

Glenmont Exchange, Inc.
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Minutes of the January 28, 2019 meeting

Attendees: Josh Goodman, Ian Rothman, Ben & Ada Joyner, Ernie Benjamin, John Bogasky, Sam & Betty Sharper, Dorinda Danneman, Arquilla Ridgell, Eric Leinhardt, Maren Hill and Jessica McVary.

The Agenda and Minutes were approved. Treasurers Report – Year End financials are the same as in October. Cash on hand at the end of October was \$1224.00. The Glenmont Exchange has 28 active members. Dues are \$10 for individuals, \$25 for Associations and \$50 for businesses. 2019 budget is the same as 2018, with expected revenues of \$445 and expenses for website, Post Office Box, Donations, and membership in Montgomery County Civic Association.

Maren Hill, Senior Planner and Jessica McVary, Area 2 Division, Montgomery County Planning Department gave a presentation on the Vision Zero Initiative in Montgomery County. Vision Zero is an International/National/Local movement.

The Vision Zero Initiative has a goal of No Traffic Deaths by 2030 and a reduction of fatal injuries. Montgomery County is the first primarily suburban county to adopt Vision Zero.

- Traffic deaths are preventable.
- Human error is inevitable.
- Prevent fatal and severe crashes.
- Human life prioritized over mobility.

Road need to be designed/reconstructed to promote safety. Roads should be planned so that mistakes do not result in loss of life.

Pedestrian safety is a big issue. Locally, there have been many accidents involving pedestrians on Georgia Avenue between Wheaton and Aspen Hill. Between 2012 and 2017 fatalities of motorists has been reduced while fatalities of bicyclists and pedestrians has remained the same.

Decrease crash frequency by decreasing the number of conflicts:

- Different space for different users
- Provide predictability where users interact
- Increase ability to yield by lowering speeds
- Make it easier to see and avoid unexpected behavior by lowering speeds

Slower speeds reduce the severity of a crash.

If a pedestrian is hit by a car going 20 mph, there is a 90% chance of survival.

If a pedestrian is hit by a car going 30 mph, there is a 50% chance of survival.

If a pedestrian is hit by a car going 40 mph, there is a 10% chance of survival.

Many agencies are involved in the Vision Zero planning and implementation, including MCDOT, the police department, the school system and the MC Planning department. The Planning

department functions as an advocate for change, roadway safety/design, master planning, regulatory review (recommending how to improve safety in projects), CIP review, and collaborates with other agencies.

The Veirs Mill Corridor Master Plan will have a public hearing tomorrow night at 7:30 pm with the County Council. Originally the master plan review was expected to be about land use and BRT, but has pivoted to address community concerns. The community is concerned about the speed of traffic, the difficulty crossing Veirs Mill and the lack of sidewalks. Veirs Mill was designed for motor vehicles, very few opportunities exist for pedestrians. 25% of residents rely on public transit to get to work. It is the most heavily used corridor for public transportation.

The long term vision is to transition to a multi-modal complete street, accommodated in the existing right-of-way. This will be accomplished by reducing lane widths, constructing continuous sidewalks and protected crosswalks. The state is designing the sidewalks to be constructed along Veirs Mill Road, they will send the project to the county to fund and build. The state maintains road curb to curb, and the county maintains the sidewalks and side access roads.

Education for residents is included in the Vision Zero 2 year Action Plan. It defines educational goals and who will carry them out. The DOT/Police have identified focus areas and are contacting road users about how to interact with each other. Note: When 2 streets intersect, it is considered a crosswalk, even if it is not marked.

The Aspen Hill Vision Zero study began in August 2018, the study area extends from Bel Pre Road on the north to Matthew Henson Park on the south end. They want to apply the best practices from other areas. Georgia Avenue and Connecticut Avenue have wide lanes and small or no buffer between the roadway and the sidewalks. There are a high number of crashes in the area. 20% of residents use the bus; bus stops do not have signalized crossings. The safe speed is 20 mph; speed limits of 45-50 mph on Georgia and Connecticut are not safe.

There is a higher percentage of pedestrian/biker fatalities in Aspen Hill than other suburban areas of the county. Countywide – 27%; Rural – 5%; Urban – 50%; Suburban – 25%. Aspen Hill – 53%.

The Aspen Hill study is just beginning, the next meeting is February 26th. The first steps are to engage the community, gather ideas, and collect/analyze data. They will also work with Agency partners, provide tools for advocacy, and develop recommendations. They will provide tools to the community so they can advocate for themselves. In Aspen Hill the goal is to create a sense of enclosure with street trees. They are trying to add traffic signals, with less distance between signals. They want to reduce lane widths to 8' to reduce speeds, add amenities for bikes and pedestrians. They want to balance the public right-of-way to serve all users.

There is poor lighting on many roadways. Pedestrians in dark clothing are hard to see. Lighting needs to be improved for pedestrians and bikes. Construct high visibility crosswalks with improved materials.

The County Council sets the work plan for the Planning Board each year. Area 2 is north of the Beltway and south of the Agricultural Reserve. Next year they will update the White Flint Metro area with a Vision Zero component. Traditional Master Plans have focused on zoning and development. Master Plans have a 25 year projected life.

Concerns about Layhill Road, north of Bel Pre to the ICC. Concerns about the crossing at Longmeade. Need to ask MCDOT for additional crosswalks and signage. A leading pedestrian interval would allow pedestrians to begin to cross the street before the left turning light allows cars to start to turn. Share your concerns with your council members. For problems with state roads, contact your Delegate. If road configurations is not generating compliance, support your complaint with video footage and statistics.

Would like to see more education when implementing new infrastructure. Lane changes, light changes, bike lanes. Would like to see more clarity in signage and road markings.

Other local areas with problems:

Georgia Avenue between Glenallan and Layhill

Georgia Avenue and Layhill Road intersection – Yield signs were removed, when replaced they are not visible enough to be useful

Layhill Road between Georgia and Glenallan

Randolph Road between Georgia and JFK High School

Layhill Road between Bel Pre and ICC

Traffic on Layhill Road has increased greatly recently. It is not well lit, was not built for the current amount of traffic, has affordable housing all along it.

Montgomery County controls timing on signals on state roads, the SHA controls the locations of signals and major changes.

Vision Zero, Montgomery Planning Board

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/transportation/vision-zero/>

Vison Zero 2 Year Action Plan

<https://montgomerycountymd.gov/visionzero/action.html>

Veirs Mill Corridor Master Plan

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/communities/area-2/veirs-mill-corridor-plan/>

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The next Glenmont Exchange Meeting will be Monday, February 28, 2019 at 7:30 pm in the Poplar Run Clubhouse, 13500 Stargazer Place, Silver Spring, MD 20906

Minutes submitted by Dorinda Danneman, Secretary.