



Howard County Council

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COUNCILMEMBERS

Calvin Ball, Chairperson
District 2
Courtney Watson, Vice
Chairperson
District 1
Jennifer Terrasa
District 3
Mary Kay Sigaty
District 4
Greg Fox
District 5

Minutes (draft, revised-Approved) Operating Budget Work Session May 20, 2014

Members Present: Dr. Calvin Ball, Chairperson; Greg Fox, Mary Kay Sigaty, Jen Terrasa, and Courtney Watson

Council Staff Present: Sheila Tolliver, Administrator; Craig Glendenning, Auditor; Audit Staff: Ed Shulder

Administration, Budget, and other Staff: Ray Wacks, Budget Director; Gale Benson, Deputy; Jennifer Sager, Legislative Coordinator; Jessica Feldmark, Office of the County Executive; Stan Milesky, Finance Department Director; Jim Vannoy, Office of Law

Others guests: Ian Kennedy, Downtown Columbia Arts and Culture Commission (DCACC); Greg Fitchett, Merriweather Post Business Trust; John DeWolf, Bob Jenkins, Howard Hughes Corp; Brad Canfield, Producer and General Manager, Merriweather Post Pavilion.

Ray Wacks explained the Administration's proposed amendments to pending budget-related legislation. He also alerted the Council to an expected amendment to correct a rounding error.

Mr. Fox explained an amendment he planned to offer to freeze the non-residential excise tax rate.

The Council then returned to its discussion of Amendment 12 to Council bill 24-2014, with particular attention to the provisions transferring funding sources for certain items in the budget to free Pay as You Go funds for an \$8 million allowance for renovation of Merriweather Post Pavilion.

Ms. Sager explained that she would bring an amendment to amendment 12 to improve the description of the amendment by clarifying that it adds \$8 million to the DCACC for the Merriweather Post Pavilion renovation.

Ian Kennedy described the DCACC's intended use of the \$10 million for Merriweather, stressing that this is still in negotiation with the developer.

John DeWolf described the Howard Hughes plan for renovating Merriweather, stressing that solving the parking problem, particularly the loss of spaces at the Crescent associated with other Downtown Columbia reconstruction, remains to be resolved, although Howard Hughes likes the concept of a parking garage for 2000 cars adjacent to Merriweather for use by both the Pavilion and the nearby businesses.

He noted that they have hired architects for the Merriweather project and expect to draw on the \$9.5 million in County funds sometime in 2016, having used proceeds from a private construction loan first.

He noted also the need for the Planning Board to approve a site development plan, which will define the scope of the project. He said that Howard Hughes would build to the CEPHA. They would have the pavilion operator “at the table” in design discussions, but are not obligated to yield to their design.

He noted that Howard Hughes would raise the roof, as the operator suggests, but that this is not part of the Joint Development Agreement among the principal parties. He said that Howard Hughes would go through a 16 step development process. They expected to draw on the \$9.5 million appropriation at the end of the second phase of the project. They hope to have a red line plan to the Department of Planning and Zoning by October 2014.

Dr. Ball asked about Howard Hughes’ plans on affordable housing. Mr. DeWolf said they are working with the Housing Commission, but see this as a later project.

Ian Kennedy explained that the DCACC would use \$500,000 of the \$10 million appropriation to stimulate the arts and to fundraise. The DCACC is expected to become self-sufficient.

Having been advised that the Council could not have approval authority over the Joint Development Agreement, which is between private entities, Ms. Watson explored the possibility of an amendment to place conditions on the release of funds from the appropriation.

The Council recessed at 6:00 p.m. and reconvened at 8:35 p.m.

Ms. Sigaty and Mr. Fox presented a concept plan for an amendment that they had worked on during the recess. The proposal was to create a trust to hold the County appropriated funds that would be transferred to the DCACC for the benefit of renovation of Merriweather Post Pavilion. Members offered conditions that they thought should be applied to the release of the funds.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 p.m.