

Committee Updates

Chesapeake College CAC

Report by Janet Boldyga...

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) met at Chesapeake College on March 27, 2008 at 6:30pm. The CAC is charged to create a community plan for an area surrounding Chesapeake College and the village of Wye Mills. The plan is to bring education, research, and employment opportunities to the citizens of Queen Anne's County (QAC) while protecting the rural agriculture, landscapes and natural and historic resources.

The Chairs of the meeting were Mary Kerr and Robert McCormick. The introductions and overview of what the committee hoped to accomplish was led by Facilitator, Jo Anne Ellison and Ben Sussman, a consultant, was available for technical guidance.

Helen Spinelli, Chief Community and Environmental Planner from the QAC Planning Office spoke of the draft document that was brought together in 2006 and how it now has the potential to expand. Ms. Spinelli reviewed the intent of the draft plan of 2006 and its' proposal to develop a Business and Employment Center, Professional Center (offices, sm. scale business), and a Community Service Center.

It was emphasized the new draft plan could take on a different approach and a different end result but the environmental resources will remain in place. Ms. Spinelli said the new draft plan could be an amendment to the updated Comprehensive

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Legislative Update!

BQA Board members Bob Waterman, Nick Deoudes, Karen Oertel and Al Helfenbein spoke before the **Eastern Shore Legislative Delegation** on issues related to business. (Critical Areas, Commercial/ Business Tax Revenue, Oyster Restoration)

Here are a couple of Bills that have caught the attention of Business Queen Anne's:

House Bill 1253

This bill would "authorize the Maryland Home Improvement Commission to deny, reprimand, suspend, or revoke home improvement licenses for failure to comply with specified requirements in the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area; authorizing the Home Builder Registration Unit to deny, reprimand, suspend, or revoke a homebuilder's registration or impose a civil penalty on a registrant for failure to comply with critical area legal terms and requirements; etc."

Mareen "Bob" Waterman, chairman of Business Queen Anne's, asked the legislators to oppose this bill as written and proposed several amendments.

Mr. Waterman was troubled that the proposal would allow the state to revoke a contractor's license. He was also concerned that the original bill called for a minimum 300 foot buffer.

While Business Queen Anne's is concerned about the Chesapeake Bay, Mr. Waterman was quoted in the March 28th *Star Democrat* as stating that "It's possible to over-regulate with the best of intentions."

House Bill 1253 bill was passed at the close of the session with several proposed amendments adopted including a 200 foot buffer. The Farm Bureau and the

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COMMITTEE UPDATES CONTD...

Plan that will be in the works shortly and should focus on jobs and economic issues.

Consultant Ben Sussman, presented an overview of the 2006 draft plan via CD and the committee of 14 interacted with questions and answers.

Facilitator, Jo Anne Ellison tasked the group to develop what they wanted to see in their vision of the new draft plan and bring it to the next scheduled meeting on April 17th at the Planning Office in Centreville. While developing their vision the committee was asked to keep a foundation of 8 visions as their guide, developed by the State of Maryland.

- o Development in a suitable area
- o Sensitive areas are protected
- o Growth directed to existing population center
- o Stewardship of the Bay
- o Conservation of resources
- o Economic growth encouraged
- o Adequate public facilities
- o Funding mechanism

In closing Ms. Ellison emphasized that the citizens are looking for their rural county to encourage agriculture, tourism, outdoor sports, industries and seafood so the quality of life is enjoyed by all.

BQA's Chesapeake College CAC Committee:

Mike Dahle, Janet Boldyga, Rich Graves and Tim Champion



Legislative Update continued...

Builder's Association endorsed the bill and Business Queen Anne's was pleased with the amendments adopted.

House Bill 1347

This bill would have "altered the fees of specified alcoholic beverages licenses issued in Queen Anne's County; altering the annual compensation for the chairman and members of the Board of License Commissioners"...

You may not have even heard of this bill due to the fact that it was withdrawn before it even went to the Senate. Three of your Business Queen Anne's Board Members, Nick Deoudes, Mike Katinas and Karen Oertel, called local representatives to stress the negative impact this would have on local restaurant and bar owners.

