



Politicians Redux

They're back - all of them. Our congratulations to all of the County Council and the County Executive for their return to office by the voters. We look forward to working with them all again.

The office of the County Executive is the only term-limited job so this will be David Craig's last four years in this office. We've noted with other lame duck politicians that these final years tend to fulfill their true desires. If the officeholder is a true environmentalist, now is when aggressive and protective legislation will occur. If he is a developer's man, then development will gain more relaxed rules and regulations. The next four years will be a showcase of his goals and dreams for our future. We hope for the best and wish for total agreement.

On the last page of this newsletter, we will list our elected officials and the ways you may contact them. The County Council normally meets the first three Tuesdays of the month at 7:30 p.m. except during the summer. Some meetings start earlier with public hearings on legislation prior to the regular session. Meetings have moved to a new location since the current building is said to be uninhabitable and unsafe. The new location for the County Council meetings is at the Board of Education building Board Room on the first floor of the Harford County Public Schools' A. A.

Roberty Building located at 102 South Hickory Avenue in Bel Air. There is free parking after 5:00 p.m. across the street in the parking garage. The meetings are also televised on Harford Cable Network the following Wednesdays at 8:00 p.m. and Thursdays at 2:00 p.m. Attendance at the regular meetings is usually very sparse, but let a hot button issue pop up, and the chambers are full and rocking.

Considering that every County Council meeting has the potential to change the way the County does business with you, or for you, or to you, we can only wonder why more people do not attend. You should. Plain old apathy or just letting things slide by is easy. So is complaining about your problems. Get rid of all that by showing up and letting your County Council see you instead of wondering if you're watching or even really care. When you join together with your friends and neighbors you can make an important impact on the decisions being made in this County that will affect you. We all need support at times and by working together we can make a difference.

On the State Level Some Changes

Again, congratulations to all the winning candidates, most of whom were in office during the last term. As the U.S. Government becomes more involved with the way Maryland protects its resources, the job of safeguarding the Chesapeake Bay, our forests and water resources will be filtered down to the state and county levels.

Apparently, the inaction and demonstrated lack of political will to ensure compliance with established safeguards to protect our natural resources has necessitated new Federal regulations being imposed.

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Maryland's economy must have the best possible quality land, water and air to attract and maintain jobs. Any further degradation of the Chesapeake Bay could seriously impact many areas of employment.

Many of the Federal positions are filled by former Maryland officials who were in the forefront

with Smart Growth initiatives. Now we are seeing some top down protection for a resource that is valuable not just to Maryland and its surrounding states, but to everyone much like the Grand Canyon and other beautiful natural resources belongs to all of us.

Water

Carol Nau

Water – clean, fishable and swimmable.

That was the requirement of the Clean Water Act passed back in the 1970's. Unfortunately, our local waters aren't clean. Today, after many attempts to improve on the quality of the water from our neighborhood streams to the Chesapeake Bay, we have an opportunity to try again. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has put waters leading to and including the Chesapeake Bay on a pollution diet. The Maryland Department of Environment and the Department of Natural Resources have delivered a high-level statewide diet plan. Over the next several months, each County will need to prepare the detailed actions it will take to implement the diet. We can point fingers at the farmers, developers, commercial enterprises, our sewer systems and our local wastewater treatment plants for causing our waters to be loaded with nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment. The counties deserve the criticism, the increased oversight and will need to be held accountable; however, there is another group that is to share in the blame – the rest of us.

It is our responsibility to do our share in 'Cleaning Up the Bay' by taking care of our own back and front yards! This could be the easiest New Year's resolution you can make – it only requires you stop over-fertilizing your lawn, wasting water, and causing trash to reach our creeks and streams! It is that easy.

