

# GTCC The Greater Timonium Community Council

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**Join us at our next general meeting  
On March 8. 7PM at the Vista Room**

## **Is Suburbia Under Attack ?**

Recently, my friend and GTCC member, Doug Dunlap, sent me an op-ed article that had appeared in the New York Post, authored by Betsy McCaughey. Ms. Caughey holds a PhD in history from Columbia University, has been a college instructor and served fellowships with think tanks, the Manhattan Institute and the Hudson Institute. She probably gained the most notoriety in her career by serving one term as Lt. Governor of New York.

The article claimed that the Biden administration and Governor Kathy Hochul of New York are trying to overturn local zoning laws to enable the building of high-rise apartment buildings with “affordable” units in single family suburban neighborhoods. Apparently, on January 19, the Biden administration announced a new policy that will require all towns across America to submit “equity plans” that demonstrate how each town proposes to enable equitable, affordable housing and transportation to be built. “ Towns that don’t meet the cookie-cutter requirement for economic diversity will lose federal funding,” according to Ms. McCaughey.

Similarly, New York Governor Kathy Hochul is proposing a state law termed the “Housing Compact.” If passed, the law would compel all towns in the New York metropolitan area to increase its housing stock to meet a uniform, state-imposed target (number of houses ) and rezone for high density housing within one-half mile of every Metropolitan Transit Authority train stop. If the town fails to meet the state-imposed targets, the State will allow developers to ignore local zoning laws and build high density housing, anyway.

Let’s hope this scheme does not migrate south, beyond the borders of New York state. It remains to be seen if Governor Hochul can force this legislation through the legislature, but it demonstrates the mindset of certain elected officials.

*Eric Rockel, vice president*

## The Legislative Front in Annapolis

Listed below are sample descriptions of the bills sponsored, or co-sponsored, by our area's representatives. This list is not meant to be a complete portrait of all the sponsored bills. You can access each bill in its totality by going to the Maryland General Assembly website.

### 11<sup>th</sup> District:

#### Senator Shelly Hettleman:

- a.) SB 087- Co-sponsored with Sen. Chris West- Establishes a Correctional Ombudsman within the Office of Attorney General to oversee administrative actions taken by the Dept. of Public Safety & Correctional Services.
- b.) SB 098- Requiring the Parole Commission to consider the age of an inmate.
- c.) SB 100- Requiring in certain actions to repossess residential rental property that a landlord submit evidence of compliance with local rental licensure requirements.
- d.) SB 158- Prohibiting, beginning Jan. 1, 2024, that the Sec. of Agriculture from registering a pesticide for use against mosquitoes in the State unless the distributor of the pesticide has submitted test results indicating the pesticide has passed the PFAS test.
- e.) SB 159- Requiring the State Police to create and maintain a voluntary "Do Not Sell Firearm" registry, in which any person may enroll for the purpose of being prohibited from buying a firearm.
- f.) SB 160- Requires local social service departments to disregard 100% of any housing subsidies an applicant would receive in temporary cash assistance payments.
- g.) SB 197- Establishes a 4-Day Work Week Pilot Program.
- h.) SB 328- Requires the Board of Public Works to allow members of the public to submit comments electronically.

#### Delegate Jon Cardin:

- a.) HB 054- Would repeal the prohibition against holders of sports wagering licenses or persons who own an interest in a video lottery operation from directly or indirectly making a campaign contribution.
- b.) HB 100- Alters, under certain circumstances, the inheritance tax due on certain real property that passes from a decedent to certain beneficiaries of limited means.
- c.) HB 179- Alters the time within which a person is required to file a Maryland estate tax return.
- d.) HB 256- Prohibiting provisions in a contract with a design professional related to indemnity.
- e.) HB 403- Requires a Dept. of Juvenile Services intake officer to forward certain complaints to the State's Attorney.
- f.) HB 427- Altering provisions relating to immunity from criminal arrest or prosecution for a person experiencing a medical emergency after ingesting or using alcohol or drugs.

- g.) HB 582- Requires a law enforcement agency to file any administrative charges arising out of alleged police officer misconduct that is not required to be reviewed by a charging committee within 1 year and 1 day.
- h.) HB 610- Prohibiting the personal representative of an estate or an interested party from attesting and witnessing a will during its execution.

