

GTCC

greater timonium community council

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www.gtccinc.org

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Our next meeting is March 13, 7PM
in the Vista Room at the State Fair

Thanks, Dutch

Towards the end of January, Charles Albert, “Dutch,” Ruppertsberger announced that he would not be seeking a reelection bid in 2024. When his term ends at the close of this year, it will mark the end of a twenty-two- year stint in Congress.

Longtime observers remember when Dutch would appear with Senator Frank Kelly, Jr., who was one of Dutch’s early mentors, at community meetings as a way to introduce the voters to the affable Ruppertsberger. At that time Dutch had served as an assistant State Attorney, who wanted to serve in politics as a way to give back to the Maryland Shock Trauma Center that had saved his life after a terrible car accident left him on death’s door.

Dutch won his first election to the Baltimore County Council in 1986, and he would win a second term in 1990. As a councilman, he often demonstrated bipartisanship through working with Republican Councilman Doug Riley on a variety of issues. Ruppertsberger demonstrated that he was fiscally conservative during those years on the County Council, and that same discipline carried over into his two terms as County Executive. During his time as County Executive, Baltimore County won national awards for being one of the best managed subdivisions in the nation. His only real misstep while County Executive was his support and sponsorship of Senate Bill 509 that sought to give the County urban renewal powers over certain properties in the Dundalk, Essex, Randallstown, and Middle River areas that Ruppertsberger considered blighted. The bill was repealed by voter referendum.

In 2002 Dutch was elected to Congress, the beginning of a twenty-two-year service. As was the case during his time in the County Council, Dutch established a bipartisan working relationship with Mike Rogers (R-Mich.) while the two men worked on the House Select Committee on Intelligence, where Ruppertsberger served as the ranking member. Later, Dutch would be assigned to the Appropriations Committee, charged with setting federal spending limits and departmental budgets.

I'm sure Dutch would disagree with me on this last observation, but as his party grew more progressive over the last fifteen years, Dutch became more fiscally liberal as well. He has supported all of President Biden's spending agendas over the last three plus years. If you have ever spent some time talking to Dutch, you know he loves his family, his wife Kay, their children and grandchildren, and he loves sports, particularly the O's and Ravens. So, to the man who at one time served as the president of the GTCC and ended up as a member of Congress, I say thank you for your service. This County is better off for it. Enjoy your retirement !

Eric Rockel

Legislative Efforts in Annapolis

Each year we provide a sample summary of some of the bills that our elected representatives sponsor in the Maryland General Assembly. This summary is by no means meant to be a complete and exhaustive list of all measures sponsored by those elected. Should you want to see a full listing, with analysis of all legislation, go to the Maryland General Assembly website and click on the homepage for each representative.

11th District

Senator Shelly Hettleman :

SB 333- Identifying Suitable Property for Affordable Housing- this bill prohibits the Dept. of Housing & Community Development from identifying certain property for use as affordable housing, specifically park and conservation lands, along with other requirements for evaluation.

SB 128- Geriatric & Medical Parole- the bill requires the Parole Commission to consider age of the incarcerated in making parole decisions; also alters how the Commission evaluates medical parole.

SB 426- Maryland STEM Program- establishing the Maryland STEM Program to provide additional compensation to educators who teach STEM classes at nonpublic schools.

SB 134- Correctional Ombudsman- establishes a Correctional Ombudsman Unit in the Office of the Attorney General.

Delegate Dana Stein: congratulations to Delegate Stein, who was named Speaker Pro Tem of the House of Delegates

HB 068- Continuing Care Retirement Communities- this bill alters requirements related to termination of continuing care agreements and contractual entrance fee refunds by providers.

HB 503- Public Safety, Steel Tubing- requiring certain tubing used in the construction of fuel gas piping systems to meet certain standards.

HB 655- Shoreline Stabilization Measures- prohibiting the Dept. of Environment from exempting a person from the requirement to use certain shoreline stabilization methods for erosion protection.

Delegate Jon Cardin:

HB 15- Police Discipline- authorizing a police officer who is denied a certain right to apply to the Circuit Court for an order to show cause.

HB 31- Electronic Harassment and Bullying- requiring the Department of Juvenile Services intake officer to forward a complaint involving misuse of electronic communications to forward the complaint to the State's Attorney's office.

HB 100- Inheritance Tax Rate- altering the inheritance tax due of certain beneficiaries of limited means.

42nd District

Senator Chris West:

SB 15- Cooperative Housing Corporations, Dispute Settlement- Altering procedures for dispute settlement under the Maryland Cooperative Housing Corporation Act.

SB 17- Criminal Law, Crimes Related to Animals- establishing that each animal harmed in a violation of a prohibition against animal cruelty is a separate offense; and other matters related to merging of actions.

SB 23- Orphan's Court Judges- requiring candidates for these posts to appear on the ballot without party affiliation.

SB 31- Prohibited Indemnity and Defense Liability Agreements- prohibiting a provision in a contract related to architectural, engineering, inspections or survey services from requiring the promisor to defend the promisee against claims brought by a third party.

