

Vol. XV, No. 4  
September 2023

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

Our next meeting is Sept. 13<sup>th</sup>, 7PM  
in the Vista Room at the State Fair

### **Imagine**

Just think what the Lutherville/Timonium area would look like if all of the development proposals presented to County officials were actually given the green light. There would be 400 apartment units being built at Lutherville Station, at the end of West Ridgely Road. Another 700 apartment units would have been built along Aylesbury Road, just north of the Bluestone restaurant. Plus, the owner of the Fairgrounds Plaza, where the Giant is located, requested to build 250-300 apartment units, which would have been allowed if a zoning change had been authorized, and the owner of Heaver Plaza made a similar zoning request that would have made possible a similar number of apartment units. Fortunately, Councilman Wade Kach has not favored any of these requests, but what would the area look like if all had been approved?

Certainly, York Road would see congestion beyond our darkest nightmares. All of the properties mentioned above are either adjacent to York Road, or within two blocks of it. Maybe ten percent of these apartment dwellers would use mass transit, a big *if*, but that still results in over 1,400 more cars daily on York Road! What about the impact on our schools? We are seeing new trailers added to Hampton and Lutherville Elementary Schools without the influx from this hypothetical development, and even if only 1 out of every 4 apartments featured school age children, that's an additional 400 pupils in our schools. All of those proposed apartment locations are in the catchment area of Ridgely Middle School, so just imagine the hypothetical increase at Ridgely. There surely would be demands on the public recreational facilities and other public services, as well.

Now the above scenario is a hypothetical, but what if I told you that the County's Planning Department is proposing to move this hypothetical one step closer to reality? Yes, the Master Plan 2030 is proposing to create three redevelopment areas, called core retrofit areas, or nodes, in the Lutherville/Timonium area. One of those nodes is located at the end of West Ridgely Road, the second is planned to be centered on Greenspring Drive and Aylesbury Drive,

north of Business Park Drive and the third is proposed to be on Greenspring Drive, north of Timonium Road, in the vicinity of where Greenspring turns into Deerco Road. Master Plan 2030 says all of these nodes would be suitable for high density residential development, as well as commercial and institutional redevelopment. When focus groups were first assembled concerning the plan, citizens told the County staff that we did not want to see Timonium become more urbanized. That we wanted to retain the suburban character that had evolved over the last sixty years, but in my estimation, the Planning Department wants the exact opposite.

The County Council will be considering this Master Plan 2030 in either October or November of the coming Fall. When that takes place, if you are of the same mindset as me, you will need to tell the Council to reject the three core retrofit areas, or nodes, proposed for Lutherville/Timonium.

*Eric Rockel, V.P. GTCC*

### **Administrative Law Judge Rejects Plan for Greenspring Manor**

After thirteen days of hearings, Administrative Law Judge Maureen E. Murphy rejected a developer's plan to construct 61 new homes on West Joppa Road, near the intersection of Falls and West Joppa Roads. The hearings featured over seventy-five hours of testimony from experts and individual residents, both for and against the development plan.

The concerns about this development centered on four problematic areas. First, this site is located within the failing traffic shed of Falls and West Joppa Roads. While the developer proposed certain physical improvements and re-stripping to improve the traffic movements near the site, those improvements did not change the level of service "F" rating. In fact, the Judge concluded from testimony presented that the additional trips caused by 61 new homes would worsen conditions, not improve them. Secondly, protestants of the development questioned the adequacy of the public sewer serving the property. Attorney for the protestants, Michael McCann, was masterful in presenting testimony from several experts, as well as internal memos from Department of Public Works and Transportation Planning staff demonstrating that the sewer service for this property was not adequate to serve sixty-one new homes. A third area of concern was the developer's desire not to extend Mays Chapel Road thru the site to connect with West Joppa Road. Instead, the developer proposed to construct an emergency access only gate at the end of the existing road and curtail a regular connection between the road in the new development and the existing Mays Chapel Road. That proposal clearly flied in the face of requirements contained in the Development Plans Review Policy Manual. Although residents from both the Meadows and Boxwood communities spoke in favor of the emergency access gate, the clear fact that this proposal contradicted written policy doomed making an exception in this instance. The protestants also brought up issues of compatibility, Master Plan conflicts, storm

water management and flood plain questions at the hearing, but the Judge did not rule on any of those issues.

Representatives from the Valley Planning Council, Greater Timonium Community Council, Seminary Ridge HOA and others expressed their concerns about the sixty-one-home development. Attorney Michael McCann and People’s Counsel of Baltimore County, Peter Zimmerman, presented a complex and exhaustive cases as to why the development failed to comply with the County’s development standards, and ultimately the Administrative Law Judge agreed with those conclusions.

