

GTCC

The Greater Timonium Community Council

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**Our Next General meeting will take place on November 10 at the Vista Room
in the Administration Building of the Maryland State Fairgrounds, 7:00 PM**

President's Message

One Year and Counting

Next year, voters will be heading to polling places to cast votes in local, state and federal elections. Below are my top questions for the candidates in each of these elections.

In the Third District County Council race, I want to know if the candidates are committed to keeping the suburban character of the greater Timonium area? To me, that means discouraging the growth of mixed-use, high-density sites that feature too much impervious surface and very little grass and tree cover. The mixed use, high-density development is currently in favor with urban planners, but I will favor the lower density, suburban pattern any day of the week. Another component of this is to discourage creeping commercialism from encroaching onto the side streets adjacent to York Road. These side streets serve as the edges of many of our residential neighborhoods, and they need to be preserved for residential use.

I am also interested to hear what the County Council candidates have to say about affordable housing in the district. Back about five years ago the County settled a lawsuit concerning the lack of affordable housing in all areas of the County by agreeing to invest \$3 million annually for ten years to develop or preserve 1,000 affordable housing units that will be

geographically dispersed. Since that settlement we have seen a private company build affordable townhouse units off East Padonia Road, behind the car dealership. That is just one example in the County. My question to the candidates is “Do you let this settlement process continue without any new impetus from County government, or Do you pass additional legislation that would provide more funds to meet or exceed the affordable housing goal?”

In the County Executive’s race, I want to know if the candidates are committed to building new high schools at Towson and Dulaney. Prior to the last election, candidate John Olszewski, Jr. supported the rebuilding of Dulaney H.S., not a renovation of the school. However, recently it seems that Mr. Olszewski has waffled in his support, and he has not come out strongly in support of his previous pledge. What will his stance be in this election?

I also want to hear all candidates take on the recent efforts in police reform. Reform measures have been enacted at both the state and local levels. I am not suggesting that some of these measures were not overdue, but has the pendulum swung too far in the other direction, with reform measures and decreased police budgets? The local chapter of the Fraternal Order of Police president claims that policing is at a critical inflection point. (See the Sept. newsletter) I want to hear how the candidates for County Executive plan to address this issue.

As for the State delegate and senator candidates, I want to know how they plan to fund the Kirwan educational reform package. When fully implemented, the Kirwan reforms will cost an additional \$4 billion per year. I felt the legislators who passed Kirwan were being dishonest by never outlining how they expected to pay for it. Will new revenue streams like sports betting and legalization of cannabis pay for part of the added costs? And how much will those new revenue streams contribute to the \$4 billion per year in added education costs? Or should we taxpayers expect to see increases to the sales tax or income tax to pay for Kirwan? No candidate wants to talk about tax increases during an election campaign, but voters should insist on a complete answer to that question.

In the governor’s race, I am not expecting another Republican to win election. Democrat registered voters outnumber Republicans by a 2 to 1 margin in the State. I have a better chance of winning the lottery than the state has a chance of seeing a third election of a Republican. My questions for Democratic candidates will aim at finding out if they have moderate positions or if they take on progressive, far-left positions.

Finally in the federal elections for congress and the senate, there are many problems facing this country, including inflation, recovery from the pandemic, foreign policy challenges, our withdraw from Afghanistan, infrastructure and many more issues. I may be the only person in the entire country that feels this way, but to me the most pressing issue facing our country is finding out the origins of the covid-19 virus. Is it a naturally occurring virus or was it man-made? All our existing congress members and senators have done almost nothing to find the origins of that virus, and for that reason I will not vote for any sitting federal official, and I want their competitors to guarantee that the house and senate will investigate this mystery within their first year in office. Admittedly this is a somewhat radical and very narrow view, but the entire

planet has dealt with the miseries caused by this pandemic for far too long without trying to determine how it started.

