

GTCC

The Greater Timonium Community Council

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**Due to the Coronavirus restrictions, there will be no GTCC Meeting
for September 2020. Stay safe!!**

President's Message:

Going Postal

I have never had problems with my USPS route carrier. He is a pleasant enough guy, and I usually don't see mail mis-delivered to my address. That is not to say the post office is infallible. I know friends and neighbors who have had problems with the officials at the Lutherville- Timonium post office, but that has never been my experience, up until recently. Granted my issues are still not with the local post office, they have been pleasant and have tried to be helpful, but I cannot say that good experience has extended to the USPS as a whole.

I waited forty-one days for a package to arrive after being sent from Utah. Now the USPS website states that packages normally take eight days to reach their destination, and even taking into consideration the pandemic, forty-one days is incredible. I tried to follow the parcel's progress on the USPS tracking system, but there were long periods of time that showed no activity at all. Even after the package reached a Washington, DC, distribution center, it took seventeen days for the package to reach my home!

These types of issues are not an outlier according to a recent article in the Baltimore Sun. They report that some residents in Dundalk are not seeing any mail deliveries to their homes for

two or three weeks at a time. One resident from Federal Hill waited ten days for a car title to reach him from a sister in New Jersey. It has gotten so bad that Congressman Dutch Ruppersberger has investigated the situation, and the congressman cited an internal memo from the postal service urging employees to leave mail behind if it might delay them. He blames the newly appointed postmaster general for many of the problems. Others, like S. David Fineman, a former chairman of the board of governors of the USPS, state that political interference is harming the operation of the postal service. For example, congress passed a law in 2006 that included, among other things, that USPS prefund its pension obligations for 75 years. Fineman points out that no private company has a similar obligation, and that type of requirement means money that would normally go to day to day operations are directed instead toward pension obligations. The former chairman of the board of governors also points out that Treasury released \$10 billion already allocated to the USPS recently but placed many strings on the money, such as details of contracts it negotiates with many shippers. Fineman concludes that the USPS is losing billions because of the pandemic, and that it will run out of money unless congress steps in to save the day.

The above brings me to the point of this commentary- don't be sure that the nation is ready for a vote by mail election in November. Postmaster General Louis DeJoy states that the USPS "has ample capacity to deliver all election mail securely and on time ...and we will do so." My personal experience makes me question that declaration. At the time of this writing, Governor Hogan has just approved a State Board of Elections plan to provide for 360 voting centers, primarily located at public high schools across the state. In addition, absentee ballot applications will be mailed to all voters in the state. I would urge all who vote by absentee ballot to get their ballot in the mail exceedingly early or personally deliver the absentee ballots to drop boxes that the Board of Elections will place at variously yet to be identified sites. The USPS is already under much strain, and the more time they have for delivery of these ballots the better.

Rest in Peace, Frank Regan

Former GTCC president, Frank Regan passed away this August after a two-and one-half year battle with complications from a stroke. Frank graduated from Dulaney H.S., where he met his late wife, Cathy, and served in the armed forces. In addition to his time as president of GTCC, he also served as the organization's treasurer and as editor of the newsletter.

His service to the community went far beyond his time at GTCC. He served as a volunteer at the Jarrettsville and Lutherville Volunteer Fire Companies, and along with wife, Cathy, as a mentor in a Church of the Nativity program for young couples preparing for marriage. Frank also served as president and member of the Board of Library Trustees for the Baltimore County Public Library system, and he received an award from the Baltimore County Executive for his distinguished service to the community at large.

Along with other departed leaders of GTCC, such as Lou Miller, Tom Kelly and Jo Owen, Frank Regan will be remembered for his generosity of time and spirit.

Villas at Pot Spring Public Meeting

Baltimore County government held a virtual community input meeting for a residential development called Villas at Pot Spring recently. The project proposes 42 units of semi-detached homes on a 42-acre parcel owned by Associated Catholic Charities on Pot Spring Road, just south and east of the terminus for Padonia Road. When built, the homes will be two-stories, plus basements, situated on small lots that will be maintained by the homeowner's association. The projected size of the homes is projected to be 2,500 to 3,200 square feet, and prices will start in the low \$600,000 range.

The attorney representing the owner points out that the existing zoning allows for the construction of 64 units, but they are only proposing 42 units. She also stated that 17 acres of the site will be left untouched, and due to the location of the proposed homes and the existing topography and tree cover, the homes will be largely not visible from Pot Spring Road.

