

# GTCC The Greater Timonium Community Council

**Volume XIV, Issue 1** 9b West Ridgely Road, Box 276, Timonium MD 21093  
**January 2022** <http://www.gtccinc.org>

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## Newsletter

**Our next general meeting on January 12, 2022, will be a virtual meeting due to the recent increase in Omicron positivity. We will email all on our mailing list an invitation ahead of the meeting. See the tentative agenda at the end of this newsletter.**

### *President's Message*

#### **Towson, you have a problem**

Many residents of Timonium and Towson are upset with the County Executive. In early December, Baltimore County Executive John Olszewski, Jr. announced that he was supporting a fifteen-year plan to renovate public school buildings that did not include a total replacement for Towson and Dulaney high schools. He did so even though the School Board had voted earlier, by a narrow margin, to support the rebuilding of both schools.

Jennifer Tarr, a founding member of the Friends of Dulaney, advocacy group, wrote a letter to the editors of the Baltimore Sun, in which she blasted the County Executive for changing his position on Dulaney. To many residents it appears that Olszewski lied about supporting replacing Dulaney back when he was candidate Olszewski during the 2018 primary campaign. At that time Olszewski was in a tight, tight race with Jim Brochin to be the Democratic nominee for County Executive. Ultimately Olszewski won that primary by 17

votes, and it is hard to believe that his initial support for rebuilding Dulaney did not greatly aid the victory.

State Senator Chris West was very direct in his criticism of Olszewski's decision. "Never in my lifetime of closely observing Maryland politics have I witnessed such a shocking breach of promise by a public official," said the senator. West and other elected officials, including councilmen Wade Kach and David Marks, issued a strong critique of the Multi-Year Improvement Plan for All Schools, a master plan created by Cannon Design, a consulting firm hired by the school system and county government. It was this consultant's report that Olszewski decided to support rather than his earlier commitment to Towson's and Dulaney's parents.

So where do we go from here? Olszewski has said that if the State will allocate more funding for school construction, he could support using the additional funds to rebuild the two high schools. Posts on the Friends of Dulaney Facebook page have bought into this approach, indicating that we should lobby our delegates and senators for more money at the State level. I would advocate for a different approach, however. Why not support a candidate for county executive who will be true to his or her word in supporting new high schools? Mr. Olszewski has been given that chance and he failed. It is time to find a new executive who can be trusted.

*Eric Rockel*

### **Towson High Administrator Garners Honor**

Congratulations go out to Kimberly Culbertson, an assistant principal at Towson High School, who was named Assistant Principal of the Year by the Maryland Association of Secondary School Principals. "Ms. Culbertson is an exemplary leader who strives to inspire others," said Towson's principal, Charlene DiMino. "Her commitment to students, families and staff has consistently resulted in academic and social advancements."

## **More Virtual Meetings on the Master Plan**

The Baltimore County Department of Planning announced that it will hold additional virtual meetings on Master Plan topics during January and early February. These targeted topics will supplement the prior general meetings in many communities during the summer and fall of 2021.

Among the topics of these individual meetings are Responsible Regionalism, Livable Built Environment, Part One-Housing and Land Use, Livable Built Environment, Part Two- Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Facilities, Resilient Economy, Healthy Community, Interwoven Equity and Harmony with Nature.

All meetings will start at 6:00 PM and run until 8:00 PM. A description of each topic and the date(s) for each meeting can be found at the [Master Plan 2030](#) on the County's website. The links to each meeting are also available at the website.

## **Maps, Maps and More Maps**

Every ten years, because of new population counts conducted by the Census Bureau, the legislative maps at the local, state and federal levels are redrawn. As to the County Council map impacting the area constituting the Greater Timonium Community Council, showing District Three, click the following, [b10321.exhibit A.pdf \(baltimorecountymd.gov\)](#)

There were two notable changes affecting the geographic area that constitutes the Greater Timonium Community Council. Initially, precinct 08-016 was slated to be part of the Second Council District. This precinct, which is situated just east of I-83, north of the Beltway and having an eastern boundary of the Light Rail line, had traditionally been part of the Third District. As a result of many outcries from Third District constituents, Councilman Kach proposed an amendment to the original map that returned this precinct to the Third. All other council members voted for this change. Another change affecting this GTCC area saw precinct 08-024 moved from the Second District under the old map to the Third District under the new map.

Additionally, there were public comments about creating a second "majority minority" district for the County Council. Testimony at the Council's work session featured more than twenty-five speakers favoring a second "majority minority" district, but in the end the Council chose not to create a

second such district. Several council members remarked that to accommodate such a request could easily divide existing communities, placing those communities in two distinct districts.

