

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 September 14th
Starting at 7 PM in the Vista Room at the State Fair**

President's Message

The leadership of the Dulaney Valley Improvement Association(DVIA) is unhappy with Baltimore County government, specifically with the Department of Permits, Approvals, and Inspections. This is the department that controls the development process in the county. Royal Farms Stores wants to build a convenience store at the south corner of York and Greenridge Roads. As is it's right, Royal Farms applied for what is know as a limited exemption in which the applicant does not have to conduct a community input meeting or be faced with a hearing officer's hearing on the appropriateness of the development. If the limited exemption is granted, and that exemption is discretionary on the part of the County, then the developer must only submit their plans to the county's departments for review and approval.

This process of limited exemptions has been going on in the county for over twenty years, and it is very typical for commercial and manufacturing development projects to receive this limited exemption. Royal Farms received a limited exemption in this case, but the folks at DVIA felt the problems with this type of use at this site are so concerning that the county should have required a community input meeting at a bare minimum. As a result, they appealed the county's decision, and recently the hearing at the County Board of Appeals was completed.

The County Board of Appeals conducted a deliberation, in advance of issuing a written decision, on August 24, and they ruled in favor of Royal Farms that the County was proper in issuing a limited exemption. The members of the Board of Appeals based this decision on the fact that this project required a minimal number of public improvements, which in turn would not require a Public Works Agreement, which is a written agreement by the developer to construct certain public improvements as required by the County. The only other subject

mentioned in the public deliberation was that there were a number of zoning issues related to the case, but one board member specifically said that this hearing was not the place to resolve those issues.

I respectfully disagree with the conclusion reached by the Board of Appeals. The whole process allowing limited exemptions can be found in Article 32, Planning, Zoning and Subdivision Control, of the Baltimore County Code. More specifically, the process for requesting a limited exemption is found in Title 4, Development, of that article in the Code. In section 32-4-104, Scope of Title, the code reads under subsection (a), Applicability of Title, that “This title shall apply to the process of review for approval of all development.” Further, in subsection (b) of the same section, it states that “Proposed development shall be in compliance with the present zoning classification on the property to be developed.” This would be a condition precedent for any development that takes place, either under the limited exemption criteria or the more traditional/regular development process.

Now in this instance, the zoning on the property would allow for the building of a convenience store. Yet, the developer also planned to construct 12 Tesla, electric vehicle charging stations on the property. Legal counsel for DVIA tried to highlight that point at the Board of Appeals hearing, but the Board greatly curtailed testimony and/or argument to examine the charging station subject. This property does not have the zoning classification to allow for a fuel service station on the site, and the Department of Permits, Approvals and Inspections should not have allowed for the limited exemption to proceed without the proper zoning or the developer’s removal of the charging stations from the plan. The Zoning Regulations define a fuel service station as “a structure or land used or intended to be used for the retail sale of automotive fuel ...” That is exactly what the plan shows, charging stations that will provide fuel for electric vehicles, and it is why the County agency and the Board of Appeals got it wrong in this case.

Baltimore County’s residential communities lost two champions for the cause of better residential aesthetics this past summer. On July 4th, Mike Pierce of Kingsville passed away from natural causes. He is survived by his wife and grown daughters. Mike was best known throughout the county as the “sign guy.” He would travel around the county looking for signs that violated the sign ordinances, take photographs of the violations, and then turn in complaints to Code Enforcement. He gained enough of a reputation that the Baltimore Sun ran an article about his pursuit of these zoning violations, and they reported that at one time approximately one-third of the code violations related to signage had come from Mike Pierce. He compared the offending signs to the problem of spam emails- both create a form of clutter that is unnecessary and annoying.

But Mike Pierce did not restrict himself to signage clutter. He would frequently testify about a variety of proposed legislation before the County Council if he thought the legislation would negatively impact residential communities. I even remember him getting involved in zoning cases here in greater Timonium, far from his home community. I will certainly miss his keen intellect and dedication to community betterment.

The other champion is still very much alive, but Barbara Hopkins, the executive director of NeighborSpace of Baltimore County, has elected to move on to another position with a national non-profit involved with food insecurity. NeighborSpace is a local, non-profit land trust that creates small park areas within the urban/rural demarcation line in Baltimore County. To date they have protected twenty-one sites, totaling ninety-nine acres, under either full ownership or a conservation easement. Barbara's skill set was well suited for her role in NeighborSpace because she held both a master's degree in landscape architecture and a law degree. Aside from her efforts to preserve open space in Baltimore County, Barbara was active in promoting the need for better zoning and development policies in the county. Her efforts to elevate NeighborSpace have left an indelible imprint on the organization and Baltimore County.