Many of the nearby residents who attended the virtual meeting voiced concerns about the impacts of the development. Traffic impacts received many comments, including the insufficient width of Pot Spring Road, the poor geometry of Pot Spring and concerns that this development will add to cut thru traffic on Girdwood Road to the south. A segment of the participants also voiced concerns that semi-detached homes were incompatible with the single-family dwellings on much larger lots that are characteristic of most homes in the neighborhood.

Associated Catholic Charities now has one year from this community input meeting to submit a revised plan, labeled a development plan, to the County for further comments. Once that second round of comments has been issued, the project could proceed to a Hearing Officer's Hearing to approve or reject the development.

A companion development by Associated Catholic Charities, called Lanahan Meadows, and located off Dulaney Valley Road, near Timonium Road, already has submitted a development plan to the County. But it was stated at this input meeting that the County Department of Recreation and Parks has expressed interest in purchasing the Lanahan Meadows parcel, and negotiations are expected to continue into early 2021.

BCPS Re-Opening Plan

Baltimore County Public Schools published a Re-Opening Plan for all its schools for the 2020-21 school year, which is available for inspection on the system's website. This plan utilized information and input from the State Department of Education, from a Fall Reopening survey, a recovery plan stakeholder group and from other input sessions with labor groups working in

public education, the Superintendent's Advisory Councils, the International Parent Leadership Academy, Special Education Citizen's Advisory Council and others.

Among the guiding principles for reopening schools, the BCPS leadership has prioritized social-emotional learning for students, high quality teaching and learning, efforts to mitigate educational inequities, additional support and differential learning for students most in need and providing resources to all students.

The school year will begin on September 8 under a virtual instruction system and continue the virtual model through the end of the first semester, January 29, 2021. BCPS reports that live instruction provided by teachers will increase compared to the instruction provided last spring. Live instruction will be provided for four days out of a five-day week. Kindergarteners will receive at least 2 hours per day. While grades 1-12 will receive a minimum of 3.5 hours a day, along with another 3 hours of independent study and/or small group instruction.

After the end of the first semester, if it is safe to do so, BCPS will adopt a hybrid instruction model for the second semester. The hybrid approach will call targeted students back for in-person instruction for a few days a week on a rotating basis. Parents, however, will have a choice to continue full time virtual learning for their children.

It was interesting to see the survey results on the type of learning experience that stakeholders preferred for 2020-21. Students strongly preferred fully in-person learning (42.3%) when compared to fully virtual learning (20.2%). Parents and/or Caregivers held a slight preference for hybrid learning (33.9%) over fully in-person learning (30.4 %). For this second group, fully virtual leaning also ran in third place with 26.7% support. Not surprisingly, school staff strongly endorsed full virtual learning (42.9%) and full in-person learning placed third at 22.6%.

It will be up to parents to examine the quality of this virtual learning to see if BCPS performs as advertised. Last spring's experience set a low bar on what type of quality the public should expect. Monitoring the virtual learning experience of students and providing feedback, and challenging BCPS staff, when necessary, is the only way to ensure a better quality of education for this school year.

Give A Little Or Maybe Even A Lot

The longest standing institution in Timonium- The Maryland State Fair and Agricultural Society- needs our help. The pandemic has been particularly unkind to the Society and its associated activities. They have cancelled the 2020 Fair, except for the livestock shows, which provides the major source of revenue for the operation, two-thirds of their income. On top of that loss, many of the trade shows, like the Home Expo, have also fallen by the wayside, a double whammy.

Many of you may not know that the Maryland State Fair is actually a private, non-profit organization, a 501 (c) (3). Beside their main goal of educating about and promoting for

Maryland agriculture, the State Fair organization does many things to benefit the local community, such as:

- Transforming the Cow Palace into a drive-thru COVID-19 testing Station
- Providing a Meal and Resource pick up site for County & City residents
- Hosting American Red Cross emergency blood drives
- Sponsoring a weekly farmers market for residents
- Acting as a staging area for out of state utility workers who come to Maryland in times of storm emergencies
- Offering their 600 stalls to State Veterinarians for emergency livestock shelter

That's why I am encouraging all Timonium residents to make a donation to the "Maryland State Fair and Agricultural Society". These donations should be sent to:

Maryland State Fair and Agricultural Society
Attn: Mr. Andy Cashman, general manager
P.O. Box 188
Timonium, MD 21094

Your donation will be acknowledged, in writing, and will include a receipt for tax purposes.

