



Government Affairs Newsletter

November 22nd

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LOWER EASTERN SHORE ACTIVITY

Hi All,

Lot of things happening around the shore. We'll take a look at density in Salisbury, the Salisbury Comprehensive Plan, R-1, Windmills, and a look ahead for the next couple of weeks.

Big shout outs to Mike Wiesner, Lauren Bunting, Joe Wilson, and Chris Mitchell this week. Mike has been instrumental in bringing me up to speed with Salisbury issues. Lauren gave a resounding statement at the R-1 hearing on Tuesday along with Chris who did a wonderful job of articulating the current enforcement ordinances. Joe ran a great public hearing for R-1 as well. Thank you guys and to everyone who's been active this week!

I wanted to mention Jay Doaty for connecting me with Ben Jorden and helping me have Ben, Mike Dunn, and Amanda Pollack come in last week.

I also have to thank Cameron for being a great committee chair and keeping tabs on me.

Thank you all and as always, suggestions and feedback are always welcome. Also, let me know what you're hearing in your areas.

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Board of Public Works

WINDMILLS

Last Wednesday, the Board of Public Works (BPW), which is comprised of Maryland's Governor, Treasurer, and Comptroller, met to discuss U.S. Wind's purchase of a West Ocean City pier.

The Tidal wetlands permit which they were seeking was approved. This permit is only for the construction of this pier which is to be extended and not for the construction or maintenance of the actual offshore wind project.

With the approval of this permit, U.S. Wind can begin their pier project needed to support and maintain the offshore wind project.



Worcester County

R-1

The R-1 and MH rental changes were heard on Tuesday before the P&Z Commission. There was a lot of local support against the ordinance, largely against the length-of-stay restriction.

The Commission had questions on the LOS change, the blanket change to occupancy, the police calls and the enforcement of calls vs. citations, the term “local agent”, and the appeals process for license holders. I tried to address each of those but my message was that we want to work with them on this issue.

The Commission and Town Council & Mayor have a duty to protect the character and quality of life for full time residents as it is a part of their comprehensive plan. The P&Z Commission will deliberate for another week and a half and give their recommendation at their next meeting. They’ll either have a favorable, unfavorable, or make amendments and from there, the Mayor and Town Council will review it over a series of first, second, and third readings.



Worcester County

OTHER COUNTY NEWS

Berlin's P&Z Board approved the plan for a new "micro-hotel" by Wyndham. This will be 78 units and sit off of Route 113 across from Berlin Intermediary School. If this sounds familiar, its because this hotel will be couple blocks from where I'm typing this newsletter.

Also, Berlin Mayor and Council meetings will begin at 6PM, a change from their previous meeting time of 7PM.

Worcester County is holding a public hearing on December 3rd at 10:30AM to change water and waste water rates in Assateague Point, Edgewater Acres, Landings, Lighthouse Sound, Mystic Harbour, Newark, and Riddle Farm.



Wicomico County

COUNTY UPDATE

HORIZON Tax:

A public hearing was held before the county council last week. On December 3rd, the council will form a decision on whether to sunset or keep this tax credit program.

Salisbury Planning and Zoning:

Last Thursday, at 1:30PM in the Government Office Building, the P&Z Board had a public hearing addressing downtown density. They were considering increasing density in the Central Business District (CBD) from 40 to 80 units per acre.

The P&Z Commission gave a favorable recommendation to increasing the density from 40 to 80 units per acre in the CBD. It'll go before the Mayor and Town Council for them to review and vote on the code change.

Much of the opposition centered around parking and that increasing density will reduce available parking for those in and visiting the CBD. Additionally, there were concerns about whether or not developers had a duty to address the impact of a denser CBD, like parking. Currently, many of the parking lots in use today have been sold (I believe 15% of the lots in use have not been sold).

From a sewer perspective, staff stated that this density change would not impact sewer and water services in a concerning manner. Also, because we're in a critical area and the current comprehensive plan for the city does not recommend overdevelopment in a critical area, this would be counter to the city's plan. Staff stated that current building policies are more environmentally stringent.

Testimony began with supporters of the increased density and was led off by a representative from DHCD. She shared that the State will be doubling its investment into Salisbury to \$1 million.



Wicomico County

COUNTY UPDATE

Comprehensive Plan:

The October, 2024 draft of the Salisbury comp. I will be sending a condensed version of this to you all. Expect a public version to be available in mid-December. Plan can be found [here](#).

Here's a link to a survey the City put out which allows for public input.

This is just a draft, but I've been looking through it and wanted to highlight a few items for you all. The "Housing" section begins on page 46.

Page 54: Housing Goals. These are the goals the consultants suggest guide policy for Salisbury.

Page 55: Housing Strategies.

- Remove the 4-2 Ordinance.
- Access for ADUs.
- Homeownership incentives.
- Implement rent control.

Page 56: Housing Strategies.

- Develop a comprehensive housing policy.
- Prepare for population growth.

Page 57: Housing Strategies.

- Encourage Housing renovations (incentives).
- Integrate small-scale businesses (more mixed use).

Still has not been presented to the City, but I suggest we go through each piece in preparation for its eventual presentation.



Somerset County

SOMERSET COUNTY UPDATE

I'm not seeing news in Somerset.



Other News

BAY BRIDGE

Maryland Transportation Authority is having two public hearings, one in Anne Arundel County at Broadneck High School on December 9th and the other at Kent Island High School in Queen Anne's on December 11th. There'll be a public hearing online on December 4th as well. I had seen different news articles on how the state will go about this, but it seems that the state has decided to build new spans, the tear down the old ones. The goal is to expand the lanes crossing the bay from five to upwards of ten and raise the height of the bridge to allow larger ships to navigate up the bay. It's currently slated to be built in "corridor 7" which is almost exactly where the existing bridge is.

This is very much a long-term plan, but it is something to keep an eye on as it could increase access to the lower eastern shore and a smoother flow of traffic can be desirable for vacation goers.

Written Comments can be submitted here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9897TPK>

Virtual Meeting Link:

<https://baycrossingstudy.com/>

A link to the study is here:

https://baycrossingstudy.com/images/public_meetings/2024-

[12/BCS Dec 2024 Open House Boards 40x30 rd40 WEB PQ.pdf](https://baycrossingstudy.com/images/public_meetings/2024-12/BCS Dec 2024 Open House Boards 40x30 rd40 WEB PQ.pdf)