For more information on the bills before the General Assembly, visit <http://mlis.state.md.us/#bill> which helps you look up bills by their number or sponsor.

MORE COMMITTEE UPDATES

Commercial Zoning Committee

(Nick Deoudes, Karen Oertel, Cheryl Russell, & John Wilson)

At the March board meeting, Nick Deoudes reported that this committee agreed the best way to approach the Commissioners regarding the need for more commercial zoning was to outline how commercial zoning would benefit the county. More commercial zoning leads to an increase in the commercial tax base. Presently, home owners have to bear the weight of new taxes which are inevitable if there is no commercial growth. It's all about balance.

Master Water & Sewer Fee Plan

(Bob Waterman, Al Helfenbein & Tim Champion)

At the last board meeting, Bob Waterman reported that this committee met last month and is working on their recommendations to the county. If you have any thought on the Master Water and Sewer Fee Plan, please contact Bob by emailing him at mareenwaterman@mris.com

If you are interested in serving on a committee, please contact the office at 410-643-6288.

Letters from the Chairman

The following letters went out in the month of March from Business Queen Anne's Chair, Mareen Waterman on behalf of the board.

John D. Porcari, Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 8755
Baltimore, MD 21240

Dear Secretary Porcari:

We were pleased to see recently that the Maryland Transportation Authority had cancelled the Bay Bridge Walk for 2008 and 2009.

WE WRITE TO SUGGEST IT BE CANCELLED PERMANENTLY.

This event causes massive Governmental expenses, borne, of course, by the taxpayer.

An unknown number of work hours by authority employees must be devoted to the planning and promotion of this event.

The cost of buses has to be mega dollars (not to mention the carbon emissions they generate, as well as carbon emissions by automobiles bringing the participants to/from the parking lots from their distant residences).

The cost - again borne by taxpayers - of other involved agencies is substantial.

The Coast Guard, the Maryland Marine Police, Department of Homeland Security, the Maryland State Police, Transportation Authority Police - all are involved.

We believe (based on reports we've received), that Secret Service, F.B.I. and possibly C.I.A. employees are present at this function.

In addition to these costs, Bridge tolls are significantly reduced.

The traveling public is tremendously inconvenienced by the reduced capacity of the Bridge, and traffic usually backs up for several miles, impacting the ability of local police, fire and E.M.T. services to get where they are needed.

The Honorable Martin O'Malley
Governor, State of Maryland
State House
Annapolis, MD 21410

Dear Governor O'Malley:

Newspapers report there is an ongoing study reference a ferry system for Chesapeake Bay.

News reports state, a "test" will cost 1.7 million for 9 months. The proponents say the system as proposed will carry 75 passengers (no vehicles).

They say a test in May reports the trip from Annapolis to Kent Island took 22 minutes - the article doesn't say whether this was on a "flat calm" day or if heavy seas were encountered.

Severe winter weather would make the trip longer, more uncomfortable and less likely to be used.

Assuming we had a winter such as we have had in the last 20 years, an icebreaker would be needed on a daily basis for much of the winter.

Once passengers reached Annapolis, where would they go? Surely very few would walk to offices in bad weather, and the City's bus system can't handle an extra 75 passengers disembarking at the same time headed for different destinations. The taxpayer might have to foot the bill for extra busses to carry these people to their destination.

The costs to taxpayers would be prohibitive.

Both letters are signed by the BQA Chairman...



Mareen D. Waterman



The recurring theme in both letters is the impact on the taxpayers. BQA strongly encourages our government to be fiscally responsible.

BUSINESS Queen Anne's
2008 Board Members

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**BQA Board Goes Before Commissioners
Regarding Sprinkler Systems Bill**

Several members of the BQA Board spoke out against a proposed bill that would require automatic sprinkler systems in all new one- and two-family houses built in Queen Anne's County. They argued that it would "increase the cost of homes and it would mandate more government interference in people's lives" as reported in the *Star Democrat*.

Mike Dahle expressed at the March BQA board meeting that he felt that the input from Business Queen Anne's helped delay this bill as the commissioners agreed to keep the record open for written comments for another week.

Business Queen Anne's supports the idea of all home builders including sprinkler systems as an option for those purchasing a new home.



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