

GTCC

The Greater Timonium Community Council

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President: Eric Rockel, 410 252-8439; Vice President: Kathleen Beadell, 410 977-7581; Secretary: Laura Renshaw, 410 583-1908; Treasurer: Ashley Richardson; Directors: Jason Rommel, Cathy Norton, Lisa Baldanza and Ed Hale, Jr.

Our Next General Meeting will be held at the Vista Room in the Administration Bldg. Of the Maryland State Fair on May 11 at 7 PM. All are welcome.

President's Message

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly from Annapolis

No topic demonstrates the good, the bad and the ugly in Annapolis more than the suspension of the gas tax. Motorists vexed by the Biden administration's desire to curb the use of fossil fuels and the ban on the import of Russian oil have seen a gallon of gas rise by \$1.40 over the last seventeen months. In an effort to ease the pain at the pump, the Governor and the legislature passed a month-long abatement of the state gas tax, resulting in a savings of 37 cents per gallon. But that good deed was soon eclipsed by a bad one. Two days before the end of the legislative session, Republican legislators attempted to add an amendment to a bill that would have extended the gas tax holiday for another two months. Extending the gas tax holiday also had the support of Comptroller Peter Franchot, who reported that the extension would not burden the State's budget, and in other states, such as New York, governors were proposing a six-month holiday, as well. On a strictly party-line vote the Democratic state legislators voted the amendment down, and Maryland motorists will have to deal with higher prices throughout the summer.

Even though many projected that the pandemic would wreak havoc on the State's finances, the budget picture is very positive. Revenues are expected to exceed expenditures by more than \$300 million in fiscal 2023. Direct aid to public schools is expected to increase by more than \$450 million in the coming year, and overall, the total State funding for education approaches nearly \$8 billion. The budget is so flush with cash that the legislators allocated \$800 million towards future costs of the Kirwan education reforms to be held in the State piggy bank for the years ahead.

There were also selective tax reductions enacted in this session. Governor Hogan had proposed that all retirement income by seniors be tax exempt, but the legislature did not want to go that far. They did, however, approve for seniors making less than \$100,000 in income would receive a \$1,000 tax credit, and couples making less than \$150,000 will receive a \$ 1,750 credit. In addition, they granted a sales tax exemption for diapers, certain baby products, certain medical devices, oral care products and diabetic products.

One of the most consequential bills to pass in the General Assembly was the so-called “Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022”. This bill sets a goal to cut the state’s greenhouse gas emissions by 60% below 2006 levels by 2031 and further projects that the state should have zero net emissions by 2045. This bill is lauded by environmentalists as the most progressive policy to deal with climate change in the entire nation.

I have always approached the topic of climate change with a questioning mind. While I applaud the efforts to clean up our air and waters, if we do not have comparable efforts in other states, as well as other nations, will our Maryland efforts make much of a difference? In addition, I am old enough to remember that in the 1970s scientists connected to the United Nations were warning about global cooling, not global warming. I also fear that the State does not have the infrastructure in place to reach the 60% goal by 2031. Part of this law requires the Public Service Commission to conduct a study to determine Maryland’s readiness to make the switch to an all-electric, non-carbon system in the future. Although the bill that finally made it to the governor did not require all school buses to switch to electric power, it does set the state in that direction. The Department of Legislative Services provided a thumbnail illustration of the difference in costs for the two types of school buses: conventional diesel buses cost approximately \$97,000 each, while electric buses currently cost over \$330,000 each. At some point both residents and businesses will have additional costs to switch to all electric power as well. That same Department of Legislative Services was unable to accurately forecast the total added costs that this law will mandate. Why would our legislators pass a bill where its costs are undeterminable?

Another controversial law that passed over Governor Hogan’s veto was a bill to provide up to 12 weeks of paid leave to care for a sick relative, to care for a new-born child or recover from a personal illness. The paid leave would be funded by a payroll tax that both employer and employee would bear. However, the legislature did not specify how much the new tax will be, nor did it specify the break down between employer and employee. That task will fall upon the state labor secretary, as well as many of the implementing rules for the new law.

