

## **HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL**

Minutes (approved, 11/19/07)

Monthly Meeting

November 13, 2007

The chair called the meeting to order at 12:35 p.m. on November 13, 2007.

Members present on call to order: Calvin Ball, Greg Fox, Mary Kay Sigaty, Courtney Watson, and Jen Terrasa.

Council member Jen Terrasa reported that MACo's Legislative Committee voted to support Governor O'Malley's proposed package for managing the projected State deficit. Responding to questions about MACo's support of the \$500 million in spending cuts proposed by the House of Delegates, Ms. Terrasa said that MACo's committee met before that proposal was made and, therefore, did not take a position on it.

Council member Greg Fox outlined some of NACo's lobbying priorities for federal legislation and budget.

Council Administrator Sheila Tolliver updated the Council on staff activities and progress in making changes in the technologies used for recording and signing-in to speak. She invited members to make suggestions for the proposed Council budget request for FY 09.

County Auditor Haskell Arnold summarized audits and activities under way by his office and by the outside auditors.

Council member Mary Kay Sigaty introduced Megan Doherty, a student in the Visual Communications Academy at Atholton High School and an intern in Ms. Sigaty's office. Ms. Doherty displayed three options for a new, uniform design for Council business cards. The members indicated a preference for the design of Ms. Doherty and suggested some possible modifications. Ms. Doherty was asked to look at paper, color, and font options and to bring those options back to the Council.

Ted Meyerson, Chairman of the Sr. Tax Credit Task Force, presented the group's final report. He said that there were 1086 applications, 505 county credits including 170 county credits to people not qualified for state credits, 184 state credits without additional county credit, 300 applicants still waiting for replies from the state, 22 applicants who dropped out, 13 applications withdrawn, and 62 denied because they did not qualify. He projected the cost at less than \$500,000 in the first year. The Task Force recommended that there be no changes made to the program for at least one more year so that data may be collected on the results of the program. They also asked that the Task Force be continued to conduct further study.

Mr. Donald Dunn and Mr. Frank Chase presented minority reports, urging the Council to expand the credit.

Faron Taylor, who retired recently from the State Fire Marshall's Office, and Theresa Thompson, representing the Howard County Volunteer Firemen's Association, presented information

advocating a requirement for residential sprinklers in new construction. Ms. Thompson left a packet of information and a DVD presentation. She asked members to view it and to allow her and Mr. Taylor to return in December to answer questions.

Mr. Taylor cited statistics from Prince George's County, which instituted mandatory sprinklers in new construction in 1991. He reported that none of the fire fatalities in that county since that time were in homes equipped with sprinklers. He reported that there had been no firefighter injuries or fatalities in homes with sprinklers in that county since the requirement. He said that 80% of all fire fatalities occur in the home. He noted that Talbot, Prince George's, Montgomery, Carroll, Frederick, and Charles Counties require sprinklers in new home construction.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:50 p.m.