Most bags of chemical fertilizers contain nitrogen, phosphorus, and potash. The labels list these; for example 10-8-2, 10 is the percent of nitrogen, 8 the percent of phosphorus, and 2 the percent of potash in the bag (the rest is filler). In most cases your lawn doesn't

need this mix. In fact, most of the land in Harford County is high in phosphorus. You can take a soil sample to find out exactly what your lawn does require and you should do this if you are starting a new lawn or garden. But for a general guideline all you need is one application of nitrogen, 1 pound per 1000 sq. ft. in the fall (between Labor Day and Halloween.) That's all – applying more just washes into our streams causing an excess of algae growth that dies reducing the oxygen levels required to support aquatic life.

One inch of water over a 10,000 sq. ft. area is 6,000 gallons of water that's equivalent to 20 days of water for a family of four. Don't water your lawn. If you feel you must, then do it in the early morning (versus during the day when it will evaporate quickly or in the evening promoting disease), water it infrequently, slowly and deeply. That's all – applying more water just washes into the streams increasing the sediments that can clog fish gills.

Take a look at our local streams where trash litters the banks (Bynum Run Park is a sad example). Assuming you aren't tossing trash out the window of your car and onto your lawn, there are two common things that are happening. The newspaper left on the lawn and the pieces of trash the birds pull out of open trash cans eventually wash down the storm sewer. The storm sewers are not magic places where all things evaporate. Many storm sewers lead to streams! Please stop the newspaper if you aren't going to read it or just put it in your recycling bin. Stop the birds from accessing your trash – put a secure lid on it. That's all!

These three easy steps will help improve our

waters. If you want to do more there are a number of ways to help clean our streams.

In your own yard:

- Install rain barrels
- Plant native plants (they are often more tolerant of drought)
- Reduce the amount of turf grass by increasing the number of trees.

- Contact Harford County Extension Office Master Gardeners and enroll in the Bay Wise (<http://www.agnr.umd.edu/Extension/gardening/mastergardeners/local/Harford/Baywise%20Page.cfm>).

Join in the larger efforts to protect our County and to clean our streams. This year Harford County will be preparing/updating its Master Plan and preparing diet plans for our waters.

Stay informed and be involved in key decisions!

Attend local community council meeting (www.harfordcountymd.gov/CommunityCouncil/)

Join Friends of Harford (<http://www.friendsofharford.com/index.html>)

The Master Plan Is Coming

The County’s Master Land Use Plan along with the Land Use Element Plan is the policy showing where the County wishes to be approximately six to eight years from now. It is descriptive in nature, but includes

designations for land use in specific areas. It is the essential groundwork for all zoning and planning of public facilities.

It is the vision which holds together related plans: Land Use, Natural Resources, Historic Preservation, Rural, Transportation, Open Space, Land Preservation, and Recreation. It is the guideline for waste management, resource conservation, economic development and community services.

We’ll be in touch with everyone after the Master Plan & Land Use Element Plan has been presented to the citizens. As in 2002, Friends of Harford is concerned that everyone has the opportunity to read, understand, question, and comment on the Plan.

As it stands now, we believe the County’s Department of Planning & Zoning will bring it to the public for their comments sometime in

the early part of 2011. If this follows the path of the Comprehensive Rezoning process, only those public meetings where large numbers of people unite for or against a particular change will have an impact on what the Department changes when they officially send the plan to the County Council as legislation months from now.

The County Council is free to ignore or support or offer other changes to the future look of our County from what is presented to them by the Administration by way of Planning & Zoning Department.

For up to the minute news about what is

friendsofharford.com

You can:

- learn about land use, development, and upcoming changes (Master Plan!)
- discover the true meaning of strange terms (B3? DAC? variance?)
- ask for information and explanations (Can THAT really be built HERE?)
- read and forward electronic copies of this and past newsletters
- find easy links to County and State Government officials and other helpful resources
- pay your dues or make a contribution using Paypal (NO stamp !)

Have A Look

occurring, read our website, www.FriendsofHarford.com. We will keep all the news current for you. Don't wait for a newsletter, visit our website.

Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)

MDOT, headed by the recently appointed Secretary of Transportation, Ms. Beverley Swaim-Staley, oversees planning, capital projects, the budget, and overall operation of the departments and agencies for which it is responsible. MDOT may establish/abolish agencies as deemed necessary. Although others exist, there are six more commonly known subordinate agencies, five of which are largely taxpayer-financed through Federal, State and local funding. The sixth, MdTA, is the only agency designed to be self-supporting through toll facility revenues and bonds; however, interstate highway projects such as the JFK (I-95) are supported in part by Federal funding. See more at www.mdot.maryland.gov.

What Do All Those Maryland State Transportation Departments Do?

The most commonly known agencies that fall under the purview of MDOT are:

State Highway Administration (SHA): SHA is responsible for the Consolidated Transportation Program of capital projects; performs all routine maintenance such as snow and trash removal, system preservation and resurfacing of bridges and highways; addresses highway needs based upon traffic studies and statistics; installs traffic lighting, signage, sidewalks, plantings, sound barriers, etc. Plainly stated, SHA is the backbone of our highway system.

MD Transit Administration (MTA): The MTA provides and supports accessible rail and bus transit networks that are customer-focused, safe, appealing, reliable and effective throughout the State.

MD Port Administration (MPA) - MD's port is an outstanding model currently experiencing increased cargo shipments at its terminals indicating its successful role as a major player in the promotion and facilitation

of international trade within the U.S. It also provides economic opportunities for the State as evidenced by the recent increase in cruise ships.

MD Aviation Administration (MAA) - MAA owns and operates both Thurgood Marshall International (BWI) and Martin State airports. The MAA has general supervision over aeronautics within the State and may designate, design, establish, expand or modify airway systems that best serves the interests of the State.

Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) - Primary mission is to provide driver education, licensing, and permitting, as well as vehicle registration and licensing services. The MVA also promotes educational services for the safety of those who travel on MD roads.

MD Transportation Authority (MdTA) - The MdTA is responsible for the improvement, operation and maintenance of all State toll road facilities.

Read more on Transportation and Transportation Planning. Visit our website at: www.FriendsofHarford.com/transportation

MARYLAND TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

The Maryland Transportation Authority (MdTA), a sixth agency under MDOT, was tasked in 1971 with the responsibility for constructing, managing, operating and improving Maryland's toll facilities. Those facilities are the JFK Memorial Highway; the Francis Scott Key, Thomas J. Hatem, Harry W. Nice, and William Preston Lane (Bay) Bridges; the Baltimore Harbor and Fort McHenry Tunnels; and will include the ICC Connector when completed.

Unlike the other MDOT agencies, MdTA is funded primarily through revenues collected from EZ Pass, bridge and tunnel toll collections and through bonds. All maintenance and improvement of roads, bridges and tunnels under the management of MdTA, as well as all operating and administrative costs, are realized through those sources. Some projects may be supplemented with Federal funding such as the I-95 improvement program. MdTA has been tasked with the control and maintenance of MD's portion of this National Defense Highway. MdTA is also reimbursed

for services provided by their personnel when assisting other State agencies.

The MdTA, with its 1,700 employees, is governed by a 9-member Board, or Authority, which serves as MdTA's policy-setting, decision-making and governing body. (Reference Annotated Code of Maryland, Transportation Article, Title 4, Section 4-202) (available at michie.com) and Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), Title 11, Subtitle 07 (available at dsd.state.md.us).

The MdTA Board, as the executive body, is responsible for all actions taken by the MdTA. As with all State agencies, there is no right of appeal for discretionary decisions made by an executive body. The MdTA Board members do not receive a salary; however, the MdTA Board is compensated for participation in each meeting and for travel expenses.

In addition to the Chairman, the Authority consists of eight members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. The appointed members of the Authority may not be employees of the Executive Branch of the State government Authority and shall reflect the racial, gender, and geographic diversity of the population of the State. Of the appointed members:

- One shall have expertise in structural engineering
- One shall have expertise in transportation planning
- One shall have expertise in land use planning
- One shall have expertise in finance

The MDOT Secretary of Transportation, Ms. Beverley Swaim-Staley, serves as the Chairman of the MdTA Board.