Eric Rockel

Meeting Agenda for Our November 10 General Meeting

- A. Introductions
- B. Report on Public Safety from the Cockeysville Precinct
- C. Delegates Michele Guyton and Nino Mangione discuss the upcoming General Assembly Session
- D. Hot Topics in the area: Speed Control on Pot Spring Road, Redevelopment Of Lutherville Station, New housing developments; Councilman Wade Kach will answer questions about Lutherville Station's redevelopment
- E. Payton Schreiber-Pan, Dulaney High School Artist
- F. New Business

Education Notes

In September, the Baltimore County Board of Education (BOE), by a narrow one vote margin, approved a school board budget that will rebuild Towson and Dulaney High Schools, rather than just renovating both schools. That position by the BOE now needs to be supported by the County's Planning Board and the County Executive before the request is submitted to the State of Maryland.

On October 21 the Planning Board held a public comment session on the County's capital budget. Several parents, Senator Shelly Hettleman, Dulaney PTSA president Yara Cheikh, and School Board member Kathleen Causey spoke in favor of rebuilding Dulaney, and District 42 A Delegate Cathi Forbes championed the cause of Towson's rebuilding. Senator Hettleman was particularly effective in detailing the need and past efforts to support the rebuilding of Dulaney. Two speakers countered that a recent study supported only renovating the schools, but of all the speakers on the subject, the overwhelming majority supported rebuilding the schools.

The Planning Board will not vote on the capital budget until the spring of 2022, and there will be more efforts to influence this question in the future.

It is curious that neither Baltimore County Public Schools nor the State Department of Education has come out with statistics showing the enrollment numbers for 2021-22. Usually, these number are released shortly after September 30, which is the deadline for the counties to report to the State. The enrollment numbers showed a 4,000-student decline last year over two years ago, and this year’s numbers may be even lower. This enrollment report is significant because it affects the level of State funding to the localities.

* * *

A recent efficiency study by the consultant Public Works LLC identified several areas that need to be addressed by Baltimore County Public Schools. Among the major findings of this 750-page study, the consultant identified the need to restructure the central office, the need to improve accountability and transparency, the low morale among employees, the need to strengthen communications and to share more services with community stakeholders.

If all the consultant’s recommendations are adopted, the school system could save \$39 million over a five-year period. Superintendent Darryl Williams accepted the report without making excuses. “We have a very real customer service problem,” Williams told the school board when the report was first unveiled. He further indicated that he will be working to involve all constituencies as he implements changes championed in the report.

The consultant’s report also critiqued the 12-person school board. The report recommended that the board adopt a civility policy, attend team-building workshops, update their operating manual and improve board governance so as to avoid micromanagement. Board Chairwoman Makeda Scott pledged to take steps to address the recommendation in this report, and she pledged to keep the public updated as the recommendations are implemented.

County Revises Regulations for Solid Waste Collection

The Bureau of Solid Waste announced changes to its regulations after input from a study group and a public meeting on the collection process. The most notable change will be that beginning April 1, 2022, the County will require that all yard waste collected must be placed in special two-ply paper bags. Collectors will no longer accept plastic bags for yard waste. The County will have a limited supply of free paper bags available at the three solid waste facilities, all County senior centers and all County libraries on a first come basis, but residents are restricted to a maximum of five bags per person. Grass can be mulched and left on the ground or placed in compost piles to reduce the cost of paper bags. Placing bagged yard waste in the street or gutter is not allowed nor is placing it in trash cans.

In another new regulation, the County will now accept larger weight and capacity limits for trash and recycling containers. The new limit is up to 45 pounds and 45 gallons per container. In the future, the County’s contract haulers will be placing lifting devices/mechanical tippers on the rear of their trucks. At that point the collectors will also accept 96-gallon tipper containers compatible with mechanical cart tippers.

Starting in January 2022, collection days that fall on a holiday will slide to another day during that same week. Residents will no longer have to deal with skipping a week if their collection falls on a holiday.

Finally, the County will re-introduce bulk collection of larger items in early 2022. Look for the details on this program at the start of the new year. It is expected to supply one free bulk collection per year of up to three bulk items.

Further details about these changes will be available in December when the County mails out new program guides and calendars for the coming year. Remember that the County requires for all household trash to be stored in a watertight, rodent resistant outdoor container equipped with handles and a tight-fitting cover. Lids are not allowed to be secured to the container with rope, springs or other devices.