Delegate Dana Stein:

- a.) HB 030- Alters the composition of the State Board of On-Site Wastewater Professionals, altering the distribution of certain fees and clarifying the application of certain license requirements.
- b.) HB 102- Requires the Dept. of Agriculture to publish a fact sheet on the protection of pets in the event of an eviction and requiring a landlord to provide such information.
- c.) HB 289- Establishes the Maryland Forestry Education Fund to expand and enhance the education of forest landowners.
- d.) HB 319- Beginning Jan. 1, 2024, prohibits the Sec. of Agriculture from registering a pesticide for use against mosquitoes, unless the distributor of the pesticide submits test results indicating the pesticide has passed the PFAS test.
- e.) HB 352- Prohibits a train or light engine moving freight in the same rail corridor as passenger trains from operating unless it has at least two crew members.
- f.) HB 503- Establishes a Greenspace Equity Program and a Greenspace Equity Advisory Board in the Dept. of natural Resources so as to provide grants to eligible applicants for enhancing the public health and livability of overburdened communities.
- g.) HB 586- Requires each agency of the State government to give preferences to certain products produced from organic materials when purchasing compost, mulch or other soil amendments.

42<sup>nd</sup> District

Delegate Michele Guyton:

- a.) HB 265- Requires the Md. Consortium on Coordinated Community Supports to develop guidelines for developing a standardized behavioral health questionnaire to identify students with behavioral health service needs.
- b.) HB 320- Requiring that “student data” for the purposes of the Maryland Longitudinal Data System include student disability data by specific disability category.
- c.) HB 456- Requiring pharmacies to provide notice to customers of the availability of accessible labels for the blind, visually impaired or otherwise disabled individuals for prescription drugs.
- d.) HB 469- Extending the eligibility for a child with a disability to receive special education and related services through the child’s sixteenth year of school.
- e.) HB 476- Prohibiting debt collectors from applying a debt payment made by a debtor with multiple debts to a disputed debt.

- f.) HB 525- Establishing the Outdoor Pre-School License Pilot Program to license outdoor, nature-based early learning and child care programs.
- g.) HB 621- Requiring the Division of Rehabilitation Services, in the Dept. of Education, to post on the division's website the total number of open cases in their caseload, and update it monthly.
- h.) HB 870- Requiring the Division of Rehabilitation Services, in the Dept. of Education, and the Developmental Disabilities Administration to enter into a memorandum of understanding, which shall include a data sharing agreement, so as to expedite decisions regarding eligibility for services.

Delegate Nino Mangione:

- a.) HB 952- Establishing, altering, and clarifying penalties for and elements of certain firearm-related crimes, and prohibiting a dealer or other person from selling or transferring a firearm under certain circumstances.
- b.) HB 1080- To authorize a county referendum on a transportation investment program; requiring a transportation investment program submitted to referendum to include a list of projects that each have a cost of at least \$20 million and would serve a particular county, and allowing voters to either adopt or reject the program.
- c.) HB 1137- Establishing the Workgroup to Study School Bus Safety, and to issue reports to each jurisdiction by June 30, 2024.
- d.) HB 1147- Requires the cannabis oversight agency to insure that no individual diagnosed with a cannabis-induced psychosis may purchase cannabis, and also regulating the potency of cannabis.
- e.) HB 250- Authorizing the MVA to issue disabled veteran registration plates to certain disabled veterans.
- f.) HB 359- Requiring certain interscholastic and intramural, j.v. and varsity teams to be

Senator Chris West:

- a.) SB 007- Altering the composition of the State Board of On-Site Wastewater Professionals, and clarifying certain fees, penalties and the application of license requirements.
- b.) SB 018- Establishing the Police Retention Workshop to study issues and factors contributing to the decline in police retention.
- c.) SB 021- Altering the definition of a "person in a position of authority" related to sexually inappropriate conduct or contact.
- d.) SB 027- Establishes the Restorative Justice Program within the Victims Services Unit of the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth and Victim Services.
- e.) SB 028- Altering the use of certain terms in child custody cases, requiring the courts to consider certain factors in custody cases and authorizing joint legal decisions to both parents in certain circumstances.
- f.) SB 036- Repealing the authority of the court to decree a limited divorce and altering certain grounds for an absolute divorce.