Mr. Harold M. Bartlett, Deputy Secretary of MDOT, was appointed August 2010 to serve as Acting Executive Secretary to MdTA following the retirement of former Transportation Secretary Freeland. He will serve as manager of MdTA's operations until a new Executive Secretary is appointed. He also had over 20 years of experience with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

Board members consist of Mr. Peter Basso; Rev. Dr. William C. Calhoun, Sr.; Ms. Mary Beyer Halsey; Louise P. Hoblitzell; Richard C. Mike Lewin; Michael J. Whitson; and Walter E. Woodford, Jr., P.E. Board members serve a 3-year term with two members'

terms expiring each year. They may be reappointed.

Mr. Basso, appointed August 2007, currently serves as Chief Operating Officer and business development director for AASHTO. He had also served as CFO for US DOT as well as several other noteworthy positions.

Rev. Calhoun, appointed May 2007, has served 30 years as pastor of the Trinity Baptist Church of Baltimore, is an active civic leader, and a professor of urban ministry.

Ms. Halsey, appointed February 2008, is currently President and CEO of Cecil Bank and Cecil Bancorp, Inc. She was recognized as one of MD's 100 Top Women in 1996 and served on Governor's Task Force for Bank Charter Modernization in 1997.

Ms. Hoblitzell, appointed July 1983, is the longest serving member. She participates in community and civic activities and serves as a consultant for corporate financial communications. She is a past VP of Black & Decker as well as the MD National Bank.

Mr. Lewin, appointed August 2007, serves on the board of the East Baltimore Development Corp. He was a past secretary of MD's Department of Business and Economic Development and worked for Legg-Mason, among other areas.

Mr. Whitson, appointed May 2007, is currently President of Tri-County Abstract, Inc. He has been active and held high offices in the Sotterley Foundation, Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas Commission, CAC for Land Use Planning and Comprehensive Zoning, etc., and Charter Writing Commission in St. Mary's county.

Mr. Woodford, Jr., appointed July 1991, is a registered professional engineer, a community leader in Queen Anne's County, and is currently an independent consultant involving civil engineering projects, planning and zoning and traffic and site developments. He also worked as a chief engineer and deputy highway administrator for the State Highway Administration. He is a retired VP of the Rouse Company.

It is also noted that with the exception of Ms. Swaim-Staley and Messrs. Bartlett, Basso and Woodford, the other five members do not appear to have any background education or experience in the field of transportation although some do fill the other requirements.

Community Councils

Why wait til changes comes knocking on your door? Why not learn about it in advance or initiate it or oppose it? Ask your County for help with problem intersections, areas in need of more police presence, a neighborhood eyesore, a continuing zoning violation. Help plan the Master Plan for your neighborhood. Your Community Council is all about this - and more. Here's the list of the current ones and when they meet. If you live in an area where no Community Council currently exists, there may be a waiting list of neighbors waiting to form one when enough interest is shown.

- DARLINGTON/DUBLIN COMMUNITY COUNCIL Meets Regularly: 3rd Wednesday of every month (unless otherwise noted) at 7 p.m., Wilson Center, 1024 Main Street, Darlington. Note: There will be no meeting in July or August.

- EDGEWOOD COMMUNITY COUNCIL Meets Regularly: Meets the 2nd Wednesday of every month (unless otherwise noted) at 7 p.m., 1980 Brookside Drive, Edgewood.

- FALLSTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL Meets Regularly: Fourth Tuesday of every other month (unless otherwise noted) Fallston Fire Station Meeting Room, Carrs Mill Road, Fallston at 6:30 p.m. There will be no Meeting July or August. Note: If schools are closed due to inclement weather the meeting will be cancelled

- JOPPA/JOPPATOWNE COMMUNITY COUNCIL Meets Regularly: 1st Monday of every month (unless otherwise noted)- at 7 p.m., Joppatowne High School, 555 Joppa Farm Road, Joppa. There will be no meeting in July or August Note: If schools are closed due to inclement weather the meeting will be cancelled

- WHITEFORD, CARDIFF, PYLESVILLE, STREET COMMUNITY COUNCIL Meets Regularly: 3rd Thursday of every month -unless otherwise noted (No meeting in July or August) at 7 p.m. Highland Senior Center, 708 Highland Road, Street.

These communities have canceled Community Councils because not enough people are interested in joining: Aberdeen-Havre de Grace, Abingdon, Bel Air, Bush River, Emmorton, Riverside, Forest Hill, Jarrettsville, Norrisville. Show your community spirit

and reinvigorate them !

To join, Telephone the County at: 410-638-3355

Troubles? Drop us a line and let us know at comments@friendsofharford.com. We can help.

An Independent Auditor Is Coming

The County Council has now taken the first step in beginning the process of eventually appointing an independent auditor. This action has been recommended in the past by countless Budget Advisory Boards. Harford is the only Maryland County operating under Charter government without the benefit of an independent auditor. Friends of Harford heartily endorses the creation of this office.

The current practice is for the County Administration to hire an independent firm of certified public accountants who perform an annual financial and compliance audit for a Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. In addition to that firm, the County Executive has at his disposal the County's Budget and Management Research Division which he has charged with the responsibility for all fiscal planning. The County fiscal department assists in developing and publishing the operating and capital budgets and 6-year capital improvements program. "Throughout the year, the staff monitors and projects expenditure patterns, inventories budgeted staffing, approves fund transfers, provides analysis, conducts research and publishes reports for the County Executive, the Administration, and all other operating departments."

The County Council's independent auditor will be a certified public accountant who will have the authority for complete access to Harford County financial records. He may be able to perform an annual audit of all County government departments or for independent audits of specific interest per County Council instructions. Resolution 36-10, introduced at the request of County Executive Craig, establishes a temporary committee to outline the County Council auditor's responsibilities and allocate the resources necessary to support the position. The report will be finished by February 15, 2011 and be presented to the County Executive and County Council.

The newly created auditor position is intended

to be independent of the County Administration and any actions the County Council takes are to be exempt from Executive veto according to the County Charter. The Charter clearly underlines the division of power. It is critical that the separation of the two branches of government remain inviolate as intended by the County Charter. If the County Council is finally willing to have at its disposal its very own means of audit and advice, it should make the final decision as to the duties and responsibilities required in such a manner that upholds the intent of the County Charter and that will ultimately benefit the citizens of Harford.

Friends of Harford believes this position of Auditor will quickly pay for itself by discovering poorly planned spending and promoting a more efficient use of existing resources.

Your County Council

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Get to know them all, but especially the Council president and the Council representative for your District.

Another Element Plan

The most recent Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) was completed in 2005 and the Department of Parks & Recreation will be issuing a new plan in the next 12-18 months. As you may be aware, the LPPRP process and the guidelines for that process are established by the State. The State recently issued the guidelines and timetable for the current process. In the meantime, the 2005 Plan is available online at:
www.harfordcountymd.gov/parks_rec/LandPreservation/contents.html.

Earth Day

Harford will be celebrating the 41st anniversary of Earth Day on April 16, 2011 from 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. This marks the eighth year that Harford County has held its Earth Day celebration at Festival Park in Aberdeen located at 60 N. Parke Street in Aberdeen. Each year some 4,000 people from the local community come together to learn about sustainable agriculture, eco-friendly services and service providers, and participate in games and activities that focus on recycled/reusable materials. See you there at the Friends of Harford booth.

Baltimore Regional Transportation Board

Harford County has been active on the Citizens' Advisory Board for years. This Board meets monthly in Baltimore. Contact us if you need information or go to www.baltometro.org for a look at the group that provides us with transportation plans for the next 50 to 60 years.