

**Friends of Harford
Annual Meeting
Sunday, April 29th
Liriodendron
Bel Air
4:30 pm**

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**Celebrating our “First Decade”
1997 - 2007**

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**Featuring Raffles of Local Artists Works
Dave DeRan Artwork
Judy Bates Handmade Basket Items**

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**Guest Speaker
Marvin F. Moss**

Friends of Harford

Annual Meeting

Have you been reading and enjoying our newsletters? Have you heard our members testifying on legislation or speaking out on issues? Do you share our vision of preserving our quality of life in Harford? Are we the kind of people you would like to get to know? Then we invite YOU to be our guest at our Annual Meeting.

Once again we will be at the lovely Liriodendron Mansion at 502 West Gordon Street in Bel Air. Our guest speaker, Marvin Moss, is from Virginia, but originally hails from Maryland. He is currently appointed to the Virginia's Capitol Square Preservation Council. He has lectured on American government and politics, was financial chairman to Senator Paul Sarbanes and financial consultant to Congressman John Sarbanes.

Please join us as we also honor our out-going President, Judy Blomquist. She has been our face to the county, our voice of reason, and our guiding hand for the past few years. She has led our efforts in the county's Master Planning process, the two-year Comprehensive Rezoning process, and numerous battles, big and small.

She is small of stature and mild in temperament, but she is a giant in leadership and resolute in standing for our principles. While she is now stepping down as our leader, she will continue to be an active, guiding hand on our board of directors.

Come help us thank Judy for her enormous contribution in fighting for the preservation of the quality of life in Harford County!

New and Improved Web Site !!!

www.FriendsOfHarford.com

Email News For You

We enjoy mailing our newsletters to you. It’s our way of telling you who we are and what we stand for. But too often the news is old hat by the time you read this. *Friends of Harford* recently enacted an email update letter. For those of you who included your email address in your membership information, we sent you information on Bill 07- 007. This bill would require a developer to hold two public meetings about a planned development. We thought it was important that you know about the bill and when the public hearing for it would be held.

We do not plan to cram your inbox with trivial emails – only with those alerts which need your immediate attention. Should you wish to be included on this list, please email us at: comments@friendsofharford.com

We are publishing our newsletter in its entirety on our web page now. Send a friend this link: www.FriendsOfHarford.com.

Web Site Update

Our original *Friends of Harford* web site has been redesigned in an attempt to make it *your* source for user friendly, current information on land use issues affecting our county. We have news, links to take you to various Harford County web sites such as new legislation, the News & Meetings calendar, and contact information for legislators to name just a few.

Our Legislative ScoreCard is now on line. Look us up at www.FriendsOfHarford.com.

This site will remain a "work in progress" with frequent updates and new features will be added soon. Have suggestions? We would love to hear your ideas.

A Better Way of Doing Business

As *Friends of Harford* joins 25 organizations represented on the Zoning Review Work Group, we are searching for a better way of building communities.

Gloria Moon will represent FOH backed by Pat Barth as an alternate in the group assembled by Executive Craig and County Council President Boniface to help guide the zoning code revision. We are looking to other volunteers to study the issues inside Friends of Harford and give those ideas to Gloria and Pat. Will you help?

It is a new opportunity to plan housing with shared, usable open space (remember the corner lot that was used for pick-up baseball games). Wetlands must be protected without intensifying the use of adjacent lands.

When land is not covered by buildings and macadam, the rain water is allowed to be absorbed and replenish the ground water. In turn, this protects our water supply and the Chesapeake Bay. Specific legislation is long overdue to safeguard our water sources.

Well-planned mixed use areas can support communities without complete dependency on cars. Walking and running paths support a new way of life. Planning now can prevent slums later.

A solid Transfer of Development Rights program could save the entire industry of agriculture in Harford County. Farmers could voluntarily sell their building rights for a market price. These rights could then be applied within the Development Envelope to areas which the County Council has

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deemed are appropriate for upzoning.

Schools should not be the last consideration but the first. Part of each Development Plan should include areas deeded to the County for parks or schools. They could be traded for a larger, more appropriate location if necessary.

People will continue to desire Harford County because it is a special place to live. **Now is the critical time to determine what we will not give away in the name of progress.** What is it we desire for our great grandchildren?

Call us (410-939-5629) or email us (comments@friendsofharford.com) to let us know if you would like to be part of our Zoning Review committee.

School Capacities - What Do They Mean?

The meaning of the term “school capacity” depends upon who is using it for what purpose. It changes because various regulations REQUIRE different definitions to be used. This conclusion was reached after discussions with several people including Mr. Joe Licata, Assistant Superintendent of Schools and Mr. Pete Gutwald, Director of Planning and Zoning. Both officials generously provided information and detailed explanations, and we greatly appreciate their assistance.

