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November 2025

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*Our Next General Meeting is November 12<sup>th</sup>, 7 PM  
At the Vista Room of the Maryland State Fair*

### ***A Troubling Precedent***

#### *President's Message*

On a national level, Democrats frequently bemoan the fact that Republicans promote policies that favor millionaires and billionaires rather than policies that help the middle and lower classes. Well, recently at the local level a bill sponsored by Councilmen Jones and Young did just what the national Democrats argue against; Bill 61-25 will benefit the rich in a tangible way. Entitled the "Revitalization Property Tax Credit, Bill 61-25 was passed by all of the Democrats on the Council, as well as Councilmen Marks and Crandell. Councilman Kach was absent, due to illness, and he did not vote on the bill.

This revitalization Property Tax Credit expands the ability to claim tax credits for properties within a State designated "transit-oriented development" specifically located at the Metro Centre at Owings Mills, as well as for properties within the Woodlawn Commercial Revitalization District. The County's Auditor's Office wrote that this bill would "incentivize the intensification, particularly in the form of additional residential units, of the State-designated transit-oriented development (at Owings Mills) and provide a kickstart for revitalization efforts ... and the full build-out of Security Square Mall area."

If any of our readers have been out to the Metro Centre at Owings Mills and the Security Square Mall area, you may be scratching your head at the use of the term "revitalization property tax credit." The Security Square Mall vicinity does present the appearance that the area is in need of revitalization, but the Metro Centre at Owings Mills is a newer development that attractively represents the area, not a place in need of revitalization.

Before this bill was passed, the County allowed the property tax credit to continue for five years, or for ten years if the qualified improvements exceeded \$10 million. Yet this law now

allows for the tax credit to continue for 30 years for qualified improvements to a residential building located in either of the two areas, provided that one of two circumstances are met: first, 10% of the total number of residential units are deemed affordable( as stipulated by Dept. of Housing and Urban Development policies), or secondly, any building for senior housing, assisted living, continuing care or elderly housing that is at least sixty feet in height. The Auditor’s note also says that the tax credit would be allowed for 20 years for other qualified improvements exceeding \$10 million to properties within those two geographic areas. What that really means is unclear to this writer, but if it would include improvements such as a swimming pool for residents or a renter’s clubhouse then that seems too extravagant for my taste.

The Auditor goes on to illustrate that for every \$10 million of eligible property value, foregone property tax revenue would mean \$110,000 annually. Imagine the tax revenue foregone if the total investment is \$30 million and the credit lasts for 20 or 30 years as allowed under this new law. The foregone taxes are in the \$10 million to \$14 million dollar range. Depending on the length of forgiveness.

Now returning to my original comment, chances are strong that if you are building a \$30 million project, you are not a member of the middle class, but rather a member of the upper class. Do the taxpayers of this County need to subsidize this type of development? My instincts tell me the taxpayers do not, and now that this bill is law, will it be expanded in the future to cover other transit-oriented development sites? Yes, this does not set a good precedent!!

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By now you have probably heard about the incident at Kenwood High School. In case you didn’t, the police confronted a 16-year-old student with their service weapons drawn because school administrators received a warning from an A I enabled detection system that the student was carrying a gun. Yet the student did not have a gun, and, in fact, the detection system mistook a bag of Doritos for a gun. Imagine if you were that student and you ended up in that situation.

Dr. Myriam Rogers, the School Superintendent, addressed the situation by saying the A I program “did what it was supposed to do,” which may be true but was not a detailed enough explanation for why a detection system believes that a snack bag is really a gun. An appropriate explanation would have been for the school system, the police department, and the maker of the detection system to explain how much of this incident was human error, and by whom, and how much was the detection system’s fault. That would have been an appropriate endnote to this incident.

Eric Rockel

## **Household Incomes Fall in Baltimore County**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, household incomes fell for the fifth year in a row in Baltimore County. The median household income closed at just under \$88,000, a two percent decline from 2023. All in all, household income has declined by almost 8% since 2018.

