressed during review of the Detailed Site Plan. There was simply no requirement from the PZED Committee that all assisted living facilities in the M-X-T zone must have podium parking. As it is, a determination was made by Thrive in the preparation of the Detailed Site Plan that structured parking would be prohibitively expensive for them at the Melford site. Low impact development techniques were used, and efforts to reduce impervious surfaces were made in the design. Ten micro-bioretenment areas are proposed on the site. It should be noted that CB-56-2014 also specifically exempted assisted living facilities in the M-X-T zone from conformance with any previously approved CSP requirements, including conditions encouraging reduction of impervious surfaces and use of structured parking (such as Condition #20.a of the District Council decision on SP-06002).

6. Bowie Businesses - 2016 Updated Analysis of Census Data
According to the US Census Bureau's latest data (for 2014) there are 1,527 businesses employing a total of 20,295 people in the seven zip codes that comprise the Bowie area.

In Prince George's County there are 14,459 businesses employing 250,855 people. In the State of Maryland there are 136,501 businesses employing 2,216,867 people.

Bowie's business base represents 10.6% of the total Prince George's County business base and 8.1% of the total employees in the County.

Small businesses abound in Bowie with 852 or 55.8% having four or fewer employees. Compare that with the County total with 7,281 or 50.4% having four or fewer employees and the State total with 72,546 or 53.1% having four or fewer employees.

Also observed about businesses with four or fewer employees is that 11.7% of all of those 7,281 County businesses and 1.8% of all those 72,546 Maryland businesses with four or fewer employees are in the Bowie area.

For those businesses employing 100 or more employees the 31 Bowie area business are 7.6% of all of the County businesses and 0.9 % of all Maryland businesses with 100 or more employees.

Businesses are almost equally distributed north and south of US Highway 50 – 49.6% are north and 50.4% are south. Employment is less in the north than in the south – 31.9% of Bowie’s total employment is north and 68.1% is south. (Note that “north” includes zip code 20720 which has seen commercial growth outside of the city limits; and “south” includes zip code 20721 which has more commercial outside of the city than inside the city limits.

7. Bowie Branch Library on Rt. 450 Closing for Renovations

Staff has been informed that the Bowie Branch Library will be undergoing renovations late this year into early next year that will result in the closing of the facility for a period of time. The Library system has received a State Capital Grant to accomplish this renovation. The last major renovation at the library was in 1999.

The Bowie Branch will undergo renovation in two phases:

Phase 1: Building will remain open: scheduled to begin in a couple of weeks, replace windows, redo roof, paint exterior.

Phase 2: Major interior renovations: scheduled to begin late November or early December 2016, adding new study rooms, carpeting, new children’s section, café, improved staff lounge and more.

The architect anticipates that the library will be closed during the Phase 2 renovations for four to six months. The exact closing date will be determined based on when the Laurel branch reopens from renovations it has undergone. The Bowie staff will be transferred to Laurel and Greenbelt during the time the library is closed. City staff asked whether there was any way for the library to remain open during the Phase 2 renovation. Because the renovation is planned throughout the building, the library cannot remain open during the Phase 2 renovations. The library will start publicizing this closing either late this week or early next week. They will use posters, press releases, e-mail messages to patrons in their data base, social media and their web site. Three weeks before the closing they will put book marks for people who are checking out books indicating the closest branches and their hours.

JLF/adf

Attachment

September 15, 2016

Resident
(Street Address)
Bowie, MD 20715

Dear Resident,

The City of Bowie has contracted services to install traffic calming measures on Jennings Mill Drive. The measures will include: a center island median located at the Church Road intersection, a center island median and crosswalk located just east of 801 Jennings Mill Drive, edge lines along the length of along the street between the two new center island medians, and required traffic signs.

These traffic calming measures are being implemented in accordance with the City's Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP) in response to request from the Hamptons at Woodmore Homeowners Association. As required by the NTMP, the proposed measures were endorsed by more than 60% of the residents on the affected section of the street.

Construction work is anticipated to start on October 3, 2016. During the construction, there will be minor traffic disruptions. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated while these improvements are completed.

Sincerely,

George J. Stephanos, P.E.
Public Works Director