

GTCC

The Greater Timonium Community Council

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[http:// www. gtcinc.org](http://www.gtcinc.org)

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+++++++ NEWSLETTER ++++++

Random Thoughts

President's Message

If you are a regular reader of this newsletter, you've seen past articles about the Kirwan Commission, that commission tasked with making recommendations for improving the State's education system. I've been concerned about the cost of those recommendations, purported to be an additional \$3.8 billion per year once all the recommendations are implemented. In September members of the Kirwan task force elected to meet behind closed doors in order to develop formulas to determine how much the State should pay for this extra education funding, as well as how much the individual counties should pay. Commission Chair William Kirwan said the "closed door" session was needed so that the workgroup could consider many options and not confuse the public with proposals that will never be adopted.

That's all well and good if this workgroup were part of private business that gets to set its own rules, but this is a public workgroup. There are open meetings policies, and laws, that require for public meetings for this sort of thing. Kirwan countered the criticism by citing an opinion from Attorney General Brian Frosh's office that the closed session is legal because the workgroup is not technically a public body, but with all due respect, this is just the opinion of a lawyer in Frosh's office. It is not an opinion from a judge, or a distinction contained in the open meetings regulations of the State.

Not surprisingly, some of the workgroup members voted against holding the "closed door" meeting. Budget Secretary David Brinkley, Harford County Executive Barry Glassman, Baltimore County Board of Education member Cheryl Pasteur and Prince George's County Board of Education Chairman Alvin Thornton all voted against meeting in secret. "I just thought the issues we had to discuss could be appropriately discussed in front of the people of

Maryland,” Alvin Thornton said. Kirwan promised that the workgroup would vote in public on the recommendations that are sent to the State legislature.

This type of secrecy does not serve the Kirwan Commission well as it attempts to argue for educational reform. It harkens back to the smoke-filled room meetings of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The people of this State should demand full transparency as this process moves forward.

* * * * *

A recent commentary piece in the Baltimore Sun had me shaking my head in disbelief. The author wrote about how it is an exciting time to be living and working in Towson because of the dramatic growth brought on by new developments like Towson Row, the Cinemark movie theatre and many residential projects. But the author also opined that this growth has brought on challenges, such as the overcrowding of Towson High School, the need for additional public transportation and other issues.

Now where the author lost me was in the following quote, “Additionally, the state must take steps to reduce the cost of living for residents of Towson who are already feeling the pressures of a growing area.” That opinion is the height of delusion. Local governments should be doing cost/benefit analysis before new development is approved, and its at the local level that remedies need to be fashioned if growth and development have negative consequences on existing residents. Can you just imagine the State’s budget if every time the city of Hagerstown or Easton makes a mistake in their land use decisions that the State comes to the rescue to correct the problem. We need to accept the good and correct the bad at the local level. It’s called accountability!

* * * * *

The trial of off-duty police officer Amber Guyger for the murder of Botham Jean certainly drew a lot of national attention because of the bizarre circumstances that caused officer Guyger to shoot Mr. Jean. But I was truly impressed by the victim’s brother and his actions at the sentencing of Guyger. Brandt Jean, the brother of the victim, told the court and Guyger that he forgave her for the killing of his brother, and he took it even a step further by giving Ms. Guyger a hug, another sign of his forgiveness. When someone such as Mr. Jean can show that much grace in an unimaginable situation, it should urge all of us to live better lives.

A Fond Farewell

At our last general meeting we learned that Officer Kevin Kahl of the Community Relations team at Precinct 7 will be retiring in December 2019. We want to thank Kevin for all

of his work with our group over the years, and we appreciate his steady presence. Have a great time in the next phase of your life!!

Officer Kahl also introduced us to a new member of community relations, officer Tim Davis, and we look forward to getting to know him in the future.

Interested in Being of Service?