Special thanks to Steve Lippy, who contributed to this article

Uptick in Serious Crime for Our Area

Over the past month we have seen an uptick in criminal activity at many commercial spots around the greater Timonium area. The most shocking was the fatal shooting of a man outside the Bowlero bowling alley, just north of Timonium Road. Police indicate this was a targeted act and not a random shooting. As of November 2, police had apprehended two suspects in the murder. In the same month there was also a fatal shooting in the 800 block of Kenilworth Drive, just inside the beltway. In addition to the shootings, the Bluestone Restaurant had a window smashed and a safe stolen in an overnight robbery, and two locations along York Road had criminals try to pry ATMs from the front walls of local businesses.

Discussions Continue on Lutherville Redevelopment

When the Lutherville Community Association told the owners of Lutherville Station, at the end of West Ridgely Road, that they could not support a 450-unit apartment complex on the property, they were hoping that the owners would significantly scale back their plans. Instead, the owners only reduced the number of apartment units by fifty, to 400 units, and they increased the amount of office space proposed from 100,000 square feet to 200,000 square feet. The owners claim that they cannot make the project profitable without that scale.

In contrast, the community association's board had not taken an official stance on how many, if any, apartment units would be acceptable as it gathers more feedback on what its residents think of the project. A public input meeting was held on November 2, which drew a very large turnout, both from residents inside the association's boundaries and from residents

outside the boundaries. Councilman Wade Kach also attended to answer audience questions about his stance on the subject.

There was a large contingent of residents who signed the “No Apartments/No Compromise” petition at the meeting. Their spokesperson stated that more than 400 persons signed the petition in opposition to any apartments on the Lutherville Station site. Many residents are concerned with the added traffic, impact on schools and stress on other parts of the infrastructure that apartments will bring. Councilman Kach responded by agreeing that he too is worried about the stresses that added apartments will bring to the area, and he also cautioned that the community has to be concerned about what will happen to the property in the future, at a time when a more “development friendly” person occupies the council seat.

Before the meeting ended, votes were taken to determine the official stance of the community association. The vote was overwhelmingly against any apartments being allowed on the Lutherville Station site. The association’s board will accordingly notify the developers that it will not support any Planned Unit Development that features apartments. In a separate motion made from the floor, a narrow majority of residents asked the association’s board to explore the possibility of senior housing on the site with the developers. This motion did not “approve” or “disapprove” of senior housing, it merely asked the association to gather information about senior housing. Further discussions will take place after the collection of that information.

Community Input Meeting Set for Hunt Valley Apartments

Hill Management, who own the Executive Plaza at 11350 McCormick Road, will be holding a community input meeting in conjunction with Baltimore County on November 16th, at 7:00 PM. This input meeting will be a virtual meeting via WebEx, and those interested in participating should go to the county website in order to register for the event. To start this process, go to www.baltimorecountymd.gov/cim.

The project is being done in partnership with Texas Roadhouse, Inc. from Louisville, Kentucky. The proposal features a restaurant on the ground floor and 300 apartments on floors above. They also plan to build a 388-space parking structure to accommodate the new construction. This construction would take place on the northwest corner of the Executive Plaza property, if approved.

Two Residential Development Projects Moving Forward

It was announced that the sixty-one-lot subdivision plan known as Greenspring Manor, located at 2310 West Joppa Road, will hold its development hearing on November 18, 2021, starting at 10:00 AM, with a second hearing date scheduled for November 22, starting at 10:00 AM, if necessary. This second date was rescheduled from the 19th. Due to the County’s covid-19 restrictions, this will be a virtual meeting. For anyone wishing to participate, please

contact the County's project manager, Jerry Chen, at Jchen@baltimorecountymd.gov, at least 24 hours prior to the hearing.

On November 3, 2021, at 10:00 AM, the County will conduct a development plan conference for the project known as Torch Hill, formerly known as 1400 West Seminary Avenue. This project proposes 31 new single-family houses on property fronting on Seminary Avenue, just east of Mays Chapel Road. Because it falls within the failing traffic shed of Falls Road and Seminary Avenue, the project will require a special hearing as part of the development approval process. Typically, the Hearing Officer's Hearing follows within two or three months after the development plan conference.

Efforts to Control Speeding on Pot Spring Road

Residents from the communities adjacent to Pot Spring Road turned out in late September to talk with Baltimore County's Office of Traffic Management and Transportation Planning about the need to control speeding drivers. The problem is a constant one, punctuated by accidents wherein autos have left the road, crashing into backyards, and serious two car collisions are now more common.