School Board Votes to Increase Salaries

Against a backdrop of declining morale across the system and teacher shortages throughout the county, the Baltimore County Board of Education voted unanimously to raise the salaries of all labor bargaining units within BCPS. These raises will not only impact teachers and administrators, but they will also affect cafeteria workers, custodians, and other workers in the system. Outgoing, Third District School Board member Kathleen Causey indicated that it was "absolutely urgent that we do this," according to a quote in the Baltimore Sun.

The teachers bargaining unit, better known as TABCO, agreement with the system carries both a cost-of-living pay increase, as well as a transition to a new pay scale. That new scale will see teachers reach maximum pay five years sooner than under the current pay scale, and the average increase for current teachers will be nearly \$5,800, according to the Sun. The new pay scale is part of the requirements imposed by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, the so-called Kirwan reforms.

By fiscal year 2026, new teachers would start with an annual salary of \$60,579 for the ten-month duration of their school year. That starting salary level represents an approximate 10% increase over the average starting salary for all college graduates in 2022, according to figures supplied by ThinkImpact.Com.

Baltimore County Executive John Oszewski, Jr., unquestionably a strong advocate for the school system, has found fault with the Board of Education action. He states that the Board of Education would be funding these salary increases with a one-time funding source that is available, but in subsequent years the county taxpayers would be responsible for the increases. He extrapolates that in the next five years, county taxpayers would fund an additional \$505 million for this plan. That increase is not in line with the spending affordability guidelines, and according to Olszewski, it could result in an additional 17 cent increase to the property tax. He called the salary deal "unsustainable" and "irresponsible," harsh words for someone who is a past BCPS teacher. School Board member Erin Hager indicated that under current projections, the school system has budget surpluses that could support the salary increases for the next three years, but after that point the system, the county executive and the council would need to figure

out how to support the salary increases. That comment implies that she expects the county general fund to supply at least part of the money rather than it coming from the overall school system budget.

The final step before the new salaries can take effect is for the County Council to vote on the measure. There should be a lot of wrangling before the Council weighs in. That vote is expected to take place in September or October.

Workgroup Finalizes Recommendations on Affordable Housing

In the May newsletter readers were made aware of a preliminary report from the Affordable Housing Workgroup, a volunteer body appointed by County Executive John Olszewski, Jr. Finding affordable housing solutions in the County, particularly in the central sector of the County, is particularly pressing because of the Voluntary Compliance Agreement entered into during the Kamenetz administration, in which the County agreed to create 1,000 affordable housing units within what is largely the central part of the County by 2027. To date the County has created 544 such units.

The GTCC leadership wrote a letter to the Affordable Housing Workgroup in response to the preliminary report. We were highly critical of many of the zoning and infrastructure recommendations as contained in the preliminary report. That criticism did not impact the Workgroup's final recommendations, as contained in a summary below.

Among the final recommendations the County is urged to “adopt inclusionary zoning practices (that) can include a mix of mandatory requirements and incentives to achieve desired outcomes.” The report calls for all residential development proposals to provide a certain percentage of units as affordable housing units. This requirement would be offset by incentives that permit density bonuses and modifications to bulk regulations to allow flexibility in height and setback regulations. Let's translate this recommendation into a possible scenario for a potential development site. If a site is zoned for single family dwellings under current zoning, the density bonus and relaxation to bulk regulations may result in the site being used for townhomes. In that this affordable housing report does not offer any specifics for the density bonus or other modifications, this possible scenario could be even more beneficial to developers once the actual law is enacted. Would these bonuses have an adverse impact on the value of existing homes that are adjacent to the affordable housing project? Only time will tell.

Another recommendation in the report calls for allowing multifamily development in select commercial and industrial zones. The report does not provide much specificity about which commercial and industrial properties would be candidates, other than it says that vacant, underutilized and/or underperforming properties would be candidates. We have already seen several examples where existing neighbors have rejected multifamily development in this type of

scenario. The proposed multifamily housing at the Giant Shopping Center in Timonium or Lutherville Station are two recent examples. Additionally, about seven years ago a multifamily project was proposed in Hunt Valley, adjacent to several industrial-use neighbors. Those neighbors objected to the residential use because the industries believed that once residents came in, those residents would start objecting to the noise, odors and hours of operation employed at the industries. Ultimately, the residential developer dropped the project.