Definitions:

Capacity is the term used to specify how many students can be accommodated in one specific school before that school *as a whole* is considered overcrowded. There are different formulas for each grade level and for regular vs. special education students. Portable classrooms do not count in “capacity” and certain elementary school rooms are not counted as “capacity.” For example, a gymnasium is a “classroom” for middle and high school students but not for elementary students because other elementary students don’t use the

empty classroom when that class is in the gym. Mr. Licata has an excellent PowerPoint presentation that explains exactly how these calculations are performed for each school.

The methodology and criteria for calculating the State Rated Capacity (SRC) is specified by the Maryland State Department of Education. Maryland uses best educational practices to determine how many students at each grade level can be taught effectively in one classroom. Thus the state can – and does – change the criteria for calculating the SRC. When competing for public school construction funds, all counties MUST submit their requirements using the current SRC.

Harford’s Adequate Public Facilities ordinance (APFO) also addresses school capacity. When the APFO took effect, the APFO and SRC were in agreement. The methodology used by the APFO to calculate capacity are the same as for the SRC, but the criteria for numbers of students allowed per classroom are now different. The APFO numbers of students per classroom at each grade level are fixed by law (within the APFO itself) and have not changed since inception. These numbers are nicknamed “APFO capacities.” Harford uses them to determine whether or not to continue approving more Preliminary Subdivision Plans and during redistricting.

High School and Middle School capacity calculations.

For middle schools and high schools, both the current SRC and APFO specify 25 students per classroom. Procedures for calculating school capacity are also the same.

Special Education capacity calculations. The number of special education students is 10 per classroom in both the SRC and APFO, regardless of grade level.

Elementary School capacity calculations. While the APFO’s criteria for classroom capacity has never been changed, the SRC has been reduced for elementary schools. Current capacities are:

	Per Maryland’s SRC	Per Harford’s APFO
	(students/classroom)	(students/classroom)
Pre-Kindergarten	20	25
Kindergarten	22	25
Grades 1 through 5	23	25

There is a now a significant difference between elementary school capacity calculations made under the SRC and those made according to the APFO. For example, if a school has one kindergarten classroom and one each of grades 1 through 5, the SRC capacity would be only 137 while the APFO capacity would be 150.

Thus, even if this school is operating at exactly 100% of capacity as calculated by APFO (i.e., 150), it is already overcrowded by 9.5% according to the SRC’s best educational practices ($150 / 137 = 1.095 = 109.5\%$). When it is operating at 105% of APFO-calculated capacity (i.e., 105% of 150 = 158 students), then it is actually operating at 115 % of SRC capacity ($158 / 137 = 1.15 = 115\%$).

Additional factors affecting physical overcrowding.

1.) In addition to an entire school being “overcrowded” by definition, individual classrooms inside that school will be even worse. It is not possible for classrooms to be maintained exactly at full capacity, even though this is assumed by both the APFO and the SRC criteria. There is additional, inherent physical overcrowding because students within a school cannot be organized into neat, uniform-sized blocks. For instance:

In middle and high schools, individual

classrooms become overcrowded when more than 25 students need to take a particular course at a particular time. Courses like jazz band or AP Physics also require separate rooms even though fewer than 25 students may take the course; this means that some classrooms will have more than 25 students in order for the average number of 25 students per classroom to be maintained.

In elementary schools, while one classroom (say 1st grade) is under capacity another (say 4th grade) will be over capacity. But because excess 4th graders can’t just be moved in with 1st graders, the 4th graders’ classroom will be overcrowded.

2.) Significant amounts of new construction can overwhelm any school even when an APFO-triggered moratorium is in effect.

Conclusion: Elementary schools considered “barely full” under APFO criteria are significantly overcrowded when compared to the SRC’s best educational practices criteria. At 105% of APFO capacity the problem is considerably worse.

We are pleased to note that this concern is being addressed via legislation being introduced by Councilmen Guthrie and McMahan. As of this writing we do not have the results of the County Council vote on Bill 07-010. However, just check the *Friends of Harford* web page for up to the minute results.

Out and About

Look for the Green shirts worn by *Friends of Harford* members out in the County planting trees together, cleaning up our roads and parks and helping the County become a more beautiful place. For details and how to join us and get your free T-shirt, check out our web site, www.FriendsOfHarford.com.

