



# Government Update



**ADVOCACY**

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# Wicomico County Legislative Issues

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Congratulations to our very own RPAC Chair, former Past President, and newest member of the Wicomico Water/Sewer Technical Advisory, Austin Whitehead!

He'll have an integral role in the future of Wicomico County's water/wastewater management programs and projects. Congrats again Austin!



# Wicomico County Legislative Issues

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Wicomico Council:

- No meetings this upcoming week

Salisbury Council: 03/23

- Both a work and legislative session, no items directly concerning land use or real estate.



# Wicomico County Candidates

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The filing deadline has passed, and the list below are the complete list of filed candidates:

County Exec: Julie Giordano; Ernest Davis  
District 1: Bernadette Cannady; Shanie Shields  
District 2: Jim Adkins; Patrick Adkins; James Winn  
District 3: Habacuc Petion; Tony Hilligoss  
District 4: Aaron Guy; Erin Patterson; Bobby Lee Leath, Jr.  
District 5: Aaron Sadberry; Ben Jordan; Joe White  
District 6: Sarah Ashley; Michael Houck  
District 7: Megan Outten; Joe Venosa



We will conduct interviews on April 6, 7, and 9

Districts 1-4 on the 6<sup>th</sup>, 5-7 and the executive on 7, and have 9 if anyone were to not be able to attend the earlier days.

We'll being the 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> at approximately noon and end at 4:30. I'm still trying to finalize responses from candidates and get their questionnaires in. As they confirm their times I'll try to get a list as soon as possible.





# Somerset County Legislative Issues

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Somerset Commissioner Candidates are as follows:

District 1: Eugene Colborn; Craif Mathies Sr.

District 2: Rex Simpkins; Darryl Webster

District 3: Michael McCready; Eldon Willing

District 4: Bryant Owens

District 5: Randy Laird; Ricky Thomas



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# Worcester County Legislative Issues

## Worcester STR Update

On March 3rd, 2026, the Worcester County Commissioners passed Bill 26-01. By doing so, dwelling structures built after April 17th, 2026, will need an additional parking space (three) in order to be used as a short-term rental. All existing dwellings in Worcester County can be used for short-term rental purposes so long as they meet the County's STR requirements.

This law applies to **unincorporated Worcester County** only, municipalities, Homeowners Associations, Condo Associations, or other governing bodies may have additional requirements for Short-term Rentals.

Two main sections of the code pertaining to STRs in unincorporated Worcester are below.

[§ ZS 1-351 Short-term rentals](#)

[§ TR 2-106 Rental licenses.](#)



# Worcester County Legislative Issues



## Ocean City Update

The moratorium on STRs in the R-1 and MH zones has been repealed and homeowners in those districts may apply for a rental license. There is, of course, several regulations that rental applicants must adhere to, including having an inspector on-site to review the unit's compliance with the Town's code.

A comprehensive plan legislative session will be held at 6PM next Monday; language regarding nonconformity has been largely amended after work session to be less penalizing to property owners in town.



# Worcester County Legislative Issues



## Ocean City Update

Peter Buas and Jeff Heiser will face off during an April 21<sup>st</sup> Special Election for a vacant town council person position.

Voting will take place at 4001 Coastal Highway, Ocean City MD (Roland E. Powell Convention Center).

March 31<sup>st</sup> is the deadline to register to vote in Ocean City. Registration can be done with the Worcester County Board of Elections; they can be reached at 410-632-1320.



# Worcester County Legislative Issues



## Snow Hill Update

Edward Lee will and Ethan Shockley will face off for a Snow Hill councilperson seat on May 5<sup>th</sup>.

Voting takes place at the Snow Hill train station.



# Worcester County Legislative Issues

## Worcester Candidates

District 1: Caryn Abbott; Laura Morrison; Shaun Shockley; Wayne Taylor

District 2: Roxie Dennis; Diana Purnell

District 3: Eric Fiori; Tim VanVonno

District 4: Ted Elder; Steve Green; Virgil Shockley

District 5: Chip Bertino; Joe Schanno

District 6: Sherrie Clifford; Lou Taylor

District 7: Joe Mitrecic

Districts 1-3 will be on April 13, the remaining will happen the 14<sup>th</sup>.

There is a Worcester County Budget hearing during the week of April 13<sup>th</sup>, some of the candidates are unable to attend during that time. I am working on alternate time.



# Worcester County Legislative Issues

Ocean City meets next Tuesday  
Berlin, Pocomoke City, and the Snow Hill Planning  
Commission meet next Monday

Budget hearings are beginning to pop up on  
agendas, meetings will become more frequent as  
governing bodies look to complete their FY27  
budgets.



# Major Investor & RPAC



The Association hosted its Major Investor Appreciation Dinner last week and it was a resounding success. We following the event, the **Coastal Association has a record 34 Major Investors!!!**

Please, if you would like to know more about RPAC and Major Investor, reach out to me directly. Our remaining goal is membership participation rate.

On the following slide is a list of Major Investors. Thank you to all who participate!!! I am extremely excited and cannot emphasize enough how our consistent high participation in RPAC reflects so strongly on the work done by our Association.