Delegate Michele Guyton:

HB 58- Speed Monitoring Systems- allowing the Baltimore County Police, the Dept. of Public Works & Transportation and the County Council to collectively decide if speed cameras are appropriate in places other than school zones where roads are designated with speed limits of 35 mph or less.

HB 60- Rehabilitation Services, Altering the definition of Disability- brings the definition of disability concerning state rehabilitation services to be in line with the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

HB 74- Lifesavers Schools Program- establishes the Lifesaver Schools Program to recognize public schools that provide health and safety training to students and personnel. This could include training in resuscitation and first aid, mental health wellness and peer mentoring.

HB 171- State Board of Pharmacy- this bill would add a veterinary pharmacist member to the State Board of Pharmacy.

Delegate Nino Mangione:

HB 25- Prohibiting Sexually Explicit Materials- prohibits explicit materials in school libraries and media centers for grades 1-12 public schools and defining what constitutes that material.

HB 41- Firearms Crimes, Penalties and Procedures- establishing, altering, and clarifying penalties for and elements of certain firearm-related crimes.

HB 46- Transportation Investment Program, County Referendum- allowing the General Assembly to authorize local (i.e., county) referendums on projects in the transportation investment program, including listing all projects that cost at least \$20 million each.

Dulaney H.S. Junior Selected as School Board Finalist

Kimberly Hernandez, a junior at Dulaney, has been selected as one of two finalists for the student member of the Board of Education for the 2024-25 school year. She is part of the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) college prep program at Dulaney, and she serves on the school's Mock trial team and La Voz Hispana, a Hispanic advocacy group.

Kimberly's volunteer efforts also include the Future Business Leaders of America, UNICEF, the Key Club, the Spanish national Honor Society, and other groups. "My goal, if I win this position, is to visit other BCPS schools in person to see what is needed there because I

don't believe we can guess what they need." Students will be able to vote to select Kimberly or Ugonma Chike-Kalu, from Western Tech, on April 4.

School Superintendent Foreshadows Increases in Class Sizes

Baltimore County's Public Schools Superintendent, Myriam Rogers, sought to clarify the system's position on class sizes in light of some social media misinformation, according to a story first reported in the Baltimore Sun. The clarification came in an hourlong presentation to the Board of Education.

Rogers said any change in class sizes would be negligible, with a ratio of one teacher for every 22 students in middle school and one teacher for every 23 students in high school. The minor increase in middle and high school class sizes will allow for the system to have smaller class sizes for grades three through five, in order to emphasize the teaching of reading and writing.

Rogers first budget as the superintendent faces challenges on the monetary front due to several factors: the reduction in federal emergency funds due to the end of the pandemic, and the increasing demands for local dollars caused by the implementation of the Kirwin education formula.

County Bill 3-24

There has already been an outpouring of opposition to local Bill 3-24, which seeks to change how mixed-use projects move forward in the development process. This bill originated at the request of County Executive John Olszewski, Jr.

Under current regulations, when a development project proposes to place residences and commercial uses on the same property that is only zoned for one of those uses, the project would need to go thru the Planned Unit Development (PUD) process, wherein the project must be supported by the Council member in whose district the property is located, receive approval to move forward by a majority of the County Council, and then enter the regular development review and approval process that culminates in a hearing officer's hearing. The project must also fully comply with the approved site plan that was submitted by the developer without any substantial changes to the plan. This process gives the citizenry ample opportunity to make comments about the proposal, including to their specific Council member, as well as at community input meetings.

Under proposed Bill 3-24, mixed use projects would be able to proceed by right to the development review and approval process without needing the support of the County Council. Mixed use projects located in land zoned Business Local (BL), Business Roadside (BR) and Business Major (BM) would not need Council approval, and land located in a Manufacturing Light (M.L.) zone could proceed with a mixed-use development after a special exception hearing.

In addition to the land use changes proposed under this legislation, mixed-use developments would receive certain reductions in the parking requirements of the zoning regulations. If a property is within one-quarter mile of a transit corridor, parking requirements are reduced by up to 10%, and by an additional 10% if a percentage of the residential units are offered to residents whose household incomes are at or below 60% of the median income for Baltimore County. Bill 3-24 terms this as “inclusionary housing.”

The bill also gives any mixed-use project a density bonus if the development incorporates inclusionary housing. The floor area ratio, a measure of property size compared to the number of square feet of floor area for a project, may be increased by 150% for projects that include inclusionary housing.

Critics of this legislation have pointed out that if passed, this legislation would diminish the Council’s ability to shape land use in all districts. It also limits the public’s voice because mixed use would be allowed by right. This legislation also ignores the importance of adequate public facilities if it is going to allow mixed-use by right. For example, in a one mile stretch of York Road between Greenridge and Ridgely Roads there are three mixed use proposals submitted as part of the County 2024 CZMP process. If all three could proceed by right as envisioned under Bill 3-24, in excess of 900 apartment units would congest York Road and foster other public facilities concerns.