Looking For Ways to Develop by F(orward)OH Thinking

- Stop thinking one must have "greenfields" cleared. This may be the cheapest way to develop, but it creates sprawl.
- Redevelop and reuse old unwanted properties, e.g., abandoned shopping centers. Let's get rid of the eyesores and use the land in an efficient manner since we can't grow more land.
- Start thinking inside the envelope.
- Work with owners of large parcels inside the Development Envelope to set aside land for uses other than housing while paying them the going rate for residential development.
- Consider Enhanced Use Leasing on APG for government buildings such as schools.
- Lease/Purchase property as was done with the new School Administration building in Bel Air for government buildings.
- Reduce the footprint of buildings to lower acreage requirements for the physical building while retaining the remainder in protected green areas. Consider increased building stories rather than one-story land-eating buildings.
- Lessen the acreage required for Elementary schools which is not used by the children or,
- Convert unused Elementary school land to add another school
- Use Parks & Recreation in conjunction with schools, co-using the one property.
- Require developers to set aside property within any development of 20 acres+ for schools (This would require long-range planning by P&Z where the developments would have contiguous set aside pieces of land joined to form a whole.)
- Any upzoning granted within the Development Envelope would require the

addition of land set aside for schools or a lands swap or a required fee-in-lieu based on the price of each developed lot price rather than current practice of only requiring bare land, undeveloped with no facilities price).

- Rethink acreage required for Middle and High schools with an eye to sharing land for different uses.

New "Friends of Aberdeen"

We choose to live in Harford County for good reasons...to escape the overcrowded urban landscape...to have a responsive, open government that shares our vision and fights to preserve our quality of life.

We believe in controlled and managed growth; not the unplanned, developer influenced growth that is robbing Harford County of its rural appeal.

Therefore, we will strive to work proactively with government officials at all levels to accomplish these goals.

This is our vision.

Who are we?

We are the newly formed citizen group the "Friends of Aberdeen" and we are pleased and honored to introduce ourselves in this edition of the *Friends of Harford* newsletter.

The Friends of Aberdeen is a volunteer organization formed by a diversified group of concerned citizens who live in and around Aberdeen, Maryland.

And, here are our roots...

In 2006, three Resolutions proposing annexation of a combined total of 846 +/- acres of land into Aberdeen was introduced by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Aberdeen. These resolutions known as Resolution 700-06 "The Wetlands", Resolution 702-06 "Robinhood

Road/Sherwood Lane” and Resolution 699-06 “Paradise Meadows” became the catalyst for unifying citizens in and around Aberdeen to oppose the annexations. This initial group of citizens became known as the “Aberdeen Annexation Opposition”, and fought the annexations because of the negative impact the annexations would have had on the quality of life for those living in and around the City of Aberdeen. Concern about Aberdeen’s lack of long-term strategic planning, water supply, overcrowded schools, tax rates, roads/traffic and preserving the small-town charm of Aberdeen were central to the group’s drive and commitment to defeat the annexations.

Resolution 702-06 (Robinhood Road/Sherwood Lane) ultimately failed due to issues with the water supply. However, Resolution 700-06 (The Wetlands) was approved by the Mayor and City Council of Aberdeen in June 2006, despite the R-1 zoning recommended by the Aberdeen Planning and Zoning commission, in a contentious Council meeting that was attended by more than 300 citizens and continued well over 4 hours. Citizen after citizen stood at the meeting and made impassioned speeches explaining why this annexation was not good for the city of Aberdeen or the residents. But the pleas of the citizens fell on deaf ears, and Resolution 700-06 was unanimously passed.

A petition was drafted by the citizens to take the issue to referendum vote. Concerned citizen volunteers walked the streets of Aberdeen in the extreme heat of the summer to get the message out – explaining point by point why the annexation was not good for the City of Aberdeen, nor the citizens and their families. The result of this grass-roots campaign was the collection of more than twice the number of signatures necessary to validate the petition and to earn the holding of a public election. Once the signatures were validated by the Harford County Board of Elections, a special election was scheduled on December 5, 2006 to let the citizens of

Aberdeen have a voice in the future of their city. On an unusually bitter cold and windy day, complete with snow showers, Aberdeen citizens – young and old – showed up at the Aberdeen Senior Center in extraordinary numbers to have their say. This time, the citizens of Aberdeen were heard loud and clear. Resolution 700-06 was rejected by a near 2 to 1 margin.

Members of the initial volunteer opposition group promised to remain united after the referendum vote, and through this commitment formed the Friends of Aberdeen.

The mission of the Friends of Aberdeen is to:

1. Be informed of governmental action that will impact the citizens of Aberdeen and the surrounding communities;
2. Educate the citizens of Aberdeen and the surrounding communities of proposed legislation that will impact the communities;
3. Promote ideas and legislation that will preserve and enhance the quality of life of citizens in Aberdeen and the surrounding communities;
4. Aggressively strive to defeat legislation that will degrade or destroy the quality of life for the citizens of Aberdeen and the surrounding communities;
5. Encourage and support currently elected public officials and candidates for public office who share the vision of the Friends of Aberdeen.

The Friends of Aberdeen meet monthly on the third Friday of each month, beginning at 7:00 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, April 20, 2007 and will be held at 401 Market Street in Aberdeen.

The Friends of Aberdeen can be contacted by calling 410.814.1671, writing to:
P.O. Box 125, Aberdeen, MD 21001-0125 or,
via email to:
concerned_citizen@friendsofaberdeen.com.