Experts blame several factors for the decline in household incomes. One factor is the loss of unionized jobs, particularly on the east side of the County, because union jobs tend to keep up with the impacts of inflation better than non-union positions. A second factor is the ever-aging population of Baltimore County, wherein retirement incomes are less than working age incomes. Adults who are age 55 and above represent 32% of the County's population, a slightly higher percentage than the state's aging population. In addition to an aging population, many young adults entering the workforce are choosing to live and work elsewhere because job opportunities are more plentiful, and the cost of living is less.

By way of comparison, Howard, Anne Arundel, Carroll and Harford counties all had median incomes higher than Baltimore County. Howard had the highest median income in the state at nearly \$152,000 per year, and the other three had incomes greater than \$111,000 per year.

## **Legislature Finds Fault with Moore Administration**

Two recent incidents have caused members of the Maryland Legislature to call upon Governor Moore to explain the circumstances behind failures in the administration. In the first incident, Maryland Office of Legislative Audits found that the State Highway Administration charged approximately \$359 million in unauthorized expenses to federal projects that may need to be covered by state funds. In fairness, this practice started under the Hogan Administration, but it greatly accelerated under Moore's leadership. Key findings of the audit included that SHA charged expenses to federal projects that were not authorized by the federal government. This practice was done to avoid showing deficits in the State's Transportation Trust Fund. Secondly, the State Highway Administration could not provide proper documentation to justify the propriety of around \$449 million in federal fund revenue recorded at the end of fiscal year 2024. Thirdly, there were no clear policies to control or monitor overtime payments; some employees received overtime payments equal to or exceeding their base salaries. Finally, the audit found that payments to certain architectural and engineering consultants were not properly supported with the necessary paperwork.

All in all, it seems likely that a legislative committee will hold a full investigation during the coming session.

For the second incident, in light of the fact that a teenager committed suicide while in the custody of a foster care vendor, legislators looked for answers from a workgroup that had been created through legislation passed during the 2025 General Assembly session. Yet that workgroup, which **was** supposed to produce a report on children in unlicensed settings by October 1, 2025, had not even held a single meeting until October 2, 2025. Governor Moore was responsible for appointing 11 of the 15-member workgroup, and the governor's staff excused the

delay as the result of “extensive vetting” necessary to ensure a quality panel. Legislators were expecting that report for the 2026 legislative session so that they could enact legislation based on the workgroup’s recommendations, but now it remains to be seen if the report will be available.

### **Comptroller’s Office Examines the “State of the Economy”**

The office of Maryland Comptroller, Brooke Lierman, released the agency’s State of the Economy report to examine economic trends in Maryland. One segment that was examined during the month of October 2025 was the impact of housing on the economy. The report points out that the entire United States has been stuck in a housing crisis for some time now. Prices of homes have skyrocketed by more than 60% since 2019, and housing production has ebbed despite the higher prices.

The report recognizes that Maryland is a state with relatively high housing cost, yet it is attracting some new residents from areas with even higher housing costs and overall high cost of living, like metropolitan New York city. The report also acknowledges that “Maryland is contending with a chronic undersupply of housing and a web of complex and costly regulations, fees and administrative processes that have the effect of limiting housing production...”. The state must address these challenges on a scale, so says this report.

One of the factors influencing housing according to this report is domestic migration. Between 2010 and 2023, Maryland lost a total of 2.3 million residents to other states, but it picked up approximately 2 million residents from elsewhere. The most significant added resident group came from international migration.

Prior to the pandemic, Maryland primarily lost older, higher income residents, think retirees, who sought more affordable living situations in states like Florida, the Carolinas and even Pennsylvania. But since the pandemic, the share of younger and lower to middle income residents leaving the state has increased.

As a result of these factors, between 2000 and 2022, the share of households earning enough income to afford the median-priced home has fallen from 75% of the households to 50%, a drop of 25 percent points.

