

GTCC The Greater Timonium Community Council

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Outgoing President: Eric Rockel, 410 252-8439; Incoming 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.

**Join us at our next General
Meeting on January 11 at the
Vista Room**

You Never Know

President's Message

I don't readily embrace the social media age that we now live in. I was raised in an earlier time before the advent of social media, the cell phone and all the other trappings of the current generation.

That's why I often underestimate the reach and the power of social media when someone is trying to get a message out. In this case the messages are that extending mass transit lines along York Road will have many detrimental impacts and that many in the area do not care to see a town center at the end of West Ridgely Road. When one of our board members, Jason Rommel, suggested that he would create an on-line petition to support these efforts. I thought it was a good idea, but I underestimated its' impact. To date more than 3,200 people have signed the petition, which is about three times the number that I expected to see. So, let's congratulate Jason for his efforts.

Speaking of the reach of our efforts, I recently received an email from a college student out in California who saw a news piece broadcast by WBFF, channel 45. This student is taking a course on the growth and evolution of suburbia, and one of the images in the newscast was the signs around the area that read "Save Suburbia," curtesy of another board member, Lisa Baldanza. This student wanted to get one of these signs as a gift to his professor. As is the case with the petition, who would have thought that the reach of our message could have extended that far and wide?

By the way, if you have not sent an email to County Executive John Olszewski, Jr., yet to express your dissatisfaction with creating a town center and transit-oriented development at the end of Ridgely Road, please do so. (johnnyo@baltimorecountymd.gov)

Inspector General Finds Abuse in Public Works Program

Baltimore County's Inspector General, Kelly Madigan, recently issued a report that found troubling conduct involving the County's Alley Reconstruction Program. The Alley Reconstruction Program started in 1995 in response to a County Council bill that aimed at repairing deteriorating alleys in residential neighborhoods throughout the County. The legislation recognized that the County contained at least 1,000 alleys that are privately-owned in neighborhoods throughout the County, including Dundalk, Essex, Edgemere and Rogers Forge. Since public utilities and trash collection often took place in these alleys, the County Council bill authorized that the County could reconstruct these alleys if at least the majority of abutting property owners agreed to participate in the cost of the reconstruction and the Department of Public Works and Transportation deemed the alley to be suitably deteriorated. In these situations, the County would assess each owner up to \$750 for the alley reconstruction, to be paid off in annual payments of \$50 for a fifteen-year period. Under this repayment schedule, the abutting property owners typically paid no more than one-third of the total costs and the County paid the other two-thirds of the cost.

The conduct that drew the Inspector General's attention concerned the reconstruction of an alley in Towson that serviced commercial properties, not residential ones. According to the Inspector General's report, Council Chairman Julian Jones became involved in trying to influence the decision-making process on whether this alley should be reconstructed under the County's Alley Reconstruction Program at the request of the businessperson whose properties abut the alley.

Chairman Jones had been told by the person who oversees the Alley Reconstruction Program that this alley did not qualify for the program because it was a commercial alley, not one serving residential properties. The chairman persisted by getting in touch with the acting Director of Public Works and Transportation, who ultimately overruled her subordinates and approved the use of Alley Reconstruction Program funds for repaving the alley. The Inspector General's report also indicated that the County Administrative Officer verbally approved of this action by the Director of Public Works and Transportation. In total, the County paid \$69,900 to have this private alley reconstructed.

David Plymer, a retired Anne Arundel County Attorney who lives in Catonsville, recently opined that Chairman Jones may have violated Section 310 of the Baltimore County Charter with his influence on this alley reconstruction. It remains to be seen whether any repercussions will follow, and the County Administrative Officer has objected to some of the information in the Inspector General's report.

What's Going on at Towson High ?

School officials have received three threats of violence at Towson High School from the middle of November to early December. The most recent threat was an email asserting that a bomb would be detonated at the school, and in response the police walked a bomb sniffing dog through the school. Nothing was found as a result of that investigation.