### **A Demographic Snapshot of the Area**

A recent article in the Baltimore Banner portrayed certain changing demographics for the Baltimore region and its communities. Demographics are defined as the statistical study of population characteristics, including distribution, density and other vital data. The Banner broke this area down into two distinct subparts: Lutherville and Cockeysville/Timonium. In both areas, the number of Caucasian residents declined from the 2010 Census to the 2020 Census. Lutherville saw a decline of 4.5%, while Cockeysville/Timonium experienced a decline of 8.5%. People of color experienced increases in both geographic areas. The Black population increased by 62% in Lutherville and by 30% in Cockeysville/Timonium. Hispanics increased by 63% in Lutherville and by 93% in Cockeysville/Timonium. Asian residents increased by 46% in Lutherville and by a little over 3% in Cockeysville/Timonium.

The decline in Caucasian residents also occurred in adjoining demographic areas. In the Greenspring Valley/Pikesville area, Caucasian residents decreased by 4%, while Hispanics increased by 70%, and in Towson/Loch Raven there was a decline of 12%, while Hispanics increased by 78%.

United States Census data, distinct from the information contained in the Banner, also offers a number of interesting data points about our Greater Timonium area. For example, the “owner-occupied housing unit rate” shows Cockeysville as having 37.5% of its housing units being owner-occupied, Timonium housing demonstrates that 78.5% are owner-occupied and Lutherville containing 86% owner-occupied. The median value of owner-occupied housing in the three areas indicated Cockeysville with a value of \$351,600 per unit, Timonium at \$402,400, and Lutherville with a median value of \$376,200. Nationwide, the median value of an owner-occupied home was \$244,900, based on 2021 valuations.

Median household income, as compiled for the period 2017-2021 and shown in 2021 dollars, demonstrated that Cockeysville’s household median was \$74,112, Timonium’s median was \$117,574, and Lutherville’s was \$129,567. For the entire nation, median household income was stated to be \$69,021. For persons aged 25 or above, who hold a bachelor’s or higher degree, Cockeysville residents occupy that category 51.1% of the time, whereas 62.2% of the Timonium residents hold a degree, and 63.3% of Lutherville residents are degree holders. Nationally, 33.7% of those age 25 or above hold a degree.

## **County Executive Names New Department Heads**

Baltimore County Executive, John Olszewski, Jr. named Marcus Wang to be the head of the Department of Economic and Workforce Development, and the Executive nominated Horacio Tablada to be the director of the Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability. Tablada, a Hispanic, and Wang, an Asian, are part of what Olszewski touts as “the most diverse administration in Baltimore County history.”

Mr. Wang co-founded a company known as ZytoGen Global Genetics Institute, which conducts preimplantation genetic screening. Since 2020, he also served as the chair of the Baltimore County Economic Development Advisory Board, a volunteer position. Mr. Tablada is the former secretary of the Maryland Department of the Environment.

Both men will need to be confirmed by the Baltimore County Council before they permanently assume their positions.

## **Former Executive Director of Ag’ Center Sentenced for Theft**

William “Chris” McCollum, the former head of the Agricultural Center on Shawan Road, was sentenced to six months in county jail after previously pleading guilty to two counts of theft. McCollum had admitted to stealing over \$110,000. McCollum used his position as campaign treasurer for the re-election campaign of former Councilwoman Cathy Bevins, the Friends of Cathy Bevins, and from the Baltimore County Victory Slate, to embezzle the money for his personal uses. Judge Robert Cahill sentenced McCollum to five years, with all but six months suspended.

McCollum’s time as head of the Agricultural Center had proven controversial. Prior to the general election of 2018, many volunteer members of the Ag’ Center had complained to then candidate John Olszewski, Jr. about McCollum’s actions in running the facility. In April of 2021, Inspector General Kelly Madigan reported that the Center had squandered \$1 million and failed to grow any food as part of a program to support area food banks. Madigan also found that McCollum had used county-issued procurement cards to make over \$36,000 in unauthorized purchases. Why McCollum was allowed to resign from the post at the Ag’ Center, rather than being fired, remains an unanswered part of this distressing saga.