In January we will hold elections for officers of GTCC for the year 2020. If you are interested in participating as an officer of GTCC or if you wish to be an appointed board member, please speak to Laura Renshaw or Eric Rockel at the November meeting or drop Laura an email at lerenshaw@comcast.net.

Proposal for a Sheetz Convenience Store Hits Setback

Approximately one year ago a Baltimore County Administrative Law Judge had approved a petition clearing the way for a Sheetz convenience store to be located at the corner of Padonia Road and Beaver Dam Road, on a location formerly occupied by a Bob Evans Restaurant. However, that decision was appealed, and a recent decision by the Board of Appeals reversed the prior approval.

At issue in this Board of Appeals hearing was the question of a special exception to approve a fuel service station on the property. The zoning on the property, Manufacturing Light, required that a special exception would be necessary for a fuel service station to be located thereon, and Sheetz planned to sell automotive fuel at the site. But the County's zoning laws required that any fuel service station use would primarily serve the industrial uses and related activities in the surrounding industrial area. Yet the testimony at the appeals hearing acknowledged that much of the fuel service use would come from motorists from I-83 or from surrounding residential areas, and not from the surrounding industrial area. As such, the Board of Appeals had no choice but to deny the special exception. The possibility exists that attorneys for Sheetz could appeal the Board of Appeals ruling, but for now Sheetz would have to abandon its fuel service use for the site in order to move forward. That type of action is highly unlikely.

Pinewood Elementary School Wins Award

Pinewood Elementary School was named a 2019 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education. The award came one year after the school won a similar award from the state.

Principal Tricia Rueter remarked that, "we are proud of the work that our students, teachers, staff and parents do each day to ensure that every child in our school feels valued and is achieving academically."

National awards, such as this one, can be made based upon either high achievement or significant improvement. Pinewood was selected in the category of exemplary high achievement. Last year, more than 84% of students in Grades 3, 4 and 5 met or exceeded requirements in both reading and math, and the schools sponsors 22 extracurricular activities and clubs to reinforce the learning experience.

Pinewood joins a list of area schools, including Riderwood and Timonium Elementary Schools and Ridgely Middle School, that have received the national honor in the past. We commend all at the school for their exemplary efforts.

Extension of Public Water and Sewer

Members of the Falls Road Community Association were apprehensive when they heard from Padonia Park Club CEO, Matt Musgrove, that the club has requested the extension of public water and sewer to the club's property. The property is currently zoned RC 5, which would not enable the public utilities to be extended without the extension of the Metropolitan District to include the property. Mr. Musgrove's explanation for the request was that the club's current septic system is failing and one of two wells on the property has operated only intermittently; therefore extending public utilities to the property would be the most effective means of dealing with the difficulties.

The apprehension on the part of some residents rested with the possibility that if public utilities were extended and the swimming club ever ceases to exist, the public utilities could lead to a large-scale housing development on the site. Mr. Musgrove offered assurances that the club has not plans to build houses on the site. One resident asked if the owners would be willing to sign an easement that would prohibit housing on the property, but Mr. Musgrove said it would depend on the specific language in the document. That answer left some persons fearing the worst possible outcome, although others were satisfied with the representations made by the CEO.

Commercial Revitalization District Extended

Councilman Wade Kach introduced a resolution to the County Council to extend the Towson Commercial Revitalization District to include properties north of the Beltway, along York Road, up to Seminary Avenue. The Councilman hopes that this extension of the revitalization district will spur new investment in the area.

The expanded district would include those properties fronting on the east side of York Road, south of Seminary Avenue, to Ridgefield Road, excepting the Baptist Church. On the west side of York Road, it would include the three properties between Seminary Avenue and Westbury Road, as well as two properties on the south corner of Othoridge Road.