The first incident took place on November 18, when an email threatened a mass shooting at the school. Out of an abundance of caution, school officials notified parents and students of the threat, and as a result many students did not attend school that day. The third threat targeted staff members at the school, and in response, the police increased their presence at the school.

Do these threats offer a creditable concern or is this just a series of immature pranks? We only have partial answers at this point. Public concern, however, is rising and the school system has scheduled a public meeting on December 7 at Towson High to discuss the incidents and to quell the concern. Parents are already reporting that incidents of student fights have increased, not only at Towson but at many county schools. Additionally, students are reporting drug use in the bathrooms in Towson, and the overall morale at the school is declining. Dr. Williams' response to the overall problem has been that the school is deploying more Resource Officers to address the concerns.

At the meeting on December 7, the parents who spoke during the meeting were respectful but concerned over what they believed was a lack of communication. The police pointed out that they could not communicate all the details of the investigation because the investigation is on-going. There was a point of disagreement between a PTSA member who believes that seven messages went out to parents and students and a BCPS staff member who claimed that nine messages went out. The staff member also pointed out that every message needed to be vetted and cleared by the police before it is sent.

Several parents asked why the school security was not checking each student's backpack before entering school property. BCPS officials responded that if it got to the point that back packs needed to be checked, they would close school for that day. The police also said that because the bomb threat was not a credible threat, in their opinion, the extra precaution of checking back packs was not warranted.

Hopefully, tensions have now subsided with the completion of the police investigation. Police have charged one local teen with allegedly making a bomb threat and a second juvenile in North Carolina also has been charged with the alleged violation. Police indicated that both teens did not possess the materials to make a bomb, and they allegedly planned to try to blame a third student for the hoax.

Variations Approved for Signs

An Administrative Law Judge approved variances to allow the Church of the Nativity to construct one identification sign and three directional signs on the church's parking lot. The identification sign would be located on Ridgely Road, literally above the masonry identification sign located at the entrance to the church. The sign regulations specify the maximum size for an identification sign is 25 square feet and 6 feet high. The church requested and received permission to construct a sign 78 square feet in size and 10 feet high.

Both a resident who lives on East Ridgely Road and the GTCC spoke against granting the variance for the sign on Ridgely Road. The judge, however, was not persuaded, and the variance was granted.

Alleged Gang Members Indicted

Federal prosecutors have indicted four alleged MS-13 gang members in connection with four homicides, two attempted murders and drug distribution in Baltimore City and County, including one murder that took place in Cockeysville. The victims in these heinous murders are often stabbed with knives and machetes as part of ritualistic gang violence, and the killings are often connected to gang initiation activities. Among the murders are an incident in Dundalk, two in Baltimore City and the Cockeysville murder. In the Cockeysville murder, which took place in May of 2020, the alleged murderers lured a young woman to a Cockeysville park where she was stabbed to death. The young woman was thought to have associated with a rival gang. Her body was later found along a stream bank in the Loch Raven Reservoir.

The alleged gang members had previously been charged for the murder by the County's State's Attorney, but those charges have been dismissed because of the federal prosecution.

Oregon Ridge Park Master Plan Talks Proceed

The Department of Recreation & Parks held another pair of public information meetings on the Park's Master Plan process during the middle of November. One meeting was in person and the other was virtual. This meeting had been billed as giving the audience a choice between two alternative visions for the property, but at the meeting officials disclosed that it was evident that given the environmental constraints of the property, only one vision made sense.

Earlier meetings disclosed that the users of the park did not support any mountain bike trails, and the department officially stated that these trails would not be allowed. Other improvements that the community would support included improvement and expansion of the hiking trails, more picnic pavilions for the property and air conditioning for the Lodge.

In terms of longer-range improvements, the consultant for the Master Plan recommended that the Lodge be rebuilt rather than renovated due to obsolescence of the structure. The consultant also recommended that the Nature Center be relocated to near the quarry lake on the property, with a wooden boardwalk adjacent to existing wetlands at the quarry area, that the performance stage be replaced to better serve the musical events held at the park, and that the Dinner Theatre be demolished.