So, if you currently itemize your expenses for income tax purposes, you can add this to other charitable contributions that you make throughout the year. And if you are a standard deduction filer, 2020 offers you a unique chance to participate. The Cares Act passed this Spring to help with pandemic relief provides a one time, tax year 2020, opportunity for standard deduction filers to deduct up to \$300 in charitable donations for this tax year. Your donation to the State Fair can be part, or all, of this \$300 deduction!

We urge all Timonium residents to help the State Fair out in this time of need. Please make a point of telling your association's members to participate in this important funding drive.

Maryland and the 2020 Census

Governor Larry Hogan announced that Maryland is now in the top ten states in self-response rate for the 2020 Census, and he continues to encourage all Marylanders to complete the forms at 2020Census.gov. In total Maryland has a 67.6% self-response rate, well above the national average. Hogan, however cautioned that our success rate "also means that more than three out of ten households has not yet responded." Every Marylander uncounted represents more than \$18, 250 per person in federal funding for programs as diverse as Medicare and Medicaid, school construction, emergency preparedness and transportation projects that go untapped.

Make an effort to get your household counted before the end of September. For more information about the census in Maryland, please go to census.maryland.gov.

CZMP Decisions Announced

Councilman Wade Kach announced his decisions on the properties involved in the 2020 Comprehensive Zoning Map Process (CZMP), and his pronouncement largely favored protection of the status quo for many communities. One of the significant themes of this 2020 CZMP was that many commercial property owners requested zoning changes that would have enabled building apartments on those commercial properties. Councilman Kach, however, rejected many of those requests, including the properties owned by KIMCO Realty across from the Maryland State Fair and another shopping center at York and Shawan Roads. Kach also rejected a zoning classification request that would have allowed apartments on the Heaver Plaza property on York Road, south of Seminary, as well as changing the zoning on the Padonia Village Shopping Center. In justifying his decision, the councilman cited the fact that schools in the greater Timonium area are already overcrowded and that roads could not support the additional traffic in these locations.

Several properties in Hunt Valley, however, did receive a zoning upgrade that will allow the construction of apartments. The property at 245 Shawan Road, which was previously fully zoned for light manufacturing (ML-IM), was changed so that approximately 6 acres carries the Business Major, Commercial Community Core (BM-CCC) classification that allows apartments. The councilman also changed nearly twelve acres of land at the Executive Plaza site, 11350 McCormick Road, to BM-CCC, and the property at 111 Shilling Road to the same zoning.

Another theme in this re-zoning cycle was the desire of neighborhoods that are adjacent to York Road to blunt further commercial encroachment. Properties at York Road & Croftley Road, York Road & Evans Avenue and York Road & Westbury Road did not receive the commercial zoning that their owners requested. However, the property on the south corner of York Road & Greenridge Road did get changed to Business Local, although the owner did not get the automotive service designation he requested that would have allowed the construction of a convenience store with fuel pumps. In explaining his decision for the York & Greenridge properties, Councilman Kach said:

“I made the recommendation that the Council reject the proposals for apartment buildings on the Heaver Plaza property and a gasoline station with convenience store on the property which was home to a credit union. Given the high number of gas stations, along with my concerns over schools and roads, I did not believe that either use was appropriate. I did however grant zoning that would allow for Business Local uses at what is now the vacant credit union property (1215 York Road). With this zoning change, I did request that the property owner address storm water concerns in the back of both properties as well as to ensure the continued presence of the Fire Museum at Heaver Plaza.”

Properties at the southwest corner of York Road & Roosevelt Avenue and York Road, near McCann Avenue did receive commercial classifications or had their commercial classification increased.

Councilman Kach also considered lowering the commercial classification on part of the Hightopps property from Business Roadside (BR) to Business Local (BL), but he ultimately left the existing zoning in place. In his rationale for this decision, he stated:

“I am very pleased that as a result of the CZMP, the concert space and restaurant Hightopps and the Stratford Community Association have come to an agreement regarding outdoor events in the summer, spring and fall seasons which will limit the number of outdoor events, and govern the sound levels and speaker placement for such events. For several years, the surrounding community has had an issue with outdoor live music at this business lingering long into the evening hours. The business had been able to do so because of their Business Roadside zoning designation. Because of this covenant agreement, I made the recommendation to keep the current zoning in place. I am hopeful that the new partnership between this business and the Stratford Community association will to be mutually beneficial for all.”