A third recommendation from the Affordable Housing Report calls to “allow affordable housing developments by right (including multi-family) in all residential districts in Opportunity Areas as defined in the 2020 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice...”. Most of the central sector of the County is included in these Opportunity Areas. Just how this will mesh with covenant restrictions and/or architectural restrictions that exist in many subdivisions remains to be seen. Will the County law be able to supersede these private covenants ? And what will happen in the subdivisions that are not subject to these covenants? Will these subdivisions see substantially more multi-family development because the lack of covenants makes them more attractive for redevelopment?

Finally, the report also recommends the elimination of DR-1 and DR-2 zoning inside the Urban Rural Demarcation Line. Why ? Because according to the report, “these zoning classifications restrict any residential development to single family detached units.”

These are but four of ten controversial recommendations involving zoning and infrastructure. All would require legislative changes to the County Code and/or Zoning Regulations; so, the County Council will be involved in changing the existing laws. GTCC remains convinced that meeting the County’s commitment should be met by incentivizing existing apartment complexes, not changing the current laws.

To read the full report, follow the link below:
[Reinvesting in the Places We Call Home \(baltimorecountymd.gov\)](https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov)

New Laws Impact Condominium & Homeowners Associations

Bills passed in the last General Assembly session that place new requirements on condominium and homeowners’ associations will take effect on October 1, 2022, and should be reviewed by legal counsel for all such associations. House Bill 107 requires an updated study every five years of the reserves needed for repairs and replacement of the common elements in condominiums and/or the common areas of a homeowner’s association. This new law particularly places very strict requirements on who can conduct the “reserve studies,” causing some to speculate that the legislators wanted to favor a certain class of professionals.

The second new law, House Bill 615, alters the procedures for dispute resolution between a governing board or council of unit owners and an alleged violator. It also takes effect on October 1.

Since House Bill 107 requires that the reserve study be completed within a one-year period, it is suggested that your association seek legal advice on its impact sooner rather than later.

Another Honor for Dulaney H.S. Graduate Miriam Talalay

Back in March, readers learned that (then) Senior Miriam Talalay was one of five persons to receive the prestigious Duke of Edinburgh Infinite Potential award. Talalay's interest in animal welfare led to volunteering with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the Maryland SPCA, as well as fostering more than 250 animals in her young life.

Her interest in animals led her to study Latin at Dulaney, as well as take courses at Cornell University's Ornithology Lab, and she put this experience to use by creating an educational course on visual arts and environmental studies for Blue Hill Heritage Trust in Maine. This fall, Talalay will be attending the University of Maine, majoring in zoology.

This summer the Baltimore County Commission for Women chose Miriam Talalay as the County's Young Woman of the Year. We salute Miriam's volunteer activities and the receipt of this award.

Nostalgic for the '80s ?

Many people still warmly respond to the 1980s. You may still listen to the music of Springsteen, U2 or other artists, for example. Yet no one responds positively to the inflation of the early '80s, and we are experiencing a similar dose of inflation this year. We have not seen inflation of this magnitude since 1981!

Listed below are year over year price increases, based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics, for the June 2022 period:

All Items	9.1%
Used Cars	7.0 %
Ground Beef	9.7%
New Cars	11.4%
Electricity	13.7%
Milk	16.4%
Chicken	18.6%
Eggs	33 %
Gasoline	60 %

We have also been advised by BGE that electricity, which currently costs 7.82 cents/kWh, will rise to 9.887 cents/kWh beginning on October 1, 2022, through May 31, 2023. That represents a 26% increase over the current cost.

Hampton Manor Plans Expansion

Hampton Manor apartments and townhomes is planning the addition of 130 units to the property located on St. David Court, off Scott Adam Road in Cockeysville. The owner of the property held a virtual community input meeting, as is required by law, on the evening of August 24. The units to be added will be a mix of apartments and townhomes, both of which will be for rent. The owners have one year from August 24th to submit a development plan, at which time the County's agencies will offer final comments on the submittal. That development plan submittal is followed by a hearing officer's hearing to judge the appropriateness of the project. The hearing officer can either approve the project as submitted, deny the project, or approve the project with changes as deemed necessary by the hearing officer.