The audience for the virtual meeting was asked to prioritize the order of improvements under this Master Plan process. Priority Number One for the audience was to realign and improve the trail network. Priority Number Two was to replace and rebuild the Nature Center, and Priority Three was to construct permanent restrooms for the site.

In the winter of 2023, the consultant will issue the final recommendations in this process. Those recommendations will be followed with another meeting(s) for additional comment/critique before the Master Plan reaches finality.

The More You Know

Many of you may remember Dr. Dan Morhaim as a state delegate representing the 11th district over a span of twenty-five years. Since departing the General Assembly, Dr. Morhaim has worked as a health care consultant, author and in other endeavors. Recently he participated in a podcast concerning health equity and inequity. If you are interested in listening to this podcast, follow the link below:

[Defining Health Equity Podcast - From the People On the Frontlines with Dr. Dan Morhaim](#)

Congratulations Dennis Delp

Former Cockeysville precinct commander, Dennis Delp, has been named the interim Chief of Police for Baltimore County by County Executive John Olszewski, Jr. Delp has a twenty-eight-year career with the Baltimore County Police Department, and he has also served as captain of the Forensic Services Section and the Training Section.

Previously the County Executive declined to renew the contract of the prior Chief of Police, Melissa Hyatt, and the County is currently conducting a nation-wide search for the next permanent chief.

New Clean Car Standards

Delegate Kumar Barve is a staunchly progressive member of the House of Delegates, representing part of Montgomery County. He is chairman of the House Committee on the Environment and Transportation, and certain residents along the Pot Spring Road corridor remember that Delegate Barve would not call for a vote in his committee to consider the bill that Delegate Michele Guyton authored last session to allow the placement of speed cameras in areas populated by nursery schools. Not allowing that committee vote denied the bill a chance to be voted on by the full House of Delegates, but Delegate Guyton has indicated she will re-introduce the legislation in this coming session.

Recently, Delegate Barve found the time to co-author an article in the Baltimore Sun urging outgoing Governor Hogan to adopt the Advanced Clean Car II standards before the end of 2022.

Just what are the Advanced Clean Car II standards, and how does it affect you? Read on.

In 2007 the Maryland legislature, with bipartisan support, enacted the Clean Cars Act, which requires the state to adopt and maintain California's vehicle emission standards. Maryland is not alone. A total of sixteen other states have also adopted the California standards for their citizenry.

This year, California adopted the Advanced Clean Cars II standard, which will require all new cars and light trucks sold by 2035 to be zero emissions vehicles. Of the seventeen states that have adopted the earlier California standards, six states have adopted the Advanced Clean Car II standards. Maryland has not adopted the new standard as of this writing, which is why Delegate Barve was urging Governor Hogan to do so. According to the Associated Press, at least two states may not adopt the new standard, Colorado and Pennsylvania.

Now what Delegate Barve does not explicitly state in his article in the Sun is the immediate impact of adopting these standards in 2022. The California Advanced Clean Car II standards employs a ramp up period before it starts setting mandatory percentages for zero emissions vehicle sales, and if Maryland does not join the program this year it cannot start enforcing the mandated 35% sales requirement in 2026. It is estimated by a study group from the University of California, Davis, that states in the northeast, such as Maryland, would need to quadruple their sales of zero emissions vehicles by 2026 to meet the 35% of sales target established in the California standard. In future years, the mandated percentage will increase until it reaches 100% in 2035.

In addition to vehicle sales, car charging stations would need to ramp up significantly to meet the demand created by the new standard, and at present it is unclear whether Maryland's electric grid is capable of meeting the increasing demand for electricity. This past summer, California needed to create rolling blackouts to avoid overtaxing its' electric grid. This vehicle standard is just one of many energy-related stories that will unfold over the next few years as consumers feel the effects of climate change legislation in the marketplace.

Recently, outgoing Governor Hogan's office indicated he would not sign the Advanced Clean Car II standards before the end of the year .

