Members Present: Andrea Mansfield (chair), Andrew Beyea, Don Opedal, Steve Randol, Key Worcester
Ex Officio Members: Keasha Haythe, Raj Kudchadkar
Members Absent: Matthew Korbelak, Kim Madore, Paulette McCree, Torrey Snow
Visitors: Andrew Curry, Barbara Donlon, Michael Foster, Sabrina Foster, Bridget McConnell, Nancy Perillo, Ron Perillo, Jason Schwier, Harry Sinclair, Stuart Title, Ben Wallingford, Jonathan Williams, Chuck Zellen
County Staff: Mark Wildonger, Lynn Miller

Administrative items:
The meeting was called to order at 6:32. The agenda was approved as circulated. The November meeting notes were approved with one noted change regarding the “café”.

Proposed Odenton Town Center Master Plan amendment:
Mr. David Helmecki, Legislative aide to Councilman Andrew Pruski

Mr. Helmecki presented a proposed amendment to the 2016 Odenton Town Center Master Plan (OTCMP) which would prohibit automobile gas stations within Regulatory Blocks 1 and 4 of the Core sub-area in the Odenton Town Center (OTC). He suggested that since automobile gas stations generate a significant amount of traffic and given the already congested intersections within Regulatory Blocks 1 and 4, Councilman Pruski plans to introduce the proposed amendment to address the traffic issue.

Councilman Pruski has heard from the community who do not want gas stations in that location. Mr. Helmecki also expressed he does not believe the infrastructure does not support an automobile gas station in Regulatory Blocks 1 and 4.

It was noted that a traffic count conducted by the State Highway Administration (SHA) in 2016 estimated approximately 25,000 vehicles using the roads in the area. Results from a November 2018 survey estimated approximately 30,000 vehicles. Mr. Helmecki pointed out that these counts were conducted prior to the opening of Town Center Boulevard, which would only add to the current numbers. He also said the development of Fort Meade and the proposed transit-oriented development would further contribute to traffic issues in the area.
Mr. Helmecki stated that this amendment is not considered significant in nature; whereas a more wholesale examination of uses that may not be appropriate within the Core sub-area should be conducted during the five-year comprehensive review of the OTCMP.

Mr. Helmecki will present the amendment to the Planning Advisory Board on Wednesday, February 13th. Councilman Pruski plans to introduce the proposed bill at the February 19th County Council meeting. If introduced, the hearing of the bill would then be held on March 18th.

Members of the Committee stated they are not necessarily opposed to the amendment; however, expressed some concern that the proposed amendment may not be the solution since other uses, such as electric charging stations, drive-through establishments, or automobile repair shops, may generate equally significant amounts of traffic and would still be permitted. The Committee also questioned what uses would be appropriate for the site.

The Committee sensed that the action to propose an amendment may be a slippery slope where if another permitted development was proposed that had the same perceived impact or was disagreeable to the public, another amendment to prohibit that use may be proposed. The Committee was concerned that developers may begin investing in consultants and other items, only for the effort and investment to be wasted due to a reactionary change in the OTCMP.

There was also concern that this amendment may set a precedent for other piecemeal changes. The amendment may also limit uses that would otherwise prove to be a higher and better use for the property.

**Public questions / comments:**
Mr. Sinclair questioned whether the amendment is necessary, since the developer would need to conduct a traffic study to determine the impact of the development on the road infrastructure and if there was an impact, and then the developer would need to terminate the project or find ways to mitigate the impact.

Mr. Foster explained that Hale Street, Town Center Boulevard, and MD 175 are already congested and a high traffic generator like a gas station would only add to the traffic issues. He suggested there are other locations more suitable for gas stations within the OTC.

Mr. Perillo equated the situation to “moving the goalposts”, where a developer may purchase a property with the full understanding of the rules and regulations of the OTCMP, only to have those rules change when they begin to invest money and develop their property. He cautioned the Committee to understand the comprehensive impact of the bill.
Mr. Curry emphasized the significant traffic issues, specifically at the Hale Street and Town Center Boulevard intersection. He stated that Councilman Pruski is trying to find a solution to the issues his constituents face. Mr. Curry clarified he is not against development in that block, but times and conditions change and the Committee should consider these changes.

Ms. McConnell said she is the property manager for The Village at Odenton Station and that the owner of the property, Dolben, supports the amendment. She explained that The Village at Odenton Station has many vacant stores; however, one successful business is Baltimore Coffee and Tea. Dolben and Baltimore Coffee and Tea fear that a gas station convenience store, which sells a variety of beverages, would put Baltimore Coffee and Tea out of business, further adding to the dark storefronts at the Village at Odenton Station.

Ms. Donlon voiced her support for the proposed amendment. She noted several existing gas within the OTC and suggested that a community facility, like a park, would be a better use for the site.

Mr. Schwier explained his comments would be as the president of the Town Center Commons Homeowners Association. The HOA sent out a survey asking residents if they were in favor of the proposed Wawa on the corner of Hale Street and Town Center Boulevard. Of 126 units, he received 15 responses. One out of the 15 responded favorably to the concept based on the opportunity to have a convenience store in close proximity. The other 14 respondents were opposed for the following reasons – decrease in property values, pedestrian safety, crime, petroleum odors, environmental runoff, and the possible displacement of a school bus stop.