Another zoning issue that drew much interest from the local community was the councilman’s consideration of downzoning the property owned by Associated Catholic Charities at Stella Maris. On that issue he stated, “ I made the recommendation to change the zoning of a large property owned by Catholic Charities, which has plans to construct two large scale developments containing 73 homes adjacent to Pot Spring Road and Dulaney Valley Road (the proposed Villas at Pot Spring and Lanahan Meadows). While I had hoped an agreement between the Springlake and Pot Spring communities and Catholic Charities would have yielded a result all could live with, no agreement was forthcoming. Because of my concerns regarding overcrowded schools, traffic congestion and proximity to the reservoir, I made the decision to downzone this property significantly. While this may not prevent all development on this land, it will significantly reduce the number of homes that can be built.” As a result of his decision, the property will feature over 136 acres of Resource Conservation 4 (RC4) zoning, nearly 36 acres of Resource Conservation 5 (RC5) zoning, one quarter acre of Resource Conservation 6 (RC6) zoning, nearly 70 acres of DR 1 zoning, nearly 41 acres of DR 10.5 zoning, a third of an acre of DR 3.5 and a little more than one acre of DR 16.

One final zoning decision should be mentioned. The northwest corner of Padonia Road and Beaver Dam Road, where a Sheetz convenience store had been proposed, did not receive the Business Major-Automotive Service (BM-AS) zoning that would have allowed the convenience store. The property will remain zoned Manufacturing Light.

For a summary of all the zoning issues in the Third Council District, please consult the Planning Department homepage of the Baltimore County website.

Early Voting Sites in Baltimore County

Listed below are the early voting locations, according to the Baltimore County Elections Board website. Early voting begins Monday, October 26 through Monday, November 2. These locations will be open from 7 A.M. until 8 P.M.

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| <p>1. Arbutus Recreation Center
865 Sulphur Spring Road
Halethorpe, MD 21227</p> | <p>2. Randallstown Community Center
3505 Resource Drive
Randallstown, MD 21133</p> |
| <p>3. Towson Univ. South Campus
Pavilion
1 South Auburn Drive
Towson, MD 21252</p> | <p>4. Honeygo Run Community Center
9033 Honeygo Boulevard
Perry Hall, MD 21128</p> |
| <p>5. Sollers Point Center
323 Sollers Point Rd.
Dundalk, MD 21222</p> | <p>6. Victory Villa Community Center
404 East Compass Road
Middle River, MD 21220</p> |
| <p>7. Oregon Ridge Park
13401 Beaver Dam Road
Cockeysville, MD 21030</p> | <p>8. Reisterstown Senior Center
12035 Reisterstown Road
Reisterstown, MD 21136</p> |
| <p>9. Woodlawn Community Center
2120 Gwynn Oak Avenue
Gwynn Oak, MD 21207</p> | <p>10. Jacksonville Rec. Center
3065 B Sweet Air Road
Jacksonville, MD 21131</p> |
| <p>11. County Campus Metro Centre
At Owings Mills
10302 Grand Central Avenue
Owings Mills, MD 21117</p> | |

The Election day, November 3, 2020, voting centers have not been publicly affirmed as of August 29, 2020. If one would consult the State Board of Elections website, you are still being given the individual polling places that existed pre-pandemic if you were to use the “find your voting location” app on the website. On the Baltimore County Board of Elections website, a reader is told that the County Board of Elections will consider approving vote centers for the 2020 Presidential General Election at a video conference meeting on August 26 at 8:30 A.M. However, the results of that approval process were not posted on the website three days later. Unofficially, it would appear that high schools

in the area will serve as the polling places for this election, and those high schools would include Dulaney, Loch Raven High, the Carver Center for Arts & Technology, Herford, and Towson. Please consult the Baltimore County Board of Elections website to see if these locations have been officially approved.

