

Home / Maryland Independent / News / Local News

[https://www.somdnews.com/independent/news/local/community-hears-status-report-on-college-s-velocity-center/article\\_dd2ed7d5-1163-54f9-9622-5a438309c85f.html](https://www.somdnews.com/independent/news/local/community-hears-status-report-on-college-s-velocity-center/article_dd2ed7d5-1163-54f9-9622-5a438309c85f.html)

FEATURED

## Community hears status report on college's Velocity Center

By LINDSAY RENNER-WOOD [Irenner-wood@somdnews.com](mailto:Irenner-wood@somdnews.com) 9 hrs ago



Thomas Luginbill, director of the Entrepreneur and Innovation Institute at the College of Southern Maryland, speaks Thursday about the plans laid for the Velocity Center, the college's new innovation center slated to open in Indian Head in the coming months.

Staff photo by LINDSAY RENNER-WOOD

If all goes well, a major step in the revitalization of Indian Head and the western side of Charles County may be completed as early as the beginning of next year.

Community members, representatives from the College of Southern Maryland, the Town of Indian Head, Naval Support Facility Indian Head and others gathered Thursday morning at the Village Green pavilion to hear updates on the Velocity Center. Planning for the center first began in 2017, the Maryland Independent previously reported. When it's completed, the Velocity Center will feature everything from spacious rooms to meetings to "RocketPods" — small office spaces that can be rented for up to a week at a time to accommodate businesspeople who are in town for work — as well as a technology-centric maker-space.

The Velocity Center will occupy the space formerly taken by the old Ely's warehouse on the northbound side of Route 210, which one sees just before they crest the hill to enter the heart of town. Many speakers at Thursday morning's gathering mentioned how, when coming to Indian Head that morning, they were delighted to see how much progress has been made on redeveloping the space.

Indian Head Mayor Brandon Paulin said the center is just "one of the fun things happening in Indian Head," and proof that the town's revitalization is gaining steam. The center fits in with an overarching revitalization plan Paulin said the town has been developing.

CSM President Maureen Murphy said the project, which began before her tenure at the college, "has really taken shape, I think, over the last 18 months as we refine what it is we're trying to do."

"I see a lot of people here who have been part of this project from the very beginning, and you know that our thinking about the Velocity Center and what it is and what it might do has shifted," Murphy said. "At first we thought it was going to be all things to everyone, but then we realized we had a 13,000-square-foot warehouse. It can't be all things to everyone. But it is taking shape. It's exciting to come down 210 and start to see something that's really starting to look like something. Over the next few weeks, I think it will start to look even greater. I'm very excited and proud of where we've come."

The center will have a plethora of uses said Thomas Luginbill, director of the Entrepreneur and Innovation Institute at CSM.

"It has evolved a lot, but I will say a lot of things have stayed the same," Luginbill said of where plans for the center currently stand.

As an example, Luginbill said, everyone from robotics teams to NSF Indian Head employees who “want to tinker with a private project” will be welcome to avail themselves of the maker-space feature of the center.

“We have found a little more focus recently,” Luginbill said. “The important thing is it’s coming to fruition. This has been a long process, and there’s a lot of people to thank for that. ... I was talking last night, and I think there’s this fallacy that things will never be complete. ... What I’ve learned in education is the learning never stops. While things will grow and continue to prosper here, there will never be an end to that.”

Bill Comey, the college’s vice president of campus operations and planning, said the work on the facility is well underway. Once the Velocity Center is complete, Comey said, the community can expect “a very nice, upscale, hip warehouse” with high-tech capabilities and a sleek and finished interior, with a design that also serves to honor the building’s history in town.

“We see this as a blend of spaces that will serve the Navy, college, community and contractors,” Comey said. The design process will hopefully be completed in June and permitting will begin shortly thereafter, working in concert with the town. From there, Comey said, they hope to begin construction in August.

Ad



“If all goes well, I’ll be seeing you at a ribbon cutting in January,” Comey said.

In brief remarks to the crowd, Del. Debra Davis (D-Charles) said the progress on the center is a remarkable sight, one that has come about in spite of the county’s western side often being overlooked.

"The word I keep hearing is partnership," Davis said. "Against all odds, we gathered together and we're turning Indian Head around. What will you be able to do now that the commissioner board is willing to work with you? That's amazing."

Speaking on behalf of Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md., 5th), Terrance Taylor, deputy district director for the congressman, said the Velocity Center is proof that all involved are "tapping into the innovation for the Navy to do what they need to do to protect the warfighters"

"When I was driving in, I saw how this part of Charles County is transforming," Taylor said. "To come through here now, to see the Velocity Center take place and see the park grow ... we can make sure we bring this vision into reality."

"There is no compelling reason not to do this," Murphy said. "What we have is really talented people who are committed and they believe in this. The struggles aren't over. There's a lot to be done. Right now we're kind of giddy because of what we've seen so far. Imagine how we'll feel when it's done."

Twitter: @LindsayIndyNews

---

Twitter: @LindsayIndyNews