## **Baltimore Metropolitan Council Holds Workshop**

The Baltimore Metropolitan Council is an independent, non-profit organization that supports and lobbies for initiatives that promote the regional growth of the Baltimore area. Its Board of Directors includes the Mayor of the City, the Executives of the adjoining counties and two members from the State legislature. This past summer, the Council held a workshop in Towson to promote its Short-Range and Long-Range Transportation Improvement Programs for the metropolitan area, as well as to inform the public of other efforts in community and environmental planning.

The short-range transportation initiatives cover projects that would be initiated between 2024 and 2027. These projects mainly include bridge repair, roadway widening, bicycle/pedestrian facilities and a few facility rehabilitation and/or expansion projects, such as the Howard Street hard rail tunnel. Very few of the short-range projects will have any immediate impact on the Timonium area, if the State undertakes the projects advocated by the Metropolitan Council. The Council does advocate for widening I-695 between I-70 and MD 43, which could include some construction in our area, but other Baltimore County projects include replacing bridges on Dogwood Road, Mohrs Lane, Golden Ring Road and Peninsula Expressway, none of which are near Timonium.

For long-range projects, defined as ones undertaken between 2028 and 2050, the Metropolitan Council supports one project that may impact Timonium, the North-South Transit Corridor. They estimate that the time frame for that project is 2040-2050. They also support the East-West Transit Corridor, which would connect the west side of Baltimore County with the east side of the City or possibly eastern Baltimore County. That project is slated for a time frame of 2028-2039, but realistically speaking the time frame likely will extend far into the 2040s. Other long-range projects suggested for Baltimore County include transit hubs for Essex, Owings Mills, White Marsh and Patapsco, expansion of I-795 and expansion of Painters Mill Road.

GTCC provided written comment to the Metropolitan Council that it did not support extending any North-South transit along York Road, north of I-695.

## **Del. Guyton Holds Public Forum**

Delegate Michele Guyton held a public meeting at the Cockeysville Library to address the distribution of hate speech flyers in our area, as well as to hear about other topics on the minds of constituents. Joining the delegate at the meeting were State Senator Shelly Hettleman, Meredith Weisel from the Anti-Defamation League, and Captain McManus of the Cockeysville Police Precinct. Recently these hate speech flyers have been appearing in small but alarming numbers in some neighborhoods.

Ms. Weisel indicated the material in these flyers mimicked content from out of state hate groups, but it was unclear if those groups had any direct involvement in producing the flyers. Captain McManus reported that the number of residents who reported receiving these flyers was small, eleven residents, but it is uncertain how many residents received the material but failed to report it to the police. McManus also reported that only one instance occurred south of Shawan Road, with the vast majority occurring in Northern Baltimore County.

Residents also discussed other issues they want the General Assembly to address in the upcoming session, including better bus service and increased roadway safety.

### **Public Works Projects Punctuate the Summer Months**

Baltimore County's Department of Public Works and Transportation Planning conducted several projects in the Timonium area this summer. Road re-surfacing took place on Fox Tail Drive and Charmuth Road, both north of Ridgely Road and from Dulaney Valley Road to Seminary Avenue. By the time you receive this newsletter, work should be complete on those two. In separate activity, a parallel, temporary sewer line is being constructed south of Timonium Road in part of the Haverford neighborhood. The cost of the sewer rehabilitation is slotted at almost \$4.5 million.

In Cockeysville, Baltimore City, who owns the Warren Road bridge, has closed all traffic on the bridge for the next three months (August-October) to facilitate repairs to the bridge, which were mandated by an inspection of the superstructure.

### **The 2024 Comprehensive Zoning Map Process is Upon Us**

For some it's like a re-occurring nightmare and for others it's a chance to make things right, but the Comprehensive Zoning Map Process (CZMP) kicks off with an early filing period beginning on August 14.

The timeline for CZMP starts with an on-line, only, filing period from August 14 to the 31<sup>st</sup>, followed by the general public filing period from September 1 until October 15. After the close of the public period, the Planning Board members are allowed to file issues from October 1 until the end of that month. The County Council members are then allowed to file issues from November 1 to the 30<sup>th</sup>. Each property that is the subject of a CZMP issue must be posted with a sign to notify the public of the rezoning application. The party requesting the zoning change is responsible for the cost of the sign posting.

There is no filing fee for the Planning Board or the County Council, but the general public does have to pay a fee. The general filing fee for the public is \$1,000 if the filing takes place from September 1 until the 30<sup>th</sup>. The general fee increases to \$1,600 from October 1 to the 15<sup>th</sup>. Civic Associations pay a smaller fee if they wish to submit issues for consideration. During the month of September, the fee for Civic Groups is \$250, and the fee increases to \$350 from

October 1 until the filing close on October 15<sup>th</sup>. Any Civic Association who wishes to receive the lower fee schedule must be registered with the Department of Planning prior to the start of the filing period, and the association must certify that the requested issue was authorized by the association's decision-making authority.

