

GTCC

The Greater Timonium Community Council

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

President's Message

Thanks . . . but No Thanks

Within the last month or so, two opinion pieces have appeared in the Baltimore Sun that have advocated for a change in the physical boundaries of Baltimore City. The first opinion piece advocated for the marriage of Baltimore City and Baltimore County into one political subdivision. While in the second article, the author states that “political realities stand in the way of rectifying the city’s situation by expanding its borders again,” but the author states that the city is “too small in area and too politically isolated to adequately address its problems.” This is not a new argument. Prior to World War II there were three different annexations of land to expand Baltimore City, and each time part of the rationale was that the City needed more land, which brought a larger tax base, in order to remain viable in addressing its needs.

While I recognize that Baltimore City faces many problems, from crumbling infrastructure, to fractured neighborhoods cause by violence and other factors, to education problems, it’s not like the suburbs are free from problems. Baltimore County has infrastructure needs just like the city, we too have areas that are struggling to attract new investment to revitalize communities, and our taxpayers just experienced several increases in taxes in the last budget cycle. So, the county should not be looked at as the cure all for Baltimore City’s problems. There should be a metropolitan area wide discussion about how to help supplement

Baltimore City's needs. It should not be the simplistic solution of combining city and county into one jurisdiction.

We are fortunate that in 1948 a constitutional amendment was passed requiring that if the boundaries of any city or county were altered, it would require the approval of voters in the affected area. When this amendment was passed, County voters supported it by a ratio of 5 to 1. So, the possibility of a change in the County's boundaries are remote. Let's have some robust discussions about other ways of addressing the City's needs, but please Sunpapers, drop the agenda of turning solely to Baltimore County to fix the City's problems.

Eric Rockel

Our September Meeting . . .

We hope you can join us for the next GTCC meeting on September 11, where our featured guest will be members of the Gunpowder Valley Conservancy. GVC has operated since 1989 as a non-profit organization whose aim is to energize people and resources to care for the land, water and character of the Gunpowder watershed.

Since its establishment, the GVC has preserved over 1,600 acres of land with the establishment of conservation easements that prevent development. They have also mobilized volunteers to plant and maintain over 30,000 native trees in the watershed. In the area of stream clean-ups, volunteers working with GVC have removed 235 tons of trash in seven hundred streams, and GVC members will speak to us about the successful "Clear Creeks" program that has been deployed in eastern Baltimore County and will soon be initiated in the Loch Raven area.

You will also learn about the Comprehensive Zoning Map Process in Baltimore County, which is just underway, and will not conclude until September 2020, as well as hear about police activities in the area. Please join us in the Meeting Room of the Cockeysville Library, where our meetings start at 7:00 PM.

Tree-planting Initiative shows us what We can accomplish

The following letter, written by Delegate Dana Stein, first appeared in the Baltimore Sun on August 17, 2019 and was reprinted here with his permission.

We've come to expect that reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)- the U.N.'s panel of climate experts from around the world- will not lead with good news, and the report released last week was no exception.

The New York Times' headline on its story about the IPCC report was "Climate Change Threatens the World's Food Supply, United Nations Warns." The report discussed how loss of productive soil threatens food production in many countries, and that climate change- with higher temperatures it's causing and extreme weather to which it's contributing- will make matters worse.

The report was not all doom and gloom, however. It offered several suggestions, most of which will require systemwide changes, such as more efficient agricultural practices and less food waste. But one of the suggestions is very straightforward: plant more trees. *Lots of them.*

In fact, the IPCC said that most of the modeled pathways that limit warming below disastrous levels "require different combinations of reforestation, afforestation, reduced deforestation, and bioenergy (high confidence)."

We've always known that trees are good at sequestering carbon, because they absorb lots of carbon dioxide and can live for decades. What is becoming increasingly clear is that massive tree-planting around the world can help fend off climate disaster. A new study found that planting one trillion trees would cut carbon in the atmosphere by 25%, an immense reduction.

Now planting one trillion trees is a huge undertaking. We know that planting that many trees will not happen anytime soon.

But the people of Ethiopia planted 350 million sapling trees *in a single day* last month. The Ethiopian Prime Minister's Green Legacy Initiative aims to plant 4 billion trees by the end of 2019.

In the United States, it's been a long time since we had such a major tree-planting initiative.

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) planted more than 3 billion trees in the 1930s and 1940s. The CCC is responsible for over half of the reforestation, both public and private, done in the country's history.

Using the CCC as a model, youth conservation programs in the western U.S. have become very proficient at planting trees, especially in state and national parks. I've estimated that \$10 million could fund the planting of 40 million trees in a single year. The trees planted in three years would sequester carbon equal to the emissions of more than one million cars.

Trees are not a silver bullet for the climate crisis. Significant emissions reductions are the most important part of a strategy to avoid a climate crisis.

But planting trees can help. Most of all, it's something we all can do now, without governmental action- at our own homes and in our communities. As Live Science said recently,

if we want to save the world from climate change, we should “grab some seeds, or some seedlings, and start planting trees like there’s no tomorrow.”

