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CR 11-2016 Council Rules

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Today, 3:33 PM
CouncilMail

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Dear Howard County Council,

The proposed amendments to the Council Rules in CR 11-2016 are overly restrictive and will limit the operations of the Council more than is probably intended.

Rule 1.002 (b)(3) not only will prohibit hearings in December, but possibly in August as well. When the Council considered the emergency legislation last August it was introduced on a Wednesday with a hearing on Friday. If the Wednesday in future years falls on the last days of July, this provision will preclude a hearing on that legislation in August.

There is no exception in this provision either for emergencies or for a super-majority to allow for a hearing. Without more leeway, this provision will restrict the scheduling of emergency hearings or require other legislation to be filed just to allow for a hearing on the emergency bill.

In addition, there is no provision for a super-majority to allow for hearings in December.

The limitations on the meetings in December will preclude consideration of vacancies within 30 days as required by Sections 202(e) and 302(f) of the Charter. If a member of the Council or the County Executive were to be elected to other offices during a presidential election, it is possible that the individual might resign in November requiring a December appointment.

I hope that amendments will be considered to address these scenarios.

Sincerely,

Joel Hurewitz