Following the filing fee, the Planning Department will issue its recommendations on the issues that were filed, and the Planning Board will conduct hearings in each council district and issue their recommendations on each of the issues. The County Council will then carry out a series of hearings in each district, followed by Council votes in the late summer of 2024.

### **Budget Problems Loom for State**

The Daily Record reports that the State of Maryland may be seeing large structural deficits in coming years. State legislators saw a multi-billion-dollar surplus before the last session, in part due to an avalanche of federal dollars coming into the state. Yet the Department of Legislative Services reports that Maryland is likely to experience a \$418 million deficit for the fiscal year that starts in July of 2024.

The State is projected to face a \$1.8 billion deficit for the year that begins July 1, 2027, and a large driver of that deficit is the cost of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (Kirwan), which budget experts claim has not been fully funded by the legislature.

David Brinkley, former Budget Secretary in the Hogan Administration, opined that "Elected people can make promises to certain constituencies and every promise has a dollar figure attached to it." Yet Brinkley acknowledged that many times the costs of those promises are not clearly understood before legislation is passed. Brinkley stated that either spending cuts or tax increases are the logical consequence of the budgetary situation.

Senate President Bill Ferguson pooh-poohed Brinkley's concerns. "The state budget is healthier today than it's ever been because we put a historic amount of funding into reserves..."

Since Maryland must pass a balanced budget each year, we will soon find out whether we will face higher taxes or see spending reductions.

### **Useful Links**

If you are a caregiver, or know someone who is, the topic of memory care can be an intimidating subject. Listed below are two useful links that may offer a good starting point for your understanding:

- <https://www.caring.com/senior-living/memory-care-facilities/maryland>

- <https://www.caring.com/senior-living/memory-care-facilities/>

We will also post these links on our GTCC webpage on the Links section, under Memory Care.

### **County Received \$0 in Impact Fees Over the Last Two Years**

According to an article in the Baltimore Sun, Baltimore County took in no money from development impact fees during calendar years 2021 and 2022. The impact fee legislation, passed by the County Council in 2019, imposed fees on new construction to offset the impacts that new development would have on school overcrowding, road improvements and water and sewer capacities. The fees imposed by this legislation were far smaller than the impact fees that exist in many neighboring counties, but even these lesser fees were anticipated to generate several million dollars for Baltimore County. The law also allowed a process wherein developers could request a waiver of these fees, and according to the article in the Sun, Baltimore County granted a total of 998 exemptions to these fees during calendar years 2021 and 2022.

A spokesperson for the County Executive stated that the administration would support a re-examination of the existing law in light of the lack of revenue generated over the last two years. What part administrative discretion played in the lack of revenue was not discussed in the Sun's article.

### **Tentative GTCC General Meeting Agenda, September 13**

1. Introductions
2. Report on Public Safety from Precinct 7
3. Featured Speakers: Delegate Michele Guyton & Senator Chris West
4. Support for Parents, Teachers, Students United & Citizens Against Speeding
5. Old Business: North/South Transit Corridor, Lutherville Station
6. New Business
7. Adjourn



## Calendar Of Events

1. Enjoy the Maryland State Fair: Our annual end of summer ritual!  
August 25-27 & 31; September 1-4, 7-10.
2. Maryland Cycling Classic, September 3, starting at 12 PM with an origination in Sparks. expect Falls Road in the Timonium area to be closed on the afternoon of September 3. It is part of the cycling route.
3. Motor Muster @ the Maryland Fire Museum, September 9, 10AM-2PM  
Enjoy free admission and free rides on fire trucks! Food available for sale
4. Baltimore Reptile & Exotic Animal Show, 10AM-4PM, September 23 & 24  
Exhibition Hall
5. Gem & Jewelry Show, 10AM-5PM, September 29 to October 1  
Exhibition Hall
6. Latino Concert, October 7, call 410-327-0226 for info.
7. Meet the Baltimore County Board of Education Members, October 11, Exhibition Hall  
Call 410-887-4334 for start time and more info
8. Stamp & Coin Show, October 14, 9AM-4PM, Mosner Miller Bldg.
9. Crab Fest-Stella Maris, October 15, 5 PM, Exhibition Hall
10. American Heart Association- Heart Walk, October 21, 8AM, Track Infield
11. Children's Consignment Sale, October 27-29, 4H/Home Arts Bldg.