

GTCC The Greater Timonium Community Council

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November 2022 [http:// www. gtccinc.org](http://www.gtccinc.org)

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.

***All Timonium residents are welcome to attend
Our meeting on November 9***

MTA to Appear at Next GTCC Meeting

The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) has agreed to appear at our next general meeting on November 9 at the Vista Room of the Maryland State Fair. In September residents learned that the MTA is conducting an evaluation of different alternative routes for a new transit connection between Towson and Downtown Baltimore. Concerns exist because three of the alternate routes would travel north of the Beltway, along York Road, and end at the terminus of West Ridgely Road in Lutherville. One of these alternates would use a rapid bus connection running every fifteen minutes for twenty-four hours a day. While the other two alternates call for new light rail tracks running on York Road and ending at the terminus of West Ridgely Road, also running twenty-four hours a day.

Answers to specific concerns, such as why an objective to connect Towson and Downtown would include Lutherville in the mix, were not addressed in the first virtual meeting that the MTA held about these and other alternative routes. Hopefully, answers to many questions will be forthcoming at the GTCC meeting. Communities south of Ridgely Road, such as Lutherville, York Manor, Dulaney Valley Improvement Association and Orchard Hills should encourage many of their members to attend the November 9 meeting, which starts at 7 PM.

President's Message

A Recipe for Relief

Everyone knows that the nation's economy is experiencing a rough patch this year. Gross domestic product has been in negative territory over the first two quarters of the year. The Dow Jones Industrial average saw a record high of 36,799 points in early January 2022, but by this September it had decreased to 29,260. Both metrics are indicative of a recession. Yet it does not truly feel like a recession because the nation is also enjoying very good employment numbers, and jobs are still going unfilled in many sectors.

In addition to the stock market and the GDP woes, we are also experiencing the worst inflation in forty years. In June, the year over year inflation increase reached 9.1%, and it is still over 8% for both the months of July and August. One economist compared this high inflation as being equivalent to an additional \$4,400 yearly tax on each household.

So, what can be done about these problems? Frankly, I do not want to see the federal government do anything more. There is a school of thought that believes that the loose money policies of the federal government are largely responsible for the inflation problems we currently experience. As the Federal Reserve raises short term interest rates, history tells us that eventually the inflation rate will fall as a result.

I would like to see the state and local governments implement short-term efforts to grant a measure of relief to the households in the state. Unlike the federal government, state and local governments need to implement balanced budgets, so the relief they offer would need to be measured and moderate in nature. To begin with I suggest that the state roll back the gasoline tax increase adopted in July. Currently the state gasoline tax extracts 42.7 cents per gallon. Reduce the tax to the old rate of 36.1 cents per gallon and keep it there for a year before returning it to the new rate. Secondly, I would lower the state income tax rate by three-quarters of one percent for a year. If a household has income of \$100,000, that tax reduction would save \$750 for the year. I would make a reduction on the local (county) income tax rate for a year as well. The county raised the income tax rate to 3.2% in calendar year 2020. I would return it for one year back to the old rate of 2.83%. None of these one-time adjustments would break the back of state or local budgets, and individual households would experience a measure of relief. Let's see what our leaders decide to do after the election.

Local Referenda Measures

The following questions will appear on the ballot in Baltimore County for voter approval in the November election, all are "For or Against" measures:

Question A: Amend Sec. 202 of the County Charter so that members of the county council shall be qualified voters of Baltimore County and not less than twenty-one years of age at the time of election.

Question B : Amend the County Charter, Sec. 525, to alter the name of the Department of Public Works, and to allow that the Director of the department may be either a professional engineer registered under the laws of this state with at least ten years of relevant supervisory experience in engineering or shall be qualified with at least ten years of supervisory experience in infrastructure planning and construction or transportation engineering and management.

Question C: To authorize the County to borrow \$5 million for agricultural and rural land preservation projects, including but not limited to the purchase of land, development rights and conservation easements.

Question D: To authorize the County to borrow \$18.5 million for community college projects, including but not limited to the construction, improvement, maintenance, and modernization of buildings.

Question E: To authorize the County to borrow \$4 million for community improvement projects, including but not limited to the construction, renovation, extension, alteration, repair or modernization of streets, curbs, gutters, water, sewer and other utilities, and sidewalks and pedestrian system improvements.

Question F: To authorize the County to borrow \$27.05 million for public operational buildings, including but not limited to general, health, police, fire recreation, libraries, senior centers and detention facilities.

Question G: To authorize the County to borrow \$2 million for parks, preservation and greenway projects.

