

Testimony to Maryland General Assembly

Health and Government Operations Committee

Chair, Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk
Vice Chair, Bonnie Cullison

Bill Hearing – HB627

House Office Building, Room 240

Wednesday, March 1, 2023

Chad Williams, Executive Director
West North Avenue Development Authority

Introduction

Good morning, Chair and Vice Chair, and other members of the committee. I am Chad Williams, Executive Director of the West North Avenue Development Authority.

Today, I ask for a favorable report out of HB627 titled Baltimore City – West North Avenue Development Authority – Membership and Procurement. This proposed emergency bill alters the membership of the West North Avenue Development Authority (WNADA) and generally exempts WNADA from State procurement law. WNADA will still be subject to written policy and procurement requirements for exempt units and the State’s Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) program.

Procurement

Generally, each unit with an exemption from any provision of Division II of the State Finance and Procurement Article must have written policies and procedures. The written policies and procedures must include the types of procurement exempted from Division II, plus the methods for such procurements, and their advertising requirements, procurement goals (including MBE participation), and their approval process. Units that are governed by their own board, commission, council, or authority must submit their policies and procedures to their board, commission, council, or authority for approval.

To ensure historical acceptable compliance with this requirement the West North Avenue Development Authority will adopt similar aligned written procurement policies and procedures currently used by the Maryland Stadium Authority. A discussion for approval of these written policies and procedures will occur at the next regular scheduled Authority meeting after this Bill becomes law.

Membership

In an effort to strengthen the State and local collaborative intent of the General Assembly when it established the Authority, the inclusion of the Maryland Secretary of Commerce and Executive Director of the Maryland Economic Development Corporation, or their designee, as members of the Authority will be necessary to support, prioritize, and direct eligible funding and financing resources within their entities to supplement the mission of the Authority to “initiate” and “fund” development activities on W North Ave.

Conclusion

I thank you for this opportunity to speak with you regarding how we can work together to improve the implementation of your newly created State Economic Development Authority for Baltimore City focused on equitable economic, housing, transportation, and neighborhood development with parity for West Baltimore