Comprehensive Zoning Map Process Underway

One of the foundational elements of Baltimore County's land use and development activity is the Comprehensive Zoning Map Process, known as CZMP. Every four years the public can file a request to change the zoning designation on any property in the County. One does not need legal representation to complete this application, but there is a fee associated with requesting a zoning change. In this cycle the public had from September 3 until October 15 to apply for a zoning change. That filing period for the public is followed by a filing period wherein the staff of the Planning Department and Planning Board can make application for changes from October 1 to October 30, followed by the month of November when County Council members can file for changes.

Starting in December and running until February 2020, the staff of the Planning Department and other County agencies review each request and ultimately make recommendations to support or oppose each requested change. In some cases, the Planning staff may recommend a middle ground- a zoning change of less impact than the initial request but a designation greater than the current zoning. During this period, every property owner impacted by a zoning request, as well as adjacent property owners, are notified by mail of the requested zoning change. In addition, prior to the first public hearing on the requested changes, each applicant is responsible to have a sign placed on the property to notify of the requested zoning change.

In March 2020, the first of two public hearings as mandated by law are held. A public hearing takes place in each of the seven County Council districts in which the members of the Planning Board listen to public comments about these requested zoning changes. The time allowed for each member of the public to comment is usually limited to three minutes per person. Comments need to be succinct and to the point. These public hearings are followed in April 2020 by Planning Board work sessions, one for each district, where the Planning Board issues its recommendation on each zoning request.

Finally, in June 2020 the County Council holds seven public hearings, one in each district, to also listen to public comments on the requested zoning changes. County law dictates that the Council hold one hearing in each district, but in the last CZMP cycle, Councilman Kach held additional public meetings as part of an effort for greater input and transparency. In September 2020, the County Council will vote to amend the existing zoning maps, which in effect supports or rejects the requested changes that were initiated with the public filing period.

Listed below are the requested zoning changes in the Greater Timonium area:

- 1521 York Road: existing zoning- predominantly Residential Office
proposed zoning- Business Local
- 1215 York Road: existing zoning- Residential Office

proposed zoning- Business Local, with automotive service designation

- 8 Greenridge Road: existing zoning- residential zoning, mix of DR1 & DR 5.5
proposed zoning- Business Local
- 2418 York Road: existing zoning- predominantly Residential Office
Proposed zoning- Business Local
- 9840 York Road: existing zoning- Business Major, CCC
proposed zoning- Business Roadside, CCC
- 1927 York Road: existing zoning- predominantly Residential Office
proposed zoning- Business Roadside
- 1925 York Road: existing zoning- predominantly Residential Office
proposed zoning- Business Roadside
- 11101 McCormick Road: existing zoning- Manufacturing Light, with an IM designation
proposed zoning- Business Major, with IM designation
- 1402 York Road: existing zoning- Residential Office
proposed zoning- Business Local
- 245 Shawan Road: existing zoning- Manufacturing Light with an IM designation
Proposed zoning- Business Major, CCC
- 11350 McCormick Road, Exec. Plaza: existing zoning- Manufacturing Light, with IM
proposed zoning- Business Major, CCC
- 10708 York Road, near Hillside: existing zoning- Manufacturing Light
proposed zoning- Business Local with Auto. Service
Designation
- 111 Schilling Road: existing zoning- Manufacturing Light
proposed zoning- Business Major, with “CCC” designation
- 400 West Padonia Road: existing zoning- Manufacturing Light, with IM designation
proposed zoning- Business Major, with Auto. Service designation
- 11317 York Road: existing zoning- Business Roadside & RC 6
proposed zoning- Business Roadside, with “CCC” designation
- 2159 York Road (Timonium Square Shopping Center): existing zoning- Primarily Business
Major
proposed zoning- Business Major
with a “CCC” designation

Community Input Meeting Draws Crowd

In excess of seventy-five residents turned out to learn and offer comments about Lanahan Meadows, a proposed housing development located on Associated Catholic Charities property, north of Timonium Road and just west of Dulaney Valley Road. Civil engineer James Matis and attorney Jennifer Bussey described for the audience that the proposal consists of thirty-one new single-family homes situated on lots that are approximately one-quarter of an acre in size. When completed, the homes would be between 2,600 and 3,400 square feet in size, and an anticipated price point for the homes would be between \$600,000 and \$900,000.