Question H: To authorize the County to borrow \$57.32 million for public works projects, which include roads, bridges and storm drain systems.

Question I: To authorize the County to borrow \$5 million for refuse disposal projects.

Question J: To authorize the County to borrow \$200 million for public school buildings, buildings for school purposes, repair of school buildings and modernization of school buildings.

Question K: To authorize the County to borrow \$20 million for the acquisition, construction, reconstruction, alteration or repair of waterway improvement and stormwater-related projects.

On-Line League of Women Voters Election Guide

The League of Women Voters provides a very comprehensive voters guide that displays all the candidates for federal, state and local elections, links to candidates' websites and other pertinent information ahead of the November 8 election. To access this guide, go to vote411.org

Council Approves Trail Study

On October 3 the Baltimore County Council approved funding for a study to connect the Jones Falls Trail in Baltimore City with the Northern Central Railroad Trail, aka the Torrey Brown Trail. After the study to identify a route for the connection, the State and County would still need to fund the final design for the trail connection, as well as provide for the construction of the trail.

This connection, long advocated by bicycling enthusiasts, would connect the Torrey Brown Trail end, at Ashland Road, to the Jones Falls Trail end in Mount Washington. It is likely that much of the connection would take advantage of the light rail line, but questions abound if the right of way for the light rail is sufficiently wide to allow for north and south light rail cars, as well as this trail route.

The study will be conducted by the engineering firm of Johnson, Mirmiran and Thompson, Inc., at a cost of \$150,000. State funding will pay for 80% of those costs, while the remaining 20% will be funded by the County. County Councilman Wade Kach confirmed that public hearings will be part of this process, but dates for those hearings are premature at this time. A private non-profit group known as East Coast Greenway already has a pedestrian and bicycling route utilizing existing road networks across a large portion of the geography between the two existing trails.

Crime Stats for the Greater Timonium Area

Baltimore County government keeps a digital dashboard for crime statistics and code enforcement activity all around the county. The information contained in this article follows information supplied to the National Incident-Based Reporting System- the NIBRS. All statistics reflect the incidents from January 2022 until the end of August.

The greater Timonium area, comprising both the Cockeysville and Lutherville-Timonium zip codes, appears to have a slightly higher number of incidents than places like Towson (21204), Pikesville (21208), Parkville-Carney (21234), and Catonsville (21228), even though these communities are smaller in geographic size, yet denser in population.

The total number of incident cases for each zip code are as follows: 21030, 1909 cases; 21093, 1608 cases; 21228, 3,103 cases; 21208, 2002 cases; 21204, 2,262 cases; and 21234, 3,764 cases.

In both Cockeyville and Lutherville-Timonium, the same four categories of cases make up the vast majority of all reported incidents. Larceny/Theft make up nearly forty percent of all cases in both zip codes- 756 cases in Cockeyville and 680 cases in Lutherville-Timonium. Cases involving Fraud accounted for 333 cases in Cockeyville and 405 cases in Lutherville-Timonium. Assaults contributed 453 cases in Cockeyville and 268 cases in Lutherville-Timonium. Finally, Vandalism or Destruction of Private Property contributed 313 cases in Cockeyville and 232 cases in Lutherville-Timonium.

No other crime case category had triple digit case numbers. By comparison there were 61 Burglary cases in Cockeyville and 69 cases in zip code 21093.

Consultants Hold Meeting on Future Plans for Oregon Ridge

The Department of Recreation and Parks, along with their consultant, Lardner Klein Landscape Architects, held a virtual meeting to discuss the master plan for future improvements to Oregon Ridge Park. The virtual meeting took place on October 6, and the department planned an in-person meeting two days after the virtual one. Councilman Wade Kach remarked that he considers the park to be a sensitive area, and the county does not plan to extend water nor sewer to the site, nor will any roads be widened to gain access to Oregon Ridge.

The consultant stressed that the master plan has not been written at this point in time, and they are still gathering input on what should be proposed. The consultant proceeded to elicit responses about what types of recreational activities are appropriate in the park, as well as what type of physical improvements should be constructed in the park.

The majority of those participants who spoke at the meeting favored leaving the park as natural as possible and keeping development in the park at a minimum. For example, no one spoke in favor of adding baseball or softball fields as part of the master plan. There was also a spirited exchange between mountain bike enthusiasts who support the creation of bike trails and preservationists who only want to see hiking trails.

The next step in this master plan process will be for the consultant to prepare several alternate concept plans for the park to gauge the public's reaction. Lardner Klein L.A. indicated those concept plans would be available by November 12, at which time another meeting will be held.