GOLDEN R	CRYSTAL R	STERLING R	STERLING R (con't)	PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE
Grace Masten	Tim Arnett	Veronica Bishop	Joni Martin Williamson	Grace Masten
	Lauren Bunting	Joe Brach	Mia McCarthy	Bernie Flax
	Kevin Decker	Kate Deckenback	Mac McGraw	Austin Whitehead
	Bernie Flax	Bilonna Dilling	Steve Parsons	
	Darron Whitehead	Jay Doaty	Carol Proctor	
	Joe Wilson	Diana Dovel	John Rego	
		Cameron Drew	Jenny Sheppard	
		Bethany Drew	Leslie Smith	
		Greg Erdie	Frances Sterling	
		Kim Heaney	Brigit Taylor	
		Debora Hileman	Mike Weisner	
		Hunter Isaac	Austin Whitehead	
		Chris Jett	Jessica Ziegler	
		Brandon Johnson		

# Session Update

Number & Name	Position	Status
<a href="#">HB 239 (SB 36) Land Use - Zoning - Limitations (Starter and Silver Homes Act of 2026)</a>	Support 5	In Committee
<a href="#">HB 548 (SB 325) Land Use - Permitting - Development Rights (Maryland Housing Certainty Act)</a>	Support 5	Passed Second Reading with Amendments
<a href="#">HB 774 (SB 462) Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause Termination (Good Cause Eviction)</a>	Oppose 5	In Committee
<a href="#">HB 778 Land Use - Middle Housing Options - Requirements</a>	Support 5	In Committee
<a href="#">HB 894 (SB 389) Land Use - Transit-Oriented Development - Alterations (Maryland Transit and Housing Opportunity Act)</a>	Support 4	Special Ordered (3/20)
<a href="#">HB 1029 (SB 691) Real Property - Termination of Residential Real Estate Contracts - Contingency Clauses</a>	Support 5	Passed Second Reading
<a href="#">HB 1132 Condominiums and Homeowners Associations - Resale Contracts - Notice Requirements (Keeping Affordable Housing Affordable Act)</a>	Support 5	Passed Second Reading with Amendments
<a href="#">HB 1175 Land Use - Residential Housing - Oversight, Regulation, and Taxation (Building Affordably in My Back Yard Act)</a>	Oppose 5	Hearing Cancelled
<a href="#">HB 1213 State Transfer Tax - Rate - Alterations (Housing Affordability for Buyers and Sellers)</a>	Oppose 5	In Committee
<a href="#">HB 1260 Common Ownership Communities - Online Publication of Resale Disclosures</a>	Support 5	In Committee
<a href="#">HB 1460 Landlord and Tenant - Investor-Owned Single-Family Rental Property - Landlord Requirements</a>	Oppose 5	In Committee
<a href="#">SB 267 Land Use - Residential Housing - Oversight and Approval (Building Affordably in My Back Yard Act)</a>	Oppose 5	In Committee
<a href="#">SB 814 Residential Property - Service Agreement - Defunct Service Providers</a>	Support 5	Passed Second Reading
<a href="#">SB 747 (HB 469) Condominiums - Unit Owner Responsibility for Damage or Destruction and Mandatory Insurance Coverage</a>	Support / Amend 2	Passed Second Reading

Monday is Crossover Day and the General Assembly is beginning to have extended sessions. Monday will be a good indicator of where MR's legislation lies. To read the priority report, [click here](#). To read the full report of all legislation we've reviewed, [click here](#).

Unless special measures are taken, any bill that does not pass third reading by Monday and are not sent to the opposite chamber at Midnight are unable to become law.

Please reach out if you have any questions about what each of these do.



# Lower Shore Candidates

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[Please use this link to see candidates who have filed for election in State and Local elections.](#)

I have been monitoring this site in preparation for this upcoming election year. This is updated twice a day and more have filed in the past few weeks as we approach the filing deadline in February.





# Comptroller and DHCD Housing Update

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The Maryland Comptroller, Brooke Lierman, presented her office's Housing portion of the State of the Economy, [linked here](#).

In it are key findings pertaining to Maryland's housing economy, including an acknowledgement of the 100,000 unit shortage in the state, potential reasonings behind that shortage including rising costs of materials and labor (Maryland cost of building exceeds the national average), stagnant permitting (neighbor states and states with high growth outpace Maryland in single-family and multi-family permitting), among other data points.

One analogy the report draws is to the Smith Island Cake, where the process to obtain the necessary permits to development is similar to our Somerset attraction's layers of cake and fudge.

Suggestions include expanded townhome zoning, residential development in commercial zones, ADU implementation, building code reform, among others. Certainly an interesting read and I'll have a summary of it next week!





# DHCD Housing Needs Assessment for 2026

[Click here to read the full assessment.](#)

DHCD put their housing needs assessment out this past week – here are a few key takeaways:

- Maryland needs about 590,000 new housing units by 2045 to meet projected demand
- The cost burden for renters has increased from 33% since 2000 to 46% since 2022.
- Homeownership is increasingly out of reach for moderate-income households; only 49% could afford the median home in 2022, down from 75% in 2000.
- For every 1,000 renters earning 0–30% of Area Median Income (AMI), 610 affordable homes are missing.
- The lower shore has an average of 20% - 55%+ of its renters are cost burdened.
- Total annual permitted units has been halved since 2000.

Maryland's housing shortage is multifaceted, and DHCD will be bringing forth legislation this Session to remedy the worsening inventory shortage for our state. This is a very interesting read and I'm happy to discuss further!