To meet the current demand and projected growth by 2045, Maryland will need to build 590,000 housing units, according to this report. That equates to almost 30,000 permits per year. By way of comparison, Maryland has only permitted an average of 18,000 units annually.

Finally, this report states that Maryland is ranked as the 6<sup>th</sup> most regulated state for housing development, according to the Wharton School of Business. Among the types of regulations that gain Maryland this notoriety are public facility regulations, forest conservation rules, development impact fees, density limitations and parking requirements according to the Comptroller’s report.

## **Bill Gates is Changing, Will the Maryland General Assembly Follow?**

Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft and one of the wealthiest men on earth, has been at the forefront of climate activism for many years. Not only does he support climate activism, but he has donated millions of dollars to the cause, as well. Yet in a recent news release, Gates said that leaders need to shift their approach to climate change. He argues that too much is being made of emission levels, and not enough spent on “improving lives.” He calls for leaders to make a “strategic pivot” to be more considerate of the issues that have the greatest impact on human welfare.

Gates has not backed away altogether from his concerns about climate, but he sees new alternate energy technologies as offering the greatest opportunity to bring down energy costs and green the planet, and he acknowledges that these new technologies will take time to refine and implement.

The Maryland General Assembly similarly has been at the forefront of climate activism, with Democrats being all in and Republicans being neutral or skeptical of the activist approach. For example, the General Assembly has adopted a Clean Power Standard to achieve 100% clean energy by 2035. Yet Republicans point out that in order to achieve that standard, Maryland will need to import a significant amount of “clean energy” at a higher cost per kilowatt hour. Maryland also wants to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 60% (from a 2006 baseline) by 2031. Ultimately, such initiatives will impact on the type of car you drive and the way you heat your home.

Will the General Assembly take a page out of the Bill Gates playbook and relax the timelines for the state? Only time will tell.

### **Free Webinars Being Offered**

Each of these live webinars last about 30 minutes and are hosted by BGE’s director of consumer assistance and an expert in the topic being discussed. To view previous sessions, visit BGE’s You Tube Channel at [www.youtube.com/channel/UCn-Vmj1XexVcpikA-EOTIDw](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCn-Vmj1XexVcpikA-EOTIDw).

November 13, 12 noon, Smart Ways to Save Energy and Save Money

Sign Up: [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_950\\_9aM8S3yHtbi\\_Afs5pg](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_950_9aM8S3yHtbi_Afs5pg).

November 18, 12 noon, Can My Utility Do That?

Sign Up: [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_ISkij\\_ZLQd2KtD1w020\\_eA](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ISkij_ZLQd2KtD1w020_eA)

December 16, 12 noon, Where to File a Complaint

Sign Up: [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_h7OIVMu-T-uWhmtMFLdXIA](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_h7OIVMu-T-uWhmtMFLdXIA)

## **Questions Regarding Racial Profiling in Traffic Stops by Police**

Following a report by the Baltimore Banner that County police officers are stopping, searching and ticketing Black drivers at a higher rate than white drivers. Several members of the County Council are calling for an investigation into the allegations.

Councilman Izzy Patoka stated that “we need to address this, there is some urgency to it.” Patoka called upon the Office of Inspector General to look into the allegations, and he said he has spoken with Inspector General Kelly Madigan about the matter.

In contrast, Councilman Pat Young said that Madigan’s office should be the last resort. The Councilman believes that an equitable policing advisory group, first established in 2019 by former County Executive Olszewski, should be the first to examine the problem. “An investigation has its merits”, stated the Councilman, “but I don’t see why the public has to wait (for Madigan to complete an investigation).”

County Executive Kathy Klausmeier stated, “I want to acknowledge the concerns raised and reaffirm that racial profiling has no place in Baltimore County.” Klausmeier also expressed confidence in Police Chief Robert McCullough and the job he is doing.