Administrative Law Judge Grants Sign Variance

In a case concerning a request from the owner of 3 Talbott Avenue to construct a wall mounted sign of sixty-nine square feet, in lieu of the permitted eight square feet, an Administrative Law Judge granted a variance for that sign.

The judge chose not to abide by an earlier ruling on the same property, wherein a prior judge, in case 1988-0250, ordered that “the Petitioner is permanently barred from any further variance to Section 230.3 of the zoning regulations. The applicant’s attorney argued that this restriction should only apply to the prior owner/petitioner and not the current owner/petitioner. Further, the attorney also argued that the County had revamped its signage laws after that original case, and the Section 230.3 was no longer in force and effect.

Additionally, the Administrative Law Judge chose to ignore a finding in the Hunt Valley/Timonium Master Plan that discouraged sign variances along York Road to “minimize visual clutter” in this commercial corridor.

Tax to Fund Kirwan Reforms Faces Loss

An Anne Arundel County Circuit Court judge has ruled that Maryland’s plans to tax ad revenue on internet sites is unconstitutional. The suit against the state was brought by Verizon and Comcast, who challenged the tax, which was expected to bring in \$250 million to fund the changes mandated by the Kirwan education reform bill.

Originally Governor Hogan had vetoed the digital tax bill, but the State legislature overrode that veto. Critics of the law argued that it was a violation of the U.S. Constitution, which prohibits states from regulating interstate commerce, as well as the federal Internet Tax Freedom Act. Maryland was the first state in the nation to attempt this type of tax. The legislature was aware of these concerns, yet it overrode Hogan’s veto just the same.

How the legislature plans to make up for this loss of revenue in funding Kirwan has not yet been announced.

Calendar of Events

1. October 22, St. Paul’s Lutheran Church Craft Fair, 1609 Kurtz Ave., 9AM to 2PM
2. November 5, Maryland Toy Expo, Exhibition Hall at Maryland State Fair (MSF)
8AM – 3PM

3. November 5, 6, GatorFest Lacrosse Tournament, Track Infield MSF, 8AM-5PM
4. November 11-13, Irish Festival, Cow Palace MSF, Nov. 11: 6PM-11PM; Nov. 12: Noon to 11PM; Nov. 13: Noon to 6PM
5. November 12, Ridgely Middle School Craft Fair, the 41st Edition, 9AM -2PM
6. November 12 & 13, Lacrosse Tournament by Robinson Sports, Track Infield MSF, 9AM-6PM
7. November 19, Fundraiser for Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital, Track Infield MSF, 11AM – 5PM
8. November 19, Native American Festival, 4H/Home Arts Bldg. MSF, 11AM-7PM
9. November 25 to 27, Festival of Trees by Kennedy Krieger Institute, the Cow Palace MSF, An In-Person Event. Please purchase tickets in advance from KennedyKrieger.org. 10AM until 2PM
10. November 25, American Red Cross Blood Donation, Mosner Miller Bldg. MSF 10AM-3PM Make arrangements in advance to donate blood
11. December 3,4, East Coast Indoor National Car Show, Cow Palace MSF, 9AM-7PM
12. December 3, Baltimore Stamp & Coin Show, Mosner Miller Bldg MSF, 9AM-4PM
13. December 3,4, Train Show, Exhibition Hall MSF, 10AM-4PM
14. December 10 & 17, Motorcycle Races, Cow Palace MSF, 5PM-10PM

Tentative Agenda, November 9 GTCC Meeting

1. Introductions
2. Report on Public Safety from the Cockeysville Precinct
3. News from the Olszewski Administration- Carmen Christiana
4. Presentation from the Maryland Transit Administration on new transit routes
5. Old & New Business
6. Adjourn

Year End Charitable Contributions

As we approach the end of 2022, we encourage all who give to charities to consider two worthy candidates. The recent destruction by Hurricane Ian has left many needs in Florida. Please consider giving to the Red Cross, [redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org), to help meet these needs.

Closer to home, the Maryland State Fair & Agricultural Society, Inc. is also deserving. The State Fair is actually a charitable non-profit, 501 (c) (3) corporation as recognized by the IRS. When you consider all the community benefits that have been extended by the State Fair, such as the covid relief efforts, disaster relief thru staging for responders, etc., the State Fair is an important cog for our community. You can direct your donations to the Maryland State Fair & Agricultural Society, Inc., P.O. Box 188, Timonium, MD. 21094-0188.