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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

DATE: 04/07/2024

WORCESTER COUNTY:

Pocomoke City: Elections on 4/3 led to new faces for the city council. Brooke Cottman won district 4's vacant seat and in the race for District 5, incumbent C. Esther Troast lost her bid for reelection against CL Marshall.

Ocean City: Members of the Ocean City Planning and Zoning Commission discussed topics such as parking and pyramidal zoning within the working planning document. A final public ready product will be ready the end of June.

Berlin: The town council has expressed a desire to curb further development in the town and to bring the county government into line for making sure their goal of "controlled development" is attained.



WICOMICO COUNTY:

Salisbury: The city council is moving forward with the sale of Mitchell Landing Apartments despite Mayor Taylor's objection. The mayor has objected to the low price for the property. The mayor and developer, Green Street Housing head Dave Layfield have been at odds over the future of this project since the campaign last year.

MARYLAND: The Maryland General Assembly will be ending its 2024 session on 4/8/2024. The late in session agreement between the house and senate over the budget has narrowly avoided a special session. The general assembly also avoided several major tax hikes but they will return next session. This Saturday a slew of renter's rights bills were passed by the Senate.

House Bill 693, known as the Renters' Rights and Stabilization Act, would create an Office of Tenants and



Landlord Affairs in state government to help tenants know what protections they have under Maryland law and what legal actions they can take to defend themselves, along with other measures. An amendment to the bill will raise the cost of eviction to \$43 from the previous \$8.

HB 538 also received Senate approval Saturday afternoon. It aims to incentivize developers to add affordable housing options in future developments and would allow certain development projects to exceed typical density limits if the new development incorporates a certain percentage of affordable housing units.

HB 599 Would create the Maryland Community Investment Corporation, a state entity that would make loans or investments aimed at developing and improving low-income communities.

HB 1117 The bill is called the Tenant Safety Act and would make the escrow process more accessible to renters when landlords do not adequately address life-



threatening repairs, by enabling tenants to file a complaint with the local district court and put rent payments in escrow while the complaint is adjudicated.