## **The Community Will Miss You!!**

After thirty-nine years of service in the Police Department, Precinct 7’s Lt. Robert McGraw retired at the end of October. Over the last twenty-some years there have been a number of captains at the Cockeysville precinct, but Lt. McGraw has been a reliable and steady presence over all of that time. Yes, he has received awards for his service, but the awards do not measure his communication skills or the pragmatic way that Lt. McGraw dealt with the public in his time as the second in command at the precinct.

We wish him all of the best in retirement and gratefully thank him for his service!

## **Recently Enacted Local Laws**

The County Council passed several pieces of legislation that may impact on our local shopping areas and the controls over rental properties. Below is a brief description of those newly enacted laws:

Bill 63-25, sponsored by Councilman Wade Kach, will change the possible uses permitted in a number of the shopping centers and other properties with the Commercial Community Core overlay district designation. Previously, those properties permitted residential use on the property provided that the first floor of all buildings were used for commercial uses and the residential use was limited to any stories above the first floor. This legislation eliminates the first-floor restriction on residential use provided that there are other commercial uses within

the property or on other properties within 1,000 feet of the building to be used for residential purposes.

Bill 73-25, sponsored by Councilmen Ertel and Marks, establishes a new commercial zone, entitled the Artisan Manufacturing zone. An artisan manufacturing business is described as one where goods are fabricated in relatively small quantities and those goods are stored and sold on premises. These businesses shall have no more than 25 employees and operate in spaces no larger than 10,000 square feet. Artisan manufacturing use is intended to help revitalize aging main streets and commercial areas.

Artisan manufacturing businesses are permitted by right in the Business Local, Business Major and Business Roadside zones within a Commercial Revitalization District. Among the types of businesses envisioned by this zoning classification are food and beverage production and sales, jewelry, apparel, ceramics, wood crafts and similar uses.

Bill 75-25, sponsored by Councilman Ertel, grants additional authority for personnel from the County's Code Enforcement Office to enter rental property, with the permission of a tenant, to enforce zoning regulations related to the County's Livability Code. This legislation is aimed at being better able to enforce regulations related to unauthorized rooming and boarding houses, a failure to maintain fire safety standards and unauthorized alteration of the number of bedrooms in a rental property.

### **Tentative Agenda for the November 12 General GTCC Meeting**

- 1.) Report on Public Safety from Precinct 7
- 2.) Nomination of GTCC Officers for 2026
- 3.) Featured Guest: Sarah David, candidate for State's Attorney for Baltimore County
- 4.) Featured Guest: Maggie Domanowski, 3<sup>rd</sup> District School Board Member
- 5.) Old Business
- 6.) New Business
- 7.) Adjourn

### **Calendar of Events**

- 1.) Maryland Trading Card Expo, Maryland State Fair (MSF), November 2  
4H/Home Arts Building, 9AM to 2 PM
- 2.) Annual Irish Festival, MSF, the Cow Palace, November 7- 6 PM to 11 PM  
Annual Irish Festival, continued, November 8- 12 noon to 11 PM: November 9  
12 noon to 6 PM.
- 3.) MidAtlantic Lacrosse Showcase, MSF, the Track Infield, all day November  
15 & 16
- 4.) Native American Festival, MSF, Exhibition Hall, November 15

- 5.) American Red Cross Blood Drive, MSF, Mosner Miller Bldg.  
November 26, 8:30 AM to 1:30 PM
- 6.) Kennedy Krieger Festival of Trees, MSF Cow Palace, November 28, 10AM to 7 PM; November 29, 10 AM to 7 PM; November 30, 10AM to 4 PM
7. Baltimore Stamp & Coin Show, MSF, Mosner Miller Bldg, December 6  
9 AM to 4 PM
8. East Coast Car, Truck & Bike Show, MSF, December 6 & 7
9. Greenberg's Train & Toy Show, MSF, December 6 & 7, 9 Am to 4 PM
10. Church of the Nativity, Christmas Eve Mass, MSF the Cow Palace  
December 24, 3 PM and 5:15 PM