## **County Council Limits the Use of Plastic Bags**

By a vote of 5-2, the Baltimore County Council banned single-use plastic bags from being distributed in stores, and County Executive John Olszewski, Jr. signed the bill into law. Councilmen Julian Jones and Todd Crandall voted against the measure.

Under the law, retailers will be giving out paper bags instead of single-use plastic bags, and they can charge five cents per bag, a reduction from the original proposal to charge ten cents per bag. The legislation will take effect on November 1, 2023, but there will be a grace period until January 2024 before the ban takes full effect. The bill also exempts farmer's markets and mom and pop stores (locally owned with four or less locations) from compliance.

## **County Council Addresses Four Housing Measures**

The Olszewski Administration submitted four housing bills that it argues will improve housing affordability in the county. Bill 4-23 would establish a housing opportunity fund that would enable the Administration to create a special purpose fund to provide gap financing for affordable housing, to provide assistance to renters and homebuyers with limited means, acquire, sell and rehabilitate housing in Baltimore County, and provide for land banking of vacant, foreclosed or abandoned housing stock. Initial funding for this bill would come from \$16 million stemming from the federal American Rescue Plan and \$3 million from the County's general fund. Future funding could come from State and Federal aid, grants, and from some unspecified amount of the County's general fund.

The second bill, Bill 5-23, addresses blighted and/or abandoned properties. It outlines a process for declaring a property abandoned, and it provides recourse for an owner to challenge that ruling.

Bill 6-23 establishes that townhomes constructed after the passage of this bill should be 20-feet wide, but it also establishes a process to allow townhomes of less than 20-feet wide to be built. The basic premise behind this bill is that townhomes less than 20-feet wide would provide a more affordable option, and a certain amount of those townhomes would be offered for sale to persons with restricted incomes.

Bill 7-23 will change some of the definitions concerning accessory dwelling units, often times called "granny flats". The County already has an accessory dwelling unit law, but currently that law restricts occupants to being immediate family members of the owners. Under this proposal the occupants of the accessory dwelling could be relatives by blood, marriage or adoption. The proposal would also allow rent to be charged, whereas the current law forbids the collection of rent.

Under Bill 7-23, there is a new process to register for creating an accessory dwelling. Accessory dwellings that are part of the principal dwelling would require that the

owners complete an application and sign a covenant that the accessory unit will only be occupied by a relative by blood, marriage or adoption. For detached accessory dwelling units, in addition to the application and the covenant, the owners would need to appear at a special hearing before an Administrative Law Judge, who could impose conditions or restrictions on the applicants' use. Bill 7-23 does not change any of the current limitations relating to size, setbacks or other characteristics.

Speakers at the Council's work session raised concerns about the enforcement of the application process, about the need to re-examine the size standards for accessory units and other concerns. The Council passed Bills 4,5 and 6-23 at its session on February 21, but the members voted to delay the vote on 7-23 until the regular session of March 6. The Council indicated that there may be multiple amendments to the current bill before the final vote.

### **Department of Planning Announces Community Planning Institute**

In order to better educate and engage the public about planning, land use and the development process, the Department of Planning will start a Community Planning Institute in the next few months. The institute will consist of five-week, in-person sessions revolving around the functions of planning. The department indicates that there will be two classes each year, and the first class is expected to range to near twenty-five citizens in size. Applications for the first class are expected to be available in late March. This institute would be good training for community members who regularly participate in zoning and development activities.

### **Standardized Tests Vex County Schools**

The recent release of the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) test results show that Baltimore County schools, as a whole, performed below the levels of neighboring counties and the state's overall averages. Baltimore County saw 38% of its students pass the English proficiency test and 19% pass the Math proficiency test. Statewide, 44% passed the English test and 22% passed the Math test. By comparison, for example, Harford County had 57% pass the English proficiency test and 36% pass the Math proficiency test. Carroll County saw results of 60% in English and 38% in math.

Taking a deeper dive into area schools shows better, but in some cases still not satisfying, results compared to the County-wide figures.