The State Legislature has approved the new map outlining Maryland's eight congressional districts. A copy of that congressional map can be viewed here, [webpage-final.pdf \(maryland.gov\)](#). The discussions of the congressional map were punctuated by a high level of acrimony during debate at the legislative special session. Critics of the map adopted by the General Assembly pointed out that the Princeton Gerrymandering Project graded this map as an "F," in part because the congressional districts created were not compact, respectful of geographic features and fair with respect to partisan considerations. By contrast, a proposed map generated by the Maryland Citizens Redistricting Commission, who were appointed by Governor Hogan, received a grade of "A" from that same Princeton workgroup. Defenders of the enacted map, such as Del. Eric Luedtke, pointed out that the adopted map also considered compliance with the Voting Rights Act. In the end, Maryland will continue to have congressional districts that are oddly shaped and often compared to the shapes of prehistoric dinosaurs. Much more of the GTCC's area will now be incorporated into the 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District.

The State legislative map has not yet been enacted by the General Assembly, but a preliminary version can be viewed here, [rac-legislative.pdf \(maryland.gov\)](#). Of particular note for this new map is that District 11 will include all the geographic area west of York Road from the Beltway to just north of Shawan Road, as well as an area on the east side of York Road from Galloway Avenue to Warren Road. District 42B will have boundaries of York Road on its west side and Dulaney Valley Road on its east side throughout a large portion of the GTCC area. Residents of Wakefield are largely situated in 42B, but residents on the southside of Wyngate Road will be placed in District 42A. North and east of Wakefield the boundary for 42B is irregular and largely follows Loch Raven Road and then Pot Spring Road, but the reader should consult the link to the map for an accurate description. District 42A has a southern boundary of Ashland Road and points north.

The two maps favored by the majority in the Maryland General Assembly were created so that legislators could choose their constituents, rather than a case of constituents choosing their legislators.

## **Community Input Meeting for Multi-Family Project in Hunt Valley**

A sparsely attended virtual meeting was held on November 16 for the multi-family residential project known as “Texas Roadhouse”. Situated on property fronting on Shawan Road, and heretofore known as the Executive Towers in Hunt Valley, this project proposes to build 300 apartment units, a mix of 1,2- & 3-bedroom units. In addition to the apartments, a structured parking facility would service both the apartments and the existing office towers. Few additional details came to light during the meeting, other than the fact that the developer plans to build a pool, courtyard and possibly a dog park as part of the project.

The developer now has one year from the date of this meeting to submit a more detailed development plan for County agencies review. After that review is completed, the project must undergo an administrative hearing in order to start building.

## **Delegate Guyton Hopes to Expand Speed Camera Law**

Prompted by concerns over excessive speeding and unsafe driving on Pot Spring Road, Delegate Michele Guyton plans to sponsor legislation in the coming session that would expand where speed cameras could be deployed. Currently, both the State and localities are limited to using speed cameras to construction work zones and to school zones for grades kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Under Delegate Guyton’s proposed legislation, speed cameras could also be used in areas that contain a nursery school. The bill has yet to be assigned a bill number at the time of this reporting.

Residents along Pot Spring Road are asking that residents from other parts of the greater Timonium area support this legislation and call upon local delegates to support this as well.

## **Local Bills Pending Before the County Council**

Councilman Wade Kach has submitted Bill 112-21, which if passed will amend the regulations affecting Planned Unit Developments. Under existing regulations, the County Council must approve any Planned Unit Development for agency review purposes to start a process that ends with a hearing officer's hearing to approve or reject a Planned Unit Development.

Typically, an applicant has 90 days after that Council approval to submit the plan for review, and if the plan proposes housing under a federal or state housing or tax law, the submittal time is extended to 180 days.

Under Kach's proposed change to the law, if the Council resolution was passed during a local state of emergency, the applicant would have one year from the end of the state of emergency to submit a plan. That would be a change from the current period of 180 days from the end of the emergency.

Councilman David Marks has submitted Bill 113-21, which if passed would modify the keeping of backyard chickens. Under this bill, hens, but not roosters, may be kept on residential property of less than one acre. Currently, hens are not allowed on properties smaller than one acre.

This proposal stipulates certain building requirements for the hen house, or coop, certain setback requirements for the coop, the area required for grazing and the number of hens allowed on variously sized lots. In a 10,000 square foot lot no more than four hens are permitted, up to ten hens on a 40,000 square foot lot. The proposed law also places certain sanitary standards and licensing requirements on any owner who wishes to raise chickens.

More than two years ago the Planning Board had issued a report on raising chickens, but the County Council had not reacted to the board's report until now. Both bills will be discussed at a work session to be held on January 11 at 4 PM.

## **County Council Enacts Public Finance Law for Local Campaigns**

Beginning with the 2026 election, candidates for County Executive and County Council can receive public financing for their campaigns. A voter referendum question, approved in the November 2020 election, paved the way for the County Council to enact this law at its December 20, 2021, session.