Implications of the Kirwan Commission Recommendations

It’s not far-fetched to predict that the upcoming Maryland General Assembly session will be all about implementing the recommendations of the Kirwan Commission, a statewide panel that examined Maryland’s school system. The State legislature established this panel in 2016, officially known as the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education. From their work, the Commission challenged the State to develop initiatives in five areas: early childhood education, developing quality teachers, college and career readiness, greater resources for at risk students and governance and accountability.

The initial report did not specify levels of funding to achieve those five initiatives, but the Commission and key legislators are trying to develop recommendations to be presented to the General Assembly in the next session. These recommendations will require increased funding at both the State level and the local level, and given the policies recommended, the costs will be substantial. It has been estimated that when fully implemented, these recommendations will cost an additional \$3.8 billion each year from state and local sources. Governor Hogan, at a recent MACO convention, has already challenged the costs associated with this initiative. He projected that it will result in a possible 39% increase in the personal income tax, or an 89% increase in the state sales tax, or a state property tax increase of over 500%. These figures are presumably only the State’s portion of the funding. The increase in local taxes has not yet been projected.

As the reader grapples to understand the demands for more education funding in the future, it may be useful to examine the current spending and where Maryland stands nationwide. A school finance organization focused on funding equity, EdBuild, reports that for 2015, Maryland public schools expended \$14,744 per pupil on a statewide basis. That ranks Maryland as 10th in the nation in spending. That ranking improves when cost of living is factored into the equation, and Maryland moves up to 8th place. Similarly, starting teacher salaries demonstrate Maryland’s commitment to educational spending. Again using 2015 statistics, Maryland’s average starting teacher salary was \$43,235, which placed it at the sixth highest among the fifty states and District of Columbia, and when adjusted for cost of living factors, Maryland moved up to 4th highest. Using 2018-19 figures supplied by the Maryland Dept. of Education, Baltimore County’s starting teacher salary for teachers with a Bachelor’s Degree and a Standard Professional Certificate, shows a salary of \$46,974, which is lower than salaries in Baltimore City and the counties adjacent to D.C, but still higher than Anne Arundel, Carroll and Harford counties.

One final point should be made about salary levels in the State of Maryland. While salaries have remained relatively flat in that period after the recession of 2008, benefits and pension costs have increased significantly by comparison. In 1998, 61 percent of all operating expenditures went to salaries and 21 percent was spent on benefits. By 2014, the amount spent

on salaries had decreased to 58 percent of operating expenditures, but benefits had increased to 26 percent. So, the evaluation of teacher's salaries cannot take place without consideration of pension and benefit payments as well. Keep these figures in mind as you start assessing the funding proposals that come out of the legislature this fall and winter. Should Maryland be first in the nation in educational funding given the tax increases that will be required? You must be the judge.

Local Trivia

1. Currently the quarry operation up at Texas is operated by Martin Marietta Materials. Can you name two of the former firms that have operated the quarry in the past century?
2. During what decade of the 1900s did the City of Baltimore dismantle the town of Warren to make way for the expansion of Loch Raven Reservoir?
3. What type of mill occupied Warren before the City dismantled it?

Lafferty Stepping Down

Delegate Stephen Lafferty, who previously served the Timonium area and currently serves the Towson area, announced that he will be leaving the General Assembly to accept a position in the Olszewski Administration. Lafferty will serve as the County's first chief sustainability officer, a position that was created in the most recent budget cycle. He served on the County's Planning Board prior to his election in the General Assembly, and he has been a delegate since 2007.

In addition to Lafferty's departure, it was also announced that Delegate Eric Bromwell will be leaving the General Assembly to accept the position of opioid strategy coordinator for Baltimore County.

A Somber Day in Springlake

Family, friends and neighbors gathered on the morning of August 24 at the Spring Lake Park in Timonium to dedicate a memorial in honor of Delaney Gaddis and Deborah Limmer, who were struck down by a motorist in the summer of 2018. Over one- hundred and twenty- five people gathered to celebrate the deceased and to view a memorial plaque and bench installed in the park. County Executive John Olszewski, Jr. spoke briefly at the ceremony, and special thanks go out to the non-profit group, Brothers Before Others, who along with the Police Emerald

Society of Baltimore, the Baltimore County Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 4, and local residents fundraised for and organized the event. The attendees placed flowers around the plaque, as well as memorial painted stones, and many attendees walked to the scene of this tragic accident before the ceremony concluded.

Housing Planned for Part of Villa Maria Campus

Associated Catholic Charities has submitted a plan to Baltimore County that, if approved, would add thirty-one new single-family dwellings on the Villa Maria property, north of East Timonium Road and just west of Dulaney Valley Road. Known as Lanahan Meadows, the company Sherwood Partners is listed as the developer of the eighty-one -acre tract, which is zoned DR-1 and RC-4.