Is your Association registered with the Planning Department?

The Department of Planning compiles a list of community and business associations within the county. These listings are used by Planning to notify associations of community issues, upcoming planning studies, events, and community input meetings, such as the one mentioned above for Hampton Manor. If you want to review the list of associations or update the information about your association, go to the Planning Department's webpage on the Baltimore County website. From the Planning webpage, click on the Community Planning button on the right side of the webpage. From that page you will see a heading that reads "Explore Community Planning" on the right-hand side of the page, and then click on "Community & Business Associations" and follow the directions from there.

Hearing for Greenspring Manor Begins

The virtual hearing for Greenspring Manor, a development of 61 single family dwellings located on West Joppa Road, began on September 1, and it is expected to continue for at least one or two more days. Surrounding subdivisions, such as Seminary Ridge and Heatherfield, as well as umbrella organizations, such as GTCC and Valley Planning Council, have expressed concerns about some parts of the development in the past. Concerns expressed include that there are three failing intersections near the development, sewer capacity in the area, the developer's plan not showing a thru-connection to Mays Chapel Road and the overall density of the housing planned on the property.

It is not projected that the hearing officer will issue a final ruling until October.

Calendar of Events

Enjoy the Maryland State Fair, which is hosting on a different schedule this year. The fair will be open on Thursday, September 1 at 5:00 PM and continue September 2,3,4 &5. In addition, if you did not get enough of the food and the rides, the fair will be open on Thursday, September 8 at 5:00 PM and run until Sunday, September 11.

1. September 10, 10AM until 3PM, "Honoring Our Heroes Motor Muster," The Fire Museum of Maryland, 1301-R York Road, free admission
2. September 10, 8AM until 2PM, Yard Sale by residents in the Lutherville Community Association, including the historic area, Country Club Park and other parts.
3. September 17-20, 10AM until 7PM, RV Super Sale, State Fairgrounds
4. September 22, 1PM until 4PM, Open Air Market, Brightview at Mays Chapel Ridge
5. September 24-25, 10AM until 4PM, Reptile & Exotic Animal Show, Exhibition Hall, State Fairgrounds
6. September 24, 6PM until 9PM, Celebrate 50 Years of Preserving Fire History. At the Fire Museum of Maryland, tickets at \$75.00 per person
7. September 24, 12PM until 11PM, Food Truck Festival, with live music, State Fairgrounds
8. September 28, 5PM until 11:30 PM, MD Building Industry Show, the Cow Palace, State Fairgrounds
9. September 30 until October 2, 10AM until 5PM, Gem & Jewelry Show, Exhibition Hall. State Fairgrounds

10. October 8, 8AM until finish, MD Heart Walk by American Heart Assoc., State Fairgrounds
11. October 8, 9AM until 4PM, Stamp & Coin Show, Mosner Miller Bldg., State Fairgrounds
12. October 12, 8AM until 1PM, Meet & Greet with the Board of Education, Exhibition Hall, State Fairgrounds
13. October 15 & 16, 9AM until 3PM, Gun Show, Exhibition Hall, State Fairgrounds
14. October 15 & 16, 10AM until 4PM, Train Show, Cow Palace, State Fairgrounds
15. October 21-23, 9AM until 4PM, Children's Toy Consignment, 4H/Home Arts Bldg., State Fairgrounds
16. October 21-23, 10AM until 6PM, Fall Home & Garden Show, Cow Palace, State Fairgrounds
17. October 22, 10AM until 9PM, Girl Scout Expo, Exhibition Hall, State Fairgrounds
18. October 22, 11AM until 7PM, Brit Fest, Track Infield, State Fairgrounds
19. October 27, 9AM until 6PM, The Power of Age Expo by Balt. Co. Dept. of Aging, Cow Palace
20. The Ridgely Middle School Craft Fair is back indoors! Coming November 12th

Tentative Agenda for the September 14th Meeting

1. Introductions
2. Report on Public Safety from Precinct 7
3. News from the Olszewski Administration- Carmen Christiana
4. Candidates Forum: hear from some new faces and incumbents
5. Final Thoughts on this year's State Fair, from Gerry Brewster
6. New Business
7. Adjourn