



Howard County Council

George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043-4392

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Minutes (draft, corrected 5/7; amended 5/9- Approved)
Operating Budget Work Session
May 7, 2014

Members Present: Dr. Calvin Ball, Chairperson; Greg Fox, Mary Kay Sigaty, Jen Terrasa, Courtney Watson

Council Staff Present: Sheila Tolliver, Administrator; Craig Glendenning, Auditor; Audit Staff: Ed Shulder, Lisa German, Steve Peters, Jim Meyd, Ali Shirazie

Administration Budget Staff: Ray Wacks, Budget Director; Analysts: Brooke Mano, Don Stitely

The Chairperson, Dr. Calvin Ball, called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. in the C. Vernon Gray Conference Room. He called on Bob Ensor, Soil Conservation District, to begin.

Mr. Ensor explained that his is a continuation budget, with a single new position for reviewing soil conservation plans, for which inquiries have increased substantially because of the Stormwater Improvement Act.

Marsha McLaughlin, Director of the Department of Planning and Zoning, was joined by Lisa Hill, Administrative Analyst. Ms. McLaughlin described the DPZ budget as a continuation budget, including a new position to replace a person transferred out, funds to fill a vacancy, and one new position; four existing positions will be transferred to the Transportation Department. In response to a question about adequacy of staff, Ms. McLaughlin replied that vacancies held open during the recession now are being filled, making the staffing adequate for the jobs needing to be done.

In responses to questions, Ms. McLaughlin reported that:

- It would require additional staff people to cover presubmission meetings;
- The development monitoring report will be issued soon;
- Staff in land development review environmental concept plans, but they lack expertise in wildlife;
- The department has charged the fee in lieu of sidewalks, but the funds have been applied toward projects (comingled with other funds) in the appropriate geographic areas by DPW;

- Electronic submission of subdivision and site plans is working, with some improvements needed to resolve problems with workflow.

Mr. Fox mentioned his forthcoming legislation requiring information on the web, much of it from DPZ, to be in a searchable format.

Bob Francis, Director of the Department of Inspections, Licenses, and Permits was joined by Sarah Flaig, Operations Chief. Mr. Francis described DILP's budget as maintenance. He noted that the chargeback for technology was up significantly. The budget allows annualizing one position and filling a vacancy. He noted that he still is holding some pre-recession vacancies.

Jim Irvin, Director of the Department of Public Works, was joined by Mark DeLuca, Chief, Bureau of Environmental Services, and Karen Becker. He summarized new initiatives in the operating budget, including staff for new capital projects. In response to questions, he offered the following:

- With respect to the Stormwater utility, DPW is responsible for operations of the facility; they have MPDS permit approval; grants are administered by Jim Caldwell's staff; the challenge is that people think the funds are for flood control, but they actually are for Stormwater quality.
- The County probably will need to increase the Stormwater fee to achieve the 20% target reduction in pollutants.
- The schools and parks are a priority for projects initially; there are problems of access, maintenance, and continuity of ownership with projects on private homeowners' properties, but they are cooperating when asked.
- The Columbia Association (CA) has a robust program to improve stormwater quality for its own lands and provides assistance to homeowners in the Little Patuxent River watershed areas.
- Ray Wacks explained that there will be a budget amendment to eliminate the capital budget funding allowed for nonprofits, as these will be handled as paygo projects within the operating budget;
- Mr. DeLuca described efforts to control flooding, especially in Ellicott City; described a voluntary "streamwatcher" program; and noted difficulties associated with controlling the flooding in Allview.

Mr. Wacks confirmed that they are adding Allview back into the description for capital project D1124 and that work had not commenced on the project.

The budget work session was closed at 11:15 a.m.