In other developments of local concern, a bill sponsored by Del. Michele Guyton that would have allowed speed cameras in nursery school zones, which was supported by GTCC and the Pot Spring community, did not make it out of committee in the house. Delegate Dana Stein, who is vice-chair of the committee, was unable to broker a compromise that would have produced a vote at the committee level. In many cases new bills take two or three years of effort to get passed in Annapolis. We shall see if the speed camera bill fares better next year. Another example of the need to be patient was Delegate Lisa Belcastro’s bill to create a suicide fatality review committee. It took her two years of effort, but the bill finally passed during this session.

Delegate Guyton was successful, however, in getting a bond bill approved that will lead to a new Farm and Garden building at the State Fairgrounds.

FY 2023 Budget Proposal Announced

County Executive John Olszewski, Jr., announced his fiscal year 2023 budget plan, including a \$4.8 billion operating budget and a \$352 million capital budget. The County gets its funding from a variety of sources, including 23% from real & property taxes; 20% from income taxes; 4% from sales and service taxes; 9% from federal aid; 22% from state aid and 22% from other sources. Those monies will go out the door when the County will spend 55% for schools, colleges & libraries; nearly 10% on public safety; 10.2 % for public works; 7.7% for health, recreation & community services and 17% on a variety of other services.

Even though school enrollment has declined by more than 4,000 students from pre-pandemic levels, Mr. Olszewski's budget proposes \$70 million more than would be required by maintenance of effort regulations, wherein the State mandates that each school system spend at least as much as it did in the preceding year. For the 2023 fiscal year, the budget proposes to add 33 new school counseling positions, 11 new social workers and 12 new health service positions. The budget also fully funds all forty-four requested positions for English Learner Programs. The average classroom teacher will see a 6.5% paycheck increase under this budget. Comparatively, the average county worker not in the school system will see a paycheck increase of 4.5%.

The major new benefit for the GTCC-based area in the budget is Olszewski's inclusion of \$19 million for the planning and design of new Dulaney and Towson High Schools. Other expenditures that will benefit this area include \$6.4 million allocated for enhancements to Oregon Ridge Park and \$600,000 towards a stream restoration project on the Jones Falls at Tally Ho Road. The Cockeysville library will also receive some renovation monies. In addition, we will benefit from county-wide funding of \$5 million in road resurfacing. What percentage of that total is going to a specific geographic area is never specified in the actual budget.

Other features worth noting from the budget release is the fact that the Inspector General's Office, created to seek out waste, fraud and abuse, will see a doubling of its staff- from three employees to six employees- and the budget also creates an ombudsman position in the Dept. of Permits, Approvals and Inspections to help citizens deal with the complexities of the permit process.

The County received a total of \$160 million from the federal government as part of the American Rescue Plan, early in the Biden presidency. Most of that money will go towards capital projects, not operating expenses.

Workgroup Issues Draft Report on Housing

In April of 2021, the Olszewski administration initiated an Affordable Housing Workgroup to examine the dual issues of housing affordability and housing opportunity in the

county. The motivations behind this initiative were multifaceted: given the county executive's progressive background, he wanted to create a more welcoming and diverse housing tableau for the county, and the county is still under the requirements of a voluntary compliance agreement, effective in March 2016 and running thru 2028, wherein the county agreed to create 1,000 units of affordable housing, provide a Mobility Counseling Program and direct 2,000 families into certain census tracts during the twelve year period as settlement of a lawsuit brought against the county.

To date, 544 units of the 1,000 units required by the agreement have been approved for financing. Additionally, 932 Mobility moves have occurred through 2021, and the county is working with 152 current Mobility clients to facilitate their relocation. Yet the county is finding some challenges in meeting the requirements of the compliance agreement, including providing enough 3+ bedroom units in the affordable housing stock, developing affordable units within developments that otherwise feature market rate housing, and finding adequate county funding given that land and building costs have risen at rates faster than anticipated.