Several of the nearby residents questioned why this housing proposal creates quarter acre lots when the existing, surrounding community is composed of one acre lots? The answers to that question were multi-fold: first, there is more demand by homebuilders to construct on small lot tracts, not one acre tracts; secondly, by creating one acre lots the grading would be more extensive and there would be a need to create some retaining walls on the site; and finally, Baltimore County zoning and development policies allow the smaller lot size in the DR 1 zoning classification.

Some residents assumed that the DR 1 classification mandated that all lots created in it require a one-acre lot size, whereas the DR 1 is more related to housing density- allowing only one dwelling per acre. Since this site has approximately 36 acres of DR 1 zoned land, they are permitted to construct the thirty-one houses in keeping with the zoning density. Further, Baltimore County's *Comprehensive Manual of Development Policies*, under Section A., "Residential Standards," states that in the DR 1 zone, minimum setback requirements call for a front yard of 25 feet, rear yard of 30 feet and between side building faces of 30 feet, all of which were complied with on the Lanahan Meadows plan.

But the concerns over the smaller lots have not been fully put to rest at this point. Baltimore County's Department of Planning requested that the engineer provide an alternate design for the site. It was stated that "the proposed buildings and site improvements... should complement those of the surrounding neighborhood." It remains to be seen just what impact this request will have on the present plan.

Other questions brought up during the input meeting included drainage concerns voiced by residents on Timonium Road. The site to be developed is up-gradient from the existing dwellings on Timonium Road, and residents are concerned that drainage may impact their properties. The engineer has proposed several stormwater collection areas on the south side of the property, but the efficacy of those collection areas will not be determined until built. Another area of concern was the traffic generated from this development, combined with other construction that is on-going on the Stella Maris property. The engineer reported that a traffic study has been submitted to Baltimore County and State Highway Administration, and those agencies will review the study to make determinations about what road improvements will be required. Residents from Wakefield stated they do not want Dulaney Valley Road widened.

All in all, it appeared that the majority in attendance are dubious about this development proposal. From this point the development team has one year to revise the plan and provide further details to answer the comments generated by County agencies. This revised plan, termed a “development plan”, is then taken to an Administrative Law Judge, who holds a hearing about the merits of the plan. The public can attend the Administrative Law Judge hearing to ask questions or voice objections to the plan. Since this is a legal proceeding, emphasis is placed on expert witnesses and factual evidence when offering testimony. We will keep everyone advised when new information comes to light about this proposed development.

Calendar of Events

- 1.) November 8-10, Irish Festival, at the Cow Palace, Timonium Fairgrounds
- 2.) November 9, 38th Annual Craft Fair, at Ridgely Middle School, 10 AM -4 PM
- 3.) November 16, Native American Festival, at 4-H Building, Timonium Fairgrounds
- 4.) November 24 to December 24, Christmas Tree Sale, North Gate, Fairgrounds
- 5.) November 29 to December 1, Festival of Trees by Kennedy-Kreiger Institute,
At the Cow Palace, Timonium Fairgrounds
- 6.) November 30, December 7,14,21 &27, Holiday Train Garden & Santa
pictures with Santa on Dec.14; Maryland Fire Museum, 1301 York Road
- 7.) December 7 &8, East Coast Car Show, Cow Palace, Timonium Fairgrounds
- 8.) December 7, Stamp & Coin Show, Mosner Miller Building, Timonium Fairgrounds

Tentative Agenda for November’s GTCC Meeting

1. Report on Public Safety from Precinct 7
2. Featured Guest: “The Upcoming 2020 Census,” Audra Harrison
3. Featured Guest: “The Kaiser Permanente Health Care Project”
4. Old Business: Lanahan Meadows Community Input Meeting,
5. New Business: Zoning Requests, Home Act proposed legislation

Texas Quarry's Grant Program

Martin Marietta Materials Texas Quarry has announced a grant program open to charitable, non-profit or faith-based organizations. Last year, the quarry awarded \$5,000 to a group associated with Oregon Ridge Park, and they are offering an equally amount this year.

