City of Bowie
Memorandum

Thursday, February 23, 2023
Alfred D. Lott, ICMA-CM, CPM,
City Manager

STATUS REPORT

1. Bowie Marketplace Consolidated Storage Hearings

Berman Enterprises has re-activated their request for City public hearings regarding Detailed Site Plan DET-2022-018 for Bowie Marketplace. Berman is seeking approval of a new proposal to build a multi-story consolidated storage facility and car wash on the vacant five acres behind the retail shopping center. The site is the location of the previously approved 225-unit, multi-family apartment project. The new plan includes a 275,100 square foot consolidated storage building complex consisting of two phases - a 132,300 square foot, three-story building (Phase 1) and a 142,800 square foot, four-story building (Phase 2). In addition, a 4,575 square foot car wash building is proposed along Superior Lane. Over 50 participants attended the Virtual Stakeholders Meeting on October 12th. Some of topics covered by Stakeholder questions included: the size and height of the proposed consolidated storage building, elimination of existing parking near the Chaney Tire and Auto store and Bowie Community Center, possible impacts on Acorn Hill Park (there are none), compatibility with adjacent residential single-family homes, the impacts of site lighting, security at the storage facility, the color scheme used on the car wash building, access to the storage building and traffic and circulation (especially around the proposed car wash). A video of the Stakeholders Meeting is available on the City's YouTube channel and the project webpage. City public hearings on the DSP have been rescheduled for April 25th at the Bowie Advisory Planning Board and May 1st at City Council. As Council is aware, County legislation (CB-11-2023) intended to prohibit Consolidated Storage in the commercial zones was amended in Committee to allow projects that have begun the review process to be grandfathered. The public hearing on CB-11 will be held in March.

2. Bowie Business Retention Program Update

In August 2022, Tiara Andrews was hired as the Business Retention Specialist. She was previously the City's Senior Code Enforcement Officer with responsibility for the commercial parts of Bowie.

To date, the business retention program has focused on populating and reviewing a database of Bowie businesses. As Bowie has no general business licensing requirement, we previously relied on other-peoples-data (e.g., State business registration data or purchased business lists). We now have a growing but not yet complete data set of our own.

To date, we have identified 1453 Bowie businesses. 255 of those Bowie businesses are homebased.

We are updating the data by contacting businesses directly. We use an economic development SaaS – Executive Pulse – for our database. This improved and specialized database is a major step in keeping better business data so we can open and maintain lines of communication between the City and the business community.

We have done a limited test of the database by generating contact information for a sustainability grant mailing and for a targeted restaurant mailing on watershed protection. We are preparing for a larger outreach on watershed protection to all Bowie restaurants later this spring. These test mailings help us get more familiar with many of the database features while assisting in City outreach efforts.

The Business Retention Specialist has started direct outreach to retail businesses to complete the data we keep on them and to identify their concerns about their business in Bowie.

In late spring we will use our business data to send a letter introducing the economic development staff and summarizing the many resources on the City's website.

Throughout this fiscal year, the Business Retention Specialist has also attended training in the use of the Executive Pulse software and in business retention practices and procedures. She has also been training in emergency assistance to business as part of the City's overall disaster recovery planning.

For the next fiscal year, we will conduct a business retention survey and increase our business visits for more face-to-face interaction.

Establish a formal business retention program to assist in retaining businesses in Bowie. These efforts will help the City identify all the businesses located in Bowie and assist in providing them with information and assistance to recover from the impacts of the COVID crisis.

STATUS –

- Hired a Business Retention Specialist to oversee the business retention program.
- Identifying all existing businesses to establish the needs of our businesses and gain an understanding of what our prospective businesses are looking for.
- Updated the business database with contact information on business owners, property managers and tenants.
- Partnered with the City of Bowie and Prince George's County Emergency Management offices to aid the business community.

- Creating a pre-disaster continuity plan for small businesses. This plan will identify some of the concerns businesses believe they will face during a disaster. This will allow the Economic Development Office to have key personal information to contact during an emergency. To be completed by June 30, 2023.
- Creating an outreach program that will allow the business retention specialist to build stronger relationships with business owners, managers, and management companies. Establish tier outreach levels, including surveys, target focus groups and in-person visits to key businesses. A first draft will be ready by June 30, 3023.