GTCC To Hold Elections

The officers of the Greater Timonium Community Council are up for election with the start of the new year. Kathleen Beadell has agreed to run for president of the council, and Eric Rockel will serve as vice-president, if elected. The secretary's position would again be held by Laura Renshaw, if elected, and Ashley Richardson would serve as treasurer. Other nominations will be accepted from the floor, prior to the vote at our next meeting.

County-Wide Efforts to Control Speed in Residential Neighborhoods

Many Springlake residents still painfully remember learning of the loss of life for a grandmother and her five-year old granddaughter while they were walking on Girdwood Road, back in 2018, when a vehicle left the road and struck the pair on the sidewalk. Sadly, tragedies like this one are more prevalent in residential neighborhoods than they were in the past. That's why citizens from around Baltimore County are taking the initiative to ask the State Legislature to change the speed camera laws county-wide.

The template for this change is already in place. Montgomery and Prince Georges Counties have already received the approval to change their speed camera laws. The first step in this process is to get the State Legislature to authorize the change for Baltimore County. After enabling legislation is passed, it will be up to the County Executive and the County Council to institute specific law and procedures on how it is implemented in the county.

In May 2007, Montgomery County implemented its' expanded speed enforcement initiative, with cameras allowed on residential streets where speed limits of 35 mph or lower are present. This was in addition to the speed cameras already in existence in school zones. In 2012 that county began using a corridor approach for its residential speed cameras, wherein the cameras were periodically moved to different locations along a length of a roadway segment to vary the driving public's awareness of the enforcement points. As in the case of school zone speed enforcement, these neighborhood violations carry a fine for speeding when drivers exceed the speed limit by 12 mph or more, but the violation does not impose any points on the driver's record.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety reports that after seven years of the program, the speed cameras induced a 10% reduction in mean speeds on surveyed neighborhood roads and a 62% reduction in the likelihood that vehicles would be traveling more than 10 mph above the speed limit at camera sites.

We will explore how our members feel about bringing this approach to our county at our next meeting.

Calendar of Events

- 1.) Woodworking Show ; Jan. 6-8 ; 12PM-3PM ; Cow Palace
- 2.) Reptile & Exotic Animal Show ; Jan 7-8 ; 9AM-4PM ; Exhibition Hall
- 3.) Wedding Expo ; Jan 7 ; 11AM-4PM ; 4-H/Home Arts Bldg.
- 4.) Jurassic Quest- A Dinosaur Exhibit ; Jan. 13-16 ; 9AM-8PM ; Cow Palace
- 5.) Gun Show ; Jan 21-22 ; 9AM-4PM ; Exhibition Hall
- 6.) Chesapeake Bay Boat Show ; Jan 22 ; 9AM-8PM ; Cow Palace
- 7.) World of Pet Expo ; Jan 27-29 ; Fri., 2PM-8PM, Sat., 10AM-7PM, Sun., 10AM-5PM
Cow Palace
- 8.) Train Show ; Feb 4-5 ; 9AM-4PM ; Cow Palace
- 9.) Gymnastics ; Feb 4-5 ; 9AM-4PM ; Exhibition Hall
American Red Cross Blood Drive ; Feb 8 ; 10AM-3PM ; Mosner Miller Bldg.
- 10) Motorcycle Show ; Feb 10-12 ; 10AM-6PM ; Cow Palace
- 11) Stamp & Coin Show ; Feb 11 ; 9AM-4PM ; Mosner Miller Bldg.
- 12) Maryland RV Show; Feb 17-19 & 24-26 ; 10AM-8PM ; Cow Palace, 4-H Bldg.
& Exhibition Hall

Tentative Agenda for the General Meeting on January 11, 2023

- 1.) Introductions
- 2.) Report on Public Safety from Precinct 7
- 3.) Featured Guest: David Birkenthal, Planning Department, on recent activities
In the Greater Timonium area
- 4.) Featured Guest: Councilman Wade Kach
- 5.) Election of GTCC Officers for 2023
- 6.) Old Business: follow up on MTA alternatives, TOD at Lutherville Station, zoning &
development news
- 7.) New Business: effort to control speed in residential neighborhoods
- 8.) Adjourn

Wishing All a Happy & Healthy New Year !