Business Relief Loans Being Offered

County Executive John Olszewski, Jr. announced that the County has secured a \$1.6 million CARES Act grant to provide low-interest loans to qualifying small businesses to help them recover from the economic impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. The County will use these funds to capitalize a revolving loan fund open to businesses from all business sectors. The Department of Economic and Workforce Development will administer the loans, which shall range in size from \$50,000 to \$250,000, to allow borrowers to support an array of needs, including payroll support, acquiring equipment, reconfiguring spaces to meet Coronavirus guidelines and capital improvements, among other needs.

The Department of Economic and Workforce Development will begin processing loan applications within the next several weeks. Businesses that are interested in learning more about the program should reach out to businesshelp@baltimorecountymd.gov.

Another Attempt at Police Reform on Horizon

Councilman Julian Jones indicated that he will be introducing seven bills that will, if passed, reform many police procedures in the County. Previously, Jones introduced one bill that would have addressed all the reform issues, but that bill was tabled by the County Council during its August meeting by a 4 to 3 vote. Council members Marks, Quirk, Blevins and Crandell voted to table the original bill, while Councilmen Patoka and Kach did not. One of the members was concerned that last-minute amendments were introduced, but the public was not able to review and comment on those amendments.

As a result of the earlier bill's tabling, Councilman Jones plans to break the very lengthy bill into seven smaller parts, and it is presumed that he hopes that if some of the parts are still objectionable, other parts may pass as a result of the seven bills.

Councilman David Marks also indicated that he is working on proposed legislation, and he is getting input from State's Attorney Scott Shellenberger on the proposal. Marks said that his legislation would provide "a buffet of different provisions" for the County Council to choose from.

Among the reform measures contained in Councilman Jones' original bill from July are a review of past employment disciplinary history for a person applying to work as an officer for BCPS. If that person were previously terminated or resigned in connection with a disciplinary

proceeding, they could not be hired. The original bill also required annual training in the use of de-escalation techniques, implicit bias, and the use of force. The department would have also been required to implement early intervention measures if an officer is identified as being at risk of engaging in the use of excessive force.

Other components of the original bill included permitting the use of physical force by officers only when all other alternatives have been exhausted. Officers must report any use of force involving a weapon, pepper spray, tasers, a canine bite or a vehicle, and if an officer reasonably believes that another officer is using excessive force, that officer must intervene and report the incident to a supervisor. Those reporting officers are protected from retaliatory actions under the original bill. The original bill also prohibited the use of chokeholds or neck holds and classifies these actions as acts of lethal force.

At the time of releasing this newsletter, the newly written seven bills that Councilman Jones plans to introduce had not been published on the County Council website. It is presumed that most of the measures enumerated above will be parts of these seven bills. In addition, Councilman Jones specifically mentioned that part of the new package would include a provision to restrict the use of “no-knock” warrants to situations where an officer’s life could be reasonably placed at risk if the warrant is announced, where child safety is involved, in cases of domestic violence or suspicion of terrorism. A “no-knock” warrant was involved when police entered the home of Breonna Taylor in Louisville, and Ms. Taylor was fatally shot by police in that exchange.

Zoning Hearing for Church on East Timonium Road

The Agape Christian Church, located at 100 East Timonium Road, was required to hold a zoning hearing prior to building an additional parking lot on the west side of the existing building. Churches are allowed by right to be built in residential zones, according to Baltimore County zoning regulations. So why then was the church required to hold the hearing? Well the hearing was required because of a little understood part of the zoning regulations known as “residential transition areas.” A residential transition area is meant to be a buffer area between two dissimilar uses that are allowed in DR 1, DR 2, DR 3.5, DR 5.5, and Resource Conservation (R.C.) zones. The dissimilar use that is to be built must maintain a 75-foot buffer, of which 50 feet cannot be disturbed, on their property in the placement of any improvements.

An example of when a residential transition area could occur is when an assisted living facility is proposed to be built adjacent to a property containing a single-family dwelling. In that case the assisted living property would need to leave a buffer of at least 75 feet to its property line in the placement of the building. In Agape Christian Church’s case, the zoning office wanted the Hearing Officer to determine if the proposed parking lot was subject to the transition area buffers.

The decision from the Hearing Officer has not been issued at the release of this newsletter. However, it would appear that the Church may not be subject to the residential transition area setbacks because the zoning regulations make a specific exception for additions to existing churches, including parking areas and driveways, provided all other zoning regulations

are maintained. That is not to say that the Church does not have to provide any screening. The Baltimore County Landscape Manual requires less stringent screening buffers for all development, and the Church will be required to comply with those landscaping standards.