Mr. Title argued that the Committee’s responsibilities did not include protecting existing businesses at the cost of new potential businesses. He explained that if a Wawa was not built as a result of the amendment, a Starbucks could still be built and would compete with the Baltimore Coffee and Tea. He also suggested that residents should be aware of the intent of the OTCMP, zoning, and what can be built in proximity to their home by consulting the OTCMP. He emphasized that all the information was available to homeowners and they should have done their due diligence.

Mr. Williams said a gas station in that location is questionable, but any use suitable for a town center would create automobile traffic. He pointed out that Odenton is a County-designated town center and the intent is for more intense development.

Mr. Randol clarified for the audience that the Committee is advisory, and that they provide recommendations to the Office of Planning and Zoning or other entities. He said he wants to protect the integrity of the OTCMP by not having to do piecemeal legislation and would
appreciate time to think about the comments from the public. Ms. Mansfield said the Committee will meet on February 26th and provide a position at that time.

Updates:
Mr. Mark Wildonger, Office of Planning and Zoning

General Development Plan
The last Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting was held on January 16th. At that meeting, the CAC reviewed previous plan vision statements and developed ideas for the Plan2040 vision. The County Executive expressed an interest in reconstituting the CAC. The application period closed on February 1st and the County Executive is currently reviewing those applications. New dates and times for future CAC meetings have not been determined.

Development projects
Recent updates include: Blue Water Self Storage facility was granted site development plan approval and the 1412 – 1420 Hale Street Townhome development project was submitted to the County.

Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Revitalization and Incentive Zone Application renewal
The intent behind the creation of the BRAC Revitalization and Incentive Zone was to identify areas that could accommodate the additional households that will be coming to Maryland as the result of BRAC and provide local governments with financial assistance for the public infrastructure in these well-defined areas. The County plans to re-apply for the designation and is requesting a letter of support from the OTCAC. A draft letter will be presented at the February meeting.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) lessons learned
The primary reason the TOD did not succeed was due to a lack of funding. The developer explored several funding options, but was not successful. Other reasons include the economic recession in 2009, the anticipated low market rent rate, cost of structured parking, the size of the property, and emerging trends such as rising constructions costs, tariff uncertainty, and interest rates. The OTCMP did not hinder the feasibility of the project.

Mr. Randol suggested that if the project were to be revisited, that a different strategy might be employed. For example, consider the project being a strictly a public or private project.

Open Meetings Act training
The Committee was encouraged to take the Maryland Open Meetings Act online training. A link will be sent to the Committee.
Advocacy/New Business:
Ms. Andrea Mansfield

Questions for State Highway Administration (SHA)
The Committee identified several questions for SHA and County staff as they relate to transportation projects. SHA and County staff will be invited to a future meeting to address the questions. These questions include:

- Are there any plans to widen MD 32 eastbound, east of the MD 198 intersection with at least a long merge lane?
- What is the status of the bridge repair on MD 198?
- What is the status and completion date for road project along MD 175 north of MD 32? Are continued improvements planned as more people move into the area?
- What is the status of the sidewalk project along 175?
- What are the plans for MD 170 in the Woodwardville area?

New Business
Ms. Mansfield met with County staff and representatives from the Academy Yard development to discuss ideas on how to better integrate the community’s needs, such as a park, into the proposed development. The Annapolis and Anne Arundel County Conference and Visitors Bureau has included a section on the OTC in the “Shopping” section of its website.

General public comment:
Mr. Helmecki said the Maryland Regional Transportation Agency informed the Anne Arundel County Office of Transportation that the 504 bus route may be ending. The service currently connects the Savage MARC Station, Piney Orchard, Odenton, Fort Meade, and the Odenton MARC Station.

Mr. Kitchin introduced himself as the District 4 Community Engagement and Constituent Services Officer. The County Executive will hold the District 4 Budget Town Hall meeting on Tuesday, March 5, 2019 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm in the Arundel High School Auditorium. He encouraged the public to attend and voice their support for community facilities, like a park, in the OTC.

Mr. Foster explained that a crosswalk is needed on Town Center Boulevard at the Hale Street intersection.

Mr. Wallingford noted that a stronger connection between the business community should be made with the residents. Mr. Kudchadkar said he would follow up to discuss.

Mr. Curry explained that he is not opposed to development, but would like to see more community-minded developments. He suggested that commuters come to Odenton due to the free parking and it is the commuter traffic that causes the greatest traffic impact.
Mr. Schwier said it was disingenuous to say residents should know the full scope of the permitted use chart in the OTCMP. He thought the Academy Yard site would be a good location for the proposed County swim center. He sent a letter to Councilman Pruski and Mr. Nestor Flores in the Anne Arundel County Department of Public Works identifying the traffic issues originating at the MARC Station North Lot, and continuing along Hale Street, Town Center Boulevard, and MD 175. Issues include vehicles no longer stopping at the intersection of Hale Street and Lokus Street, vehicles blocking Town Center Boulevard from Hale Street, vehicles making double lefts from Town Center Boulevard to MD 175, and vehicles driving down the wrong side of the road. The letter has been forwarded to the Committee.

Mr. Helmecki indicated that the Department of Public Works is interested in relocating the current Road Operations Facility currently located on Duckens Street.

The Committee suggested inviting Mr. Ramond Robinson of the Office of Transportation to the meeting when SHA is scheduled to present.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for February 26th.