The Affordable Housing Workgroup report offers the skeleton of an affordable housing strategy that could be implemented in the future, but before that can take place there needs to be input from the citizenry, as well as a vetting from the County Council. The Workgroup is composed in large measure by special interest advocates from racial justice groups, attorneys representing the development community, the multi-family housing industry and county officials who specialize in housing-related areas. The entire Workgroup met on seven occasions during 2021, and specialized sub-groups met on more occasions. The subgroups concentrated on areas of Education, Outreach and Engagement; Zoning and Infrastructure; and Best Practices, Policy, and Legal aspects. On the outreach and engagement front the sub-group recommended that the county retain a consultant to engage focus groups and develop communications strategies. They also hope that outreach will result in building an affordable housing movement among county residents, as well as "create a toolkit to be utilized by developers" to engage both communities and elected officials. The Zoning and Infrastructure sub-group advocates that the County must be more flexible regarding its zoning laws to alter its rules and regulations to encourage more affordable and denser housing developments. Among the specific initiatives this sub-group is advocating for is to modify zoning classifications to allow multi-family units in more locations, including in commercial and industrial zones that have heretofore prohibited multi-family housing, and to create administrative exemptions for affordable housing projects. All the descriptive elements in this section of the report seem to ignore the fact that existing neighborhoods find certain comfort from the predictability of existing regulations that have been in effect for forty or more years in the county. Finally, the Best Practices, Policy and Legal sub-group demonstrated a very progressive approach in their mission statement for the sub-group: "Baltimore County will create and preserve stable and affordable housing in all neighborhoods to promote economic mobility, provide access to quality education, health care, transit connections and that are guided by intentional strategies to dismantle a legacy of social and racial inequities." They advocate that Baltimore County should be more like Howard and Montgomery Counties in being proactive in creating affordable housing. They see the newly created Department of Housing and Community Development as being in the vanguard of this movement, and they want to create policies that would establish a quasi-governmental housing authority with bonding

authority to develop new housing, and that the County should use county-owned land or explore the purchase of additional land to facilitate the development of affordable housing stock.

You can read the full Draft Report by searching the term “Affordable Housing Work Group” on the home page of the County’s website. Feedback on the report will be accepted until April 27, and comments by email can be sent to AHWG@baltimorecountymd.gov.

Rec. & Parks Initiates Master Plan for Oregon Ridge Park

Baltimore County has hired the firm Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects to develop a master plan for the 1,043-acre, Oregon Ridge Park. The park has a wide variety of current uses, including its nature center, lodge, walking trails, pavilions, and other features. A March 15 kick-off meeting served as an introduction to the Lardner/Klein team and some introductory remarks about what lies ahead in developing a plan for the park. The meeting did not include any substantive material about the park’s future. A recent report in a local paper that indicated a commercial vendor would be building ziplines and other fee-based activities at the park was not discussed at this meeting, but the director of the department has assured others that no final decision has been made about the commercial vendor. Based upon the projections from Lardner/Klein at the meeting, in the coming months they will be interviewing a variety of interested parties to find out the strengths and needs of Oregon Ridge.

Girl Power At Dulaney High School

There have been many significant achievements by young ladies at Dulaney High School. Yet, none are more unique than the achievements of Senior Sarah Sunday. This past March she became the first two-time female wrestling champion under the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA). This championship tournament began in the 2019-20 school year, and the whole sport of women’s wrestling only began in Baltimore County a few years earlier. When Sarah began to compete as a freshman, her early competition was largely against male students because the sport of women’s wrestling was so new and not heavily populated.

As a sophomore in 2020 she won the inaugural MPSSA tournament for young women, and that stoked her competitive fire to continue in the sport. She also began to appreciate her place in history at the state level. “If some little girl is doing a project on wrestling and she looks up the first state champions, I’ll pop up,” stated Sunday about her initial success. But she could not build on the success of 2020 because the Covid pandemic wiped out the 2020-21 winter sports season. But she found other ways to deal with the adversity of not having a program offered by the school system. She admits that her training for the sport became more focused than it had been the previous year, and with the help of her father, she travelled to tournaments in

the states of North and South Carolina, as well as Ohio and West Virginia in search of competition.

She credits Dulaney wrestling coach Scott Asher and her father with supporting her in pursuit of her goals. When she returned to Dulaney's program for the 2021-22 winter sports season, after the pandemic shutdown was lifted, she again found success wrestling both boys and girls at various tournaments. In fact, she was 8-4 in matches against boys during her senior year, which culminated with a second MPSSA championship for Sarah Sunday.

In addition to her wrestling prowess, she has achieved academic success, and the two in combination have resulted in Sunday accepting a scholarship offer from Oklahoma City University, where she will continue to wrestle. She is undecided about a major in college, but acknowledges that she is considering kinesiology, business and/or social work.