The law establishes a Baltimore County Fair Election Fund Commission, which will oversee the amount of public funds necessary to fully fund the fair election fund and recommend to the County Executive the necessary appropriation for the annual budget. This commission will consist of nine members, one nominated by each Council member and two nominated by the County Executive. The commission will meet at least twice annually in non-election years and meet at least once every 90 days during the 12 months preceding a primary election. In addition, the commission will conduct a review of the fund after the end of an election cycle so that its findings can be reported to the County Executive and County Council.

In order to receive public funding, candidates for County Executive and County Council must complete a multi-step certification process that starts with filing a notice of intent with the State Board of Elections, followed by establishing a citizen-funded campaign account. Candidates are subject to certain restrictions if they elect to receive public financing. Among the restrictions are a prohibition from accepting private contributions from any group or organization, including from political action committees, labor organizations or the central committee of a political party. Candidates may not accept more than \$250 from an individual during an election cycle.

The candidate must next raise a threshold amount of qualifying campaign contributions from County residents during a specific period of time. For County Executive a candidate must collect at least 550 distinct contributions that total at least \$50,000. County Council candidates must collect at least 150 distinct contributions that total at least \$15,000. Following the initial fund raising, the candidate must apply for certification from the State Board of Elections, including submitting certain reports. If the candidate is certified as meeting the requirements, the State will notify the County's Director of the Office of Budget and Finance that the candidate is eligible to receive public financing.

The funding formula is too cumbersome to be detailed at length in this article, but two examples can provide a sense of the formula. If an individual contributes \$150 to a County Executive candidate, that candidate would receive \$600 in matching public finance funds. That same contribution to a County Council candidate would be matched with \$450. There is no match for contributions above \$150. The total public financing to a County Executive candidate may not exceed \$750,000, and total financing to a County Council candidate may not exceed \$80,000. These limits apply for either a primary or a general election.

Finally, the law places limits on the total expenditures by a candidate in either a primary or a general election. The County Executive candidate is limited to no more than \$1,400,000 in spending from their citizen financed campaign

account, and the Council candidates are limited to no more than \$150,000. Any public financing that is unspent at the end of a campaign must be returned to the County within 30 days after the election.

### **Calendar of Events**

Premier Wedding Expo: January 8, 11AM to 4PM, 4-H/Home Arts Bldg.  
At Maryland State Fair

TotSwap, a children's consignment sale: January 14-16, 9AM to 4PM  
4-H/Home Arts Bldg. Md. State Fair

Jurassic Quest, a dinosaur experience: January 14-17, 9AM to 8PM  
Cow Palace, Maryland State Fair

Boat Show: January 21-23, 9AM to 8PM, the Cow Palace at Maryland State Fair

Train Show by Makin Tracks, LLC: February 5, 9AM to 5PM; Cow Palace  
February 6, 10AM to 4PM; Maryland State Fair

Motorcycle Show: February 11-13, 10AM to 6PM, Cow Palace, Md State Fair

Maryland RV Show: February 18 to 20 & 25 to 27, 10AM to 8PM  
Various buildings at the Maryland State Fair

*All events were scheduled prior to the outbreak of the Omicrom strain of the Covid Virus, Scheduling may be subject to change.*

*It is suggested that you check with the State Fair, 410-252-0200 about event status*



## **Inspector General Investigates Tennis Barn Approval**

From a story reported in the Baltimore Sun, the county's inspector general is investigating what role, if any, that top aides to County Executive John Olszewski, Jr. played when developer David Cordish submitted a plan to build a tennis barn next to his home.

The county's staff at Permits, Approvals and Inspections denied the permit for the tennis barn, and they directed Cordish to seek a zoning hearing, which could result in approval from an administrative law judge.

According to the Sun, a top aide to Olszewski was involved with discussion of the zoning laws that would apply in this instance. Olszewski told the newspaper that his office did not give Cordish preferential treatment. When the permit was approved, there was a notation on the permit that it was done so under the direction of the Olszewski aide. Shortly thereafter the director of Permits, Approvals and Inspections, Michael Mallinoff, left his position with county government.

Cordish ultimately did not proceed with his plans to build the tennis barn. He instead opted to pursue a temporary structure termed a "tennis bubble." He also ran into problems with that proposal, and he was told he would need a variance hearing despite the earlier approval for the tennis barn.

A final report from the inspector general's office is still pending.

## **Agenda for GTCC Virtual Meeting of January 12**

1. Report on Public Safety, Officer Jennifer Arnett
2. Featured Guest: Steve Lafferty, Director, Dept. of Planning  
Upcoming efforts on Master Plan 2030
3. Controlling Speeding on Pot Spring Road- a legislative fix
4. Maryland General Assembly's Legislative Maps
5. Proposed County Law on Chickens
6. Election of Officers
7. New Business
8. Adjourn