Council Chairman, Izzy Patoka, announced on February 20 that the County Executive was withdrawing the bill. Patoka also announced that he was preparing a substitute bill that would give council members the ability to designate mixed use areas in their own districts, but he did not want to “formally” withdraw Bill 3-24 until the new bill is introduced on March 4. That maneuvering caused Councilman Todd Crandell to observe that Bill 3-24 had been DOA since it was first introduced, and he requested that the initial bill be voted down at that meeting. Councilman Patoka resisted that request, and the other councilmen did not support Crandell in insisting on a vote that night. Crandell went on to object to the Administration’s and the Chairman’s handling of the whole matter. It was mentioned that fifty to sixty emails a day were being received in opposition to Bill 3-24.

GTCC area residents no doubt played a significant role in rebuffing Bill 3-24, but we will have to see if the new bill is merely a trojan horse. We will discuss the new bill at our next meeting on March 13, at which time we will have the language of the new bill.

Governor Moore’s “ Housing Expansion and Affordability Act of 2024”

Governor Moore is also attempting to address housing issues with bills in both the House of Delegates and the Senate- HB 538 & SB 484. The bills feature identical language in each instance and the first hearings on this legislation took place in the House’s Transportation and Environment Committee on February 20, and in the Senate’s Education, Energy and the Environment Committee on March 1.

This bill, if passed, would have impacts on affordable housing projects on a variety of fronts. On property that was formerly owned by the State and is appropriate for redevelopment as determined by the Secretary of Housing and Community Development, a local jurisdiction may not place an “unreasonable limitation or requirement” on such a project, such as applying adequate public facilities requirements on that project. For example, if county law would prohibit an affordable housing project because it is in a traffic shed that contains a failing intersection, grade F, this proposed State law would supersede the County’s ability to stop the project. The law, if enacted, would also give density bonuses of 30% to affordable housing projects built on land zoned for multifamily residential use, and it would allow a jurisdiction’s highest allowable multifamily density if the project is built on land zoned exclusively for nonresidential use. In Baltimore County that highest multifamily residential use is RAE 2, which allows 80 units per acre.

This legislation also allows extra benefits for projects that contain at least 25% of its units as affordable housing for any project within one mile of a rail station, such as rail stations on the Light Rail line and the Baltimore Metro Subway system. This includes the 30% density bonus mentioned above for land zoned for multi-family use, as well as the benefit for projects in non-residential areas of the jurisdiction’s highest multi-family density.

Given that the governor is backing this legislation, it is likely that it will pass before the legislature closes in this Spring. In the initial hearing in the House committee assigned to examine the bill, the only speakers in opposition were GTCC President, Kathleen Beadell, Vice President, Eric Rockel, and a representative from the town of Havre de Grace. By contrast, there were more than thirty speakers in favor of the bill.

Council Passes Master Plan 2030

The County Council passed Master Plan 2030 at its meeting on February 20, but not without making many, many amendments to the plan. Within the Greater Timonium area, Councilman Wade Kach eliminated one Core Retrofit Area, aka node, in the West Ridgely Road area, and he greatly reduced the size of two other nodes. He also added a new node in the area around the Lowe’s store, off Beaver Dam Road.

This Master Plan was greeted with greater public opposition than any other master plan in recent memory. Councilman Crandell, for example, revealed that the Department of Planning

refused to assist him in making revisions/amendments to the plan. The Council also included amendment language in the plan making it clear that only upon vote of the Council could the plan be amended. There was concern that the Planning Department or the Planning Board would attempt to alter the plan without County Council consent. The passing of the plan brings a close to a very dysfunctional episode in local government.

Calendar of Events

1. March 2, Maryland Fire Museum, 1301-R York Road
Fire Safety Day: Free Admission, 10AM-4PM
2. March 2,3, Maryland State Fair, Home, Garden & Craft Show
March 2, 10AM-8PM; March 3, 10AM-6PM
3. March 8-10, Maryland State Fair, Home, Garden & Craft Show
March 8, 10Am-6PM; March 9, 10AM-8PM; March 10, 10AM-6PM
4. March 9-10, 4H/Home Arts Bldg., Maryland State Fair, Crab & Mallet Cat Show
9AM-4PM
5. March 16,17, Cow Palace, Maryland State Fair, Antique Firearm Show
9AM-3PM
6. April 13, Cow Palace, Maryland State Fair, Dessert Wars
3PM-7PM
7. April 19,20, Exhibition Hall, Maryland State Fair, St. Vincent de Paul, Empty Bowl
Fundraiser
April 19, 6:30PM-9:30 PM ; April 20, 4PM-7PM

Councilman Kach will hold his own CZMP Hearing (not the one required by law)

On March 21st at 6:30 PM (sign up begins at 5:45); Fasig-Tipton Bldg., Fairgrounds

Tentative Agenda for GTCC Meeting of March 13th: Report from Precinct 7; News from County government; Featured Speaker: Yara Cheikh, on Dulaney HS and education issues; New bill from Councilman Patoka on mixed use development; State bill on affordable housing; old & new business.