New Money for Police Dept. in Upcoming Budget

County Executive John Olszewski, Jr. announced new spending on public safety in advance of his yearly budget presentation. Among the additional expenditures for the police are: four additional school resource officers, who will float among a number of schools; a pool of funds for hiring bonuses as a recruitment incentive; a "wellness director," who will focus on the wellbeing of the rank and file officers; a liaison position to engage with community leaders; eight new data analysts to identify crime trends and make recommendations on resource deployment; and seven new forensic technicians to assist in investigations.

New recruits are eligible for signing bonuses of \$10,000 per candidate, and existing officers can receive a referral bonus of \$500 for each successful candidate who joins the force. The department hopes to hire 100 new officers in the coming fiscal year.

President of the Fraternal Order of Police, Dave Folderauer, commented that the county was "missing an opportunity by not focusing on retention," (of existing employees). He added that patrols "cannot afford any more vacancies," and his critique did not end with that comment. He also observed that the force already has an existing wellness section overseen by a captain, so the need to hire a wellness director seems duplicative, and he observed that the department already has a crime analysis unit that currently has multiple open positions.

Congratulations

Our congratulations go out to Valley View Farms. They are marking a sixtieth anniversary this year! In 1962 the Foard brothers opened what was then a produce stand to sell some of the bounty from their farm, and today we have an area institution that sells all sorts of landscaping items, produce and Christmas products, not only to Cockeysville but to the entire metropolitan area.

Calendar of Events

1. April 30-May 1 ; 9AM-5PM, Gun Show presented by Appalachian Promotions, Maryland State Fair (MSF), Exhibition Hall
2. May 7, Steam Engine Demonstration at Maryland Fire Museum, May 7, 10 AM
Free admission
3. May 21,22 ; Grad Gala- Dulaney H.S. , 7 PM-12 AM
MSF, Exhibition Hall
4. May 28, 29 ; Reptile & Exotic Animal Show, 10 AM-4 PM
MSF, Exhibition Hall
5. June 18 ; Maryland Toy Expo, 9 Am- 3 PM, MSF, Exhibition Hall
6. June 24-26; Gem & Jewelry Show, 10 AM- 5 PM, MSF, Exhibition Hall
7. June 25, Baltimore Wine & Food Festival, 11 AM- 11 PM, MSF, Exhibition Hall

Tentative Agenda for May General Meeting

1. Report from the Cockeysville Police Precinct
2. Review of the Past General Assembly session with Senator Shelly Hettleman & Senator Chris West
3. Joint Venture by GTCC and Hunt Valley Business Forum to address traffic & public safety
4. The Redistricting Maps for Congress, State Legislature and County Council
5. Gerry Brewster reports on State Fair news
6. New Business
7. Adjourn

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Rest In Peace

Longtime GTCC members are mourning the passing of Margaret, “Marge”, DiNardo, who passed away peacefully in April. Marge and her late husband, Dr. Hector DiNardo, Jr., were active members of the community from the 1960s when Hector established his dental practice. Marge Di Nardo had served as a membership director of GTCC in the past, as well as championed many environmental causes, including the Loch Raven Watershed Coalition. She was instrumental in causing our group to support “no solicitation” legislation to curb the activities of hucksters and door to door sales in the county. We will miss her kind manner, strong spirit, and care for the Timonium area.

Dulaney Valley Improvement Association’s Objection Heard

The Dulaney Valley Improvement Association (DVIA) objected to Baltimore County government giving a proposed Royal Farm Store planned for the southeast corner of York and Greenridge Roads a limited exemption that would have allowed no community input meeting and no hearing on the appropriateness of the development. Under a process known as a limited exemption, a developer can apply to the Development Review Committee to seek such a limited exemption.

On April 20, 2022, the DVIA had their day in court before the County Board of Appeals. The Board of Appeals is a quasi-judicial body composed of persons appointed by the seven County Council members, and the board rules on matters such as administrative variances, certain zoning and development decisions, personnel matters and other decisions. In any one particular hearing there are three members of the Board of Appeals who evaluate a case and issue a decision. The three-person board for this case included Deborah Dopkin, Esq., Bryan Pennington and Sharonne Bonardi.