Martin Marietta reports that to be considered for this grant, the activity should focus on STEM education projects, environmental sustainability and enhancement activities the seek to preserve or beautify the Cockeysville area, or its surrounds, or youth and outdoor recreation programs, the preservation of natural resources and conservation.

Applications must be received no latter than December 2, 2019. Should you be interested in applying for this grant, please contact Dave Thomey at drthomey@outlook.com. to request an application. You will be invited to make a presentation/description of your proposal to the Texas Quarry Community Liaison Committee on December 5, 2019.

State Fairgrounds Holds Tour

Several GTCC members, along with members of the Towson Chamber of Commerce, were treated to a brief tour of the fairgrounds facilities by Gerry Brewster, Andy Cashman and Donna Meyers. It was surprising to hear that 2,000,000 people annually use the facilities at Timonium, be it the fair, the various trade shows on the grounds and the many local organizations, such as Jaycees, Optimists and similar groups. With support for Pimlico and Laurel expected to be a hot topic in the upcoming legislative session, the leadership of the State Fair wants the legislators to consider help for Timonium as well. Brewster indicated that if they can get funds from Annapolis, some of the first priorities would be to repair or replace some of the utility lines that are frequently breaking due to age and to replace one of two elevators in the grandstands.

Another feature that is new at the fairgrounds is the presence of a new vendor at the Grandstand Grille. Nick's Seafood, already well known for a Baltimore location, is trying out the Grandstand with its fare from the surf, as well as turf, and if it can generate enough business, they will make a permanent commitment to this location.

Consider Joining Citizens Academy

If you are interested in learning about the functioning of the County's police force, you may want to consider participating in the Citizens Academy. The department is now taking applications for a new class that starts in the Spring of 2020. A flyer on the Academy follows in this newsletter, as well as a contact number if you want to request an application to join.

**Hope to see you at our next GTCC meeting, November 13 @ 7 PM
at the Cockeysville Library !**

In Remembrance

October saw the passing of two gentlemen who were known to our GTCC members. Dr. Tim Robinson ran unsuccessfully on two occasions for the Maryland Legislature, and he impressed many voters with his conservative views. While unsuccessfully in those elections, Robinson made a mark with his leadership and involvement in the Reagan Republican Club of the Timonium area. His energies and enthusiasm made the political club a stimulating place to learn of and discuss many of the current events in state and national news.

We also saw the passing of Roger Hayden recently. Mr. Hayden lived a varied life of public service and private enterprise. In the private sector he worked for the Eastern Stainless Corp., the Baltimore Orioles and his own consulting firm, Hayden Consulting Group. In the public sector, he won election as Baltimore County Executive, serving from 1990 to 1994. He was also very involved with the Board of Education, where he served for 12 years after being appointed by Gov. Mandel in 1974. During those twelve years, he served as president of the Board from 1979 to 1986. In 2017, Gov. Hogan appointed Mr. Hayden again, and he served on the Board until his death.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families of both men.



Baltimore County Citizens Academy

2020

HOW DOES BCOPD FUNCTION?

Citizens Academy participants will be given the opportunity to see the benefits of public service and learn about the challenges and demands associated with law enforcement. Attendees will learn about select police units and will participate in practical applications that demonstrate the aspects of the police officer's job.

TIME: 6:30PM - 9:30PM
DATES: MARCH 4, 2020 -
JUNE 10, 2020

*Every wednesday evening and one scheduled saturday class

APPLY NOW!
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Units Covered:

- *Patrol Operations
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- *Internal Affairs
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