County traffic engineers initially proposed bike lanes on the sides of Pot Spring, which would limit traffic to one lane in each direction, thereby prohibiting drivers from passing on the right. That solution was not accepted by a number of the attendees at the meeting, who suggested that parking lanes along the side of the road would be more useful and practical.

Although speeding is a problem along all parts of Pot Spring, the attendees acknowledged that the physical road conditions on Pot Spring are quite different in the area north of Timonium Road than for the part south of Timonium Road. These differences may require that the traffic engineers develop different solutions for each stretch of road. Pedestrian safety also came up at the meeting, and the County needs to look at solutions for that problem as well.

Ethics Commission Established

County Executive John Olszewski, Jr., created an ethics commission tasked with assessing government accountability. Retired Judge Joseph Murphy will head the seven-member commission, and it includes Joanne Antoine, executive director of Common Cause of Maryland, Brigadier General Janeen Birkhead, retired Judge Kathleen Cox, William E. Johnson, Jr., formerly inspector general for the Maryland Dept. of Human Resources, Jon Laria, an attorney and Cindy Leppert, chair of the County's Ethics Commission.

It is unclear what topics this commission will examine, but most observers assume that the Office of Inspector General, headed by Kelly Madigan, will be scrutinized by

this commission. Although he created the Office of Inspector General in 2019, Olszewski faced criticism last year when he sought to limit the powers of the Inspector General and install an oversight board for the office. Commission member, Joanne Antoine, indicated that from her perspective the Office of Inspector General needs to be “strengthened and empowered.” Whether the other commission members share that sentiment remains to be seen in advance of their first meeting.

County Seeks Feedback

Baltimore County is seeking public input by releasing two online surveys. The first is feedback on Pedestrian and Bicyclist issues, and the survey is open until November 14th. To access this survey paste the following into your browser:
<https://baltimorecountymd.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?u=f369a86ae30458b468445b231&id=83469281a2&e=7be94bbf5>

The second survey concerns Park and Recreation opportunities in Baltimore County. To reach this survey, which is open until November 15th, paste the following into your browser:
<https://baltimorecountymd.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?u=f369a86ae30458b468445b231&id=a1f0ef3e80&e=f94623f570>

Proposed GTCC Officers for Year 2022

All the current officers have agreed to serve for year 2022. Eric Rockel will stand for president, Kathleen Beadell will stand as vice president and Laura Renshaw will stand as secretary and treasurer. If anyone wishes to run for any of these offices, nominations may be submitted at our November meeting.

Ruppersberger Discontinues Facebook Use

Congressman C.A.”Dutch” Ruppersberger announced that he will no longer reach constituents with a Facebook page. In explaining his decision about Facebook, the Congressman stated Facebook promotes “disinformation and hate.” This decision comes after a former Facebook employee told Congress that the company puts profits over the content on the site. Ruppersberger also added in a radio interview that “there is no consequence to their (Facebook’s) focus on negativity.” The Congressman did, however, indicate that he would still use Twitter, another popular social media site.

On an unrelated matter in the same interview, Ruppertsberger indicated that he would support and vote for the \$1.2 trillion infrastructure bill and the \$1.75 trillion budget reconciliation bill, even though congress has not written the text for the latter at this time.

Calendar of Events

1. November 12-14, Irish Festival at the Maryland State Fairgrounds, the Cow Palace
From 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM
2. November 13, Ridgely Middle School's Annual Craft Fair
From 10:00 AM until 2:00 PM
3. November 26-28, Festival of Trees by Kennedy Kreiger at the Maryland State Fairgrounds, the Cow Palace, From 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM
4. Starting November 28, Holiday Train Garden at the Fire Museum of Maryland
10:00 AM to 4:00 PM, On this date from 11:00 AM until 2:00 PM
meet Santa and get a selfie with the jolly old fellow.
The train garden will also be opened on Dec, 5,12,19,26 and 28-31, 10 until 4.
5. December 4-5, East Coast Indoor Nationals Custom Car & Truck Show
Maryland State Fairgrounds, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM, Cow Palace
6. December 4-5, Greenberg Train Show, Maryland State Fairgrounds, Exhibition Hall
10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Enjoy the Holidays and Have a Happy New Year!!