There was a concept plan conference where County agencies submit their preliminary critique of the development on August 27th. The next step will be for the developer to schedule a Community Input Meeting, open to the public, where the details of the project are described and where the public can ask questions about the project. All adjoining property owners, as well as immediate community associations should receive notice of this Community Input Meeting, as well as copies of the agencies' comments from the concept plan conference. Following the input meeting, the developer has one year's time to amend the development plan to incorporate the County agencies' comments and resubmit the plan for approval. Following that development plan conference, a Hearing Officer's Hearing is scheduled, wherein the public can voice their concerns about the project, as well as question the witnesses testifying on behalf of the development.

Since the property is already zoned to allow one dwelling unit per acre on the DR-1 portion, it is unlikely that a general opposition to any development would be successful at the Hearing Officer's Hearing. However, the finer details of the plan could be challenged if those details deviate from County standards. The Pot Spring Community Association has indicated that some of its members are concerned about this development, and the Community Input Meeting should detail those concerns. We will provide a summary of those concerns in a future newsletter.

Answers to Trivia Questions

- 1. The Texas quarry has been operated by Harry T Campbell & Sons, Genstar, La Farge and Bluegrass Materials before Martin Marietta took over.*
- 2. The town of Warren was dismantled in the 1920s and by 1931 the reservoir's waters had expanded.*
- 3. The Warren Mill manufactured cotton cloth.*

Events Calendar

1. September 6, 5 PM until 10 PM, Countdown to Kickoff for the Ravens
At the State Fair Grounds
2. September 7, 6 PM until 10 PM, Veteran's Benefit Concert
At the State Fair Grounds
3. September 12, 7 PM until 8:30 PM, "Old Time Radio & the Great American Songbook"
At the Cockeysville Library
4. September 12-15, 10 AM until 7PM, RV Sale
At the State Fair Grounds
5. September 14, 10 AM until 3 PM, Motor Muster, honoring Police, Fire, EMS & Military
At the Maryland Fire Museum, admission free
6. September 18, 12 PM until 1 PM, Book Club, at the Cockeysville Library
7. September 22, 12 PM until 10 PM, Sabroso Craft Beer, Tacos & Music Festival
At the State Fair Grounds
8. September 26, 7PM until 8:30 PM, Talk on Climate Change
At the Cockeysville Library

Residents Dissatisfied with Sewer Project

A private contractor for Baltimore County has been lining a sewer pipe that runs from Timonium Road to the Beltway for several months now. This is part of the County's efforts to comply with a consent decree with the federal government that states the County will reduce leaks from the sewer system that may flow into many waterways.

One Lutherville neighborhood has been dissatisfied with the actions of that contractor, and a resulting meeting with the Department of Public Works and representatives of the Executive's office left many residents only partially satisfied. Among the complaints expressed

by residents were the fact the contractor had no port-a-pot on-site, and frequently workers were seen going into the woods to relieve themselves. Since the initial attempt to line the sewer pipe failed, the workers had to remove the failed lining, but they left the liner in the front yards of some residents for several days before removing the trash. Manholes have been left open at the end of the workday, which could pose a safety threat to smaller children who live on the street, and driveway entrances were blocked by construction vehicles, another inconvenience.

The meeting with County officials did resolve some of the problems that impacted residents, but these issues had been left to fester for several weeks until the meeting attempted to clear the air. Will things improve for the better going forward? Only time will tell if the County exerts more oversight on the contractor.

New Community Outreach Coordinator

Carmen Christiana has replaced Anne Marie Humphries as the outreach liaison for our area within the Office of the County Executive. We have invited her to speak at our November meeting, and we will confirm that appearance in our next newsletter. Should you need her assistance, she can be reached at 410-887-2450.

Robo Calls May Face Restrictions

Those obnoxious robo calls that we all receive far too frequently may soon experience limitations. According to WBAL News, attorneys general from all fifty states are working with telecom carriers to prevent and block those spam calls. Specific information about Maryland's attorney general's office was not included in the report, but the universal plan will be implemented in all states. Under this new plan, the telecom carriers will implement a call-blocking protocol, make anti-robo call technology free to consumers and institute a system that labels calls as legitimate or spam. All of this would be done at no cost to the consumer. Some of the telecom carriers already employ some of those tools, and the report did not specify any timeline for the measures.

Embarrassing Test Results

New School Superintendent Darryl L. Williams, Ed.D. wasted little time in responding to the student assessment results of the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) that were released on August 27. Dr. Williams stated that "in English language arts and math, far too few of our students are meeting or exceeding expectations . . . We can and must do better." He outlined an eight bullet-point strategy that had already been implemented prior to the release of the test scores, and several of those points specifically dealt with changes in the teaching of English and math.

With respect to English language arts as taught in Baltimore County, only 36.8% of students in grades 3 to 8 met or exceeded standards. The statewide average for the same grade group was 43.7%. While in math, only 26.6 % of students in the same grade levels met or exceeded standards in the county, and the statewide average in math was 33%.

Listed below, by school, are the percentage of 5th Graders who passed:

	English	Math
Lutherville	71.9	59.4
Hampton	61	61
Padonia Int'l.	45.5	28.9
Mays Chapel	59.5	48.4
Pinewood	78.8	83.5
Pot Spring	56.8	42.7
Timonium	86.3	74
Warren	39.6	37.7

Hope to see you at our September 11th general meeting as we return from the summer break!