#### *English Proficiency, percentage passing*

<i>School</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2022</i>
Lutherville ES	71%	60%
Hampton ES	66%	58%

Pinewood ES	83%	90%
Timonium ES	80%	83%
Mays Chapel ES	62%	64%
Riderwood ES	78%	82%
Pot Spring ES	50%	60%
Warren ES	52%	38%
Padonia Intl. ES	39%	25%
Ridgely MS	59%	68%
Cockeysville MS	46%	49%

*Math Proficiency, percentage passing*

<i>School</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2022</i>
Lutherville ES	69%	35%
Hampton ES	68%	48%
Pinewood ES	83%	78%
Timonium ES	72%	69%
Mays Chapel ES	59%	43%
Riderwood ES	80%	71%
Pot Spring ES	48%	45%
Warren ES	48%	25%
Padonia Intl. ES	38%	18%
Ridgely MS	58%	36%
Cockeysville MS	37%	16%

*All statistics for this article came courtesy of the Baltimore Banner*

## **Town Hall Budget Meeting, March 15**

Join County Executive John Olszewski, Jr. and Councilman Wade Kach for the Third District Town Hall Budget Meeting on March 15, 6:30 to 8:00 PM at the Fasig Tipton Building at the State Fairgrounds. The Fasig Tipton Building is located at the southern end of the State Fairgrounds. At these meetings, citizens usually advocate for inclusion of specific projects in the County's annual budget.

## **Councilman Initiates Talks on Lutherville Station**

Councilman Wade Kach convened a series of meetings to see if any compromise is possible on the development at Lutherville Station. The first meeting took place in February, and future meetings in March and beyond are possible. Those in attendance at the first meeting included representatives from the Lutherville Community Association, GTCC, the developers, representatives from two groups in Lutherville who support the Transit Oriented Development, representatives from the NO Apartments/NO Compromise group, the head of the Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability, the Deputy Director of the Department of Public Works and Transportation Planning and the Councilman and staff. Since this was the first meeting, each interest group outlined their position on the development, and the department leaders answered questions about the development process, storm drainage issues and other matters. The meeting was at times slightly contentious, and towards the end of the meeting a member of the side supporting the Transit Oriented Development went on a profanity-laced tirade that effectively brought an end to the discussions.

No issues were resolved at this first meeting, but calmer heads on both sides will continue the dialogue in the future.

## **Calendar of Events**

- 1.) March 4,5 & 10-12, Maryland Home, Garden & Craft Show, 10AM-6 PM  
Exhibition Hall and Cow Palace, Maryland State Fair (MSF)
- 2.) March 8, Balt. County Public Schools Job Fair, 3:30 PM -7PM  
4-H/Home Arts Bldg, MSF
- 3.) March 10, American Red Cross Blood Drive, 10AM-3PM  
Mosner Miller Bldg., MSF



- 4.) March 11,12, All Breed Cat Show, 9AM-3PM  
4-H/Home Arts Bldg., MSF
- 5.) March 18,19, Antique Arms Show, 9AM-3PM  
Cow Palace, MSF
- 6.) March 24-26, Beer, Bourbon & BBQ Fest, 2PM-6PM  
Cow Palace, MSF
- 7.) March 31-April 2, Children's Consignment Sale, 10AM-4PM  
4-H/Home Arts Bldg., MSF
- 8.) April 15, Stamp & Coin Show, 9AM-4PM, Mosner Miller Bldg., MSF
- 9.) April 15,16, Gun Show, 9AM-3PM, Exhibition Hall, MSF
10. April 15, Taco Fest, 12PM-5PM, Cow Palace, MSF
11. April 15, Punishers, LEMC & Hope and Peace Foundation Bull Roast,  
2PM-11:30 PM, 4-H/ Home Arts Bldg., MSF
12. April21-23, Kennel Club Dog Show, 8AM-6PM, Cow Palace & Infield, MSF
13. April 22,23, Quilt Expo, 9AM-5PM, 4-H/Home Arts Bldg., MSF
14. April 22, St. Vincent DePaul, 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Empty Bowls Fundraiser, 12PM-3PM  
Exhibition Hall, MSF
15. April 29, Shred Day by Better Business Bureau, 8AM-11AM, North Gate MSF