Central to the case made by an expert engineer, on behalf of DVIA, was that this development had certain major questions that should have precluded Baltimore County from issuing a limited exemption. These questions included the property’s prior subdivision and how many lots from the original subdivision were impacted, whether the proposed Tesla Charging Stations planned for the site are an approved use under zoning regulations and whether the improvements that the developer would be required to construct should have caused the County to insist that a public works agreement be completed, which typically is not the case when a limited exemption is granted.

One of the members of DVIA, who also happens to be an attorney, ventured to opine that the County’s practice of handing out limited exemptions violates the legal requirement of due process because there is no notice to the public about the proposed administrative action to grant a limited exemption.

The hearing will require a second day, and as of this writing no date had been set. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Board of Appeals will conduct a public deliberation wherein the public can listen to the three members discuss the case before a written decision is issued.

Primary Election Candidates List

With the Congressional and State Legislative maps now official, attention turns to revising the voter database, which should occur by late May, mailing out new voter registration cards only to voters whose districts have changed under the new maps, and getting ready for the State-wide primary election day, July 19. In addition, there will be eight days of early voting to take place from July 7 until July 14.

Listed below are the candidates running in the primary. Independents and third-party candidates are not included because they will only be on the general election ballot, not the primary ballot.

Governor/Lt. Governor Candidates

Dan Cox/Gordana Schifanelli (R) ; Robin Ficker/LeRoy Yegge, Jr. (R)

Kelly Schulz/Jeff Woolford (R) ; Joe Werner/Minh Thanh Luong (R)

Rushern Baker III/ Nancy Navarro (D) ; Jon Baron/ Natalie Williams (D)

Peter Franchot/ Monique Anderson-Walker (D); Doug Gansler/Candace Hollingsworth (D)

Jerome Segal/ Justinian Dispensa (D) ; Tom Perez/Shannon Sneed (D)

Ralph Jaffe/Mark Greben (D) ; Ashwani Jain/ LaTrece Lytes (D)

John King/Michelle Siri (D) ; Wes Moore/ Aruna Miller (D)

Comptroller

Barry Glassman (R) ; Timothy Adams (D) ; Brooke Lierman (D)

Attorney General

Michael Peroutka (R) ; Jim Shalleck (R)

Anthony Brown (D) ; Katie Curran O'Malley (D)

U.S. Senator

Chris Chaffee (R) ; James Taratin (R) ; George Davis (R) ; John Thormann (R)

Nnabu Eze (R) ; Lorie Friend (R) ; Reba Hawkins (R) ; Jon McGreevey (R)

Joseph Perez (R) ; Todd Puglisi (R)

Chris Van Hollen (D) ; Michelle Smith (D)

State Legislators

Due to the recently approved State Legislative map, the information contained on the Board of Elections website needs further refinement. Both the 11th and 42nd Legislative districts contain an "A" district that presumably elects only one delegate and a "B" district that presumably elects two delegates. The maps clearly differentiate the geography of the A & B districts. But the Board of Elections information does not appear to contain all of the correct information, and it cautions the viewer to return to the site in May when the proper information will be posted. Below are the candidates running in each district, without the distinction of whether they are running in the A or B district. Each district has only one State Senator.

State Senators

11th District: Ruth Goetz (R) ; Shelly Hettleman (D)

42nd District: Jimmy Mathis (R) ; Chris West (R)

House of Delegates

11th District: Cheryl Pasteur (D) ; Jon Cardin (D) ; Lisa Belcastro (D) ; Dana Stein (D)

42nd District: Nino Mangione (R) ; Todd Huff (R) ; Tyler Stiff (R) ; Lydia Brown (D)
Michele Guyton (D) ; Bill Brooks (D) ; Paul Konka (D) ; Jay Walton (R)

County Executive

Darren Badillo (R) ; Henry Ciezkowski (R) ; Thilo Gluck (R) ; Pat McDonogh (R) ;
Scott Pappas (R) ; Kimberely Stansbury (R) ; John Olszewski, Jr. (D) ; Adam Reuter (D)

County Council, 3rd District

Wade Kach (R) ; Roberto Zanotta (R) ; Paul Henderson (D)

State's Attorney

James Haynes (R) ; Deborah Hill (R) ; Robbie Leonard (D) ; Scott Shellenberger (D)

Clerk of the Circuit Court

Brian Campbell (R) ; Julie Ensor (D)

Sheriff

Andy Kuhl (R) ; Jay Fisher (D) ; Al Roberts (D)