



Howard County Council

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

COUNCILMEMBERS

Liz Walsh, Chair
District 1

Opel Jones, Vice Chair
District 2

Christiana Rigby
District 3

Deb Jung
District 4

David Yungmann
District 5

Meeting Minutes - Approved

Legislative Work Session
Monday, February 24, 2025
Hybrid Meeting (Virtual and In-Person Meeting)
Video Streamed on <https://cc.howardcountymd.gov/watch-us>
9:30 a.m.

The Work Session was called to order at 9:33 am.

Councilmembers present: Liz Walsh, Deb Jung, and David Yungmann.

Councilmembers absent: Opel Jones, Christiana Rigby.

Council Staff present: Michelle Harrod, Council Administrator; Christopher Ashman, County Auditor; Gary Kuc, County Solicitor; Amanda Mihill, Senior Assistant County Solicitor; Isaiah Anderson, Executive Assistant; Theo Wimberly, Administrative Manager; Nick Rinehart, Legislative Analyst; Jim Almon, Legislative Analyst; and Brenda Smith, Administrative Assistant.

Agenda

CR44-2025 - Introduced by The Chairperson at the request of the County Executive
Short Title: Easement and Amendment to Easement – 1.074 acres - Baltimore Gas and Electric – County Property - Rockburn Park

CR45-2025 - Introduced by The Chairperson at the request of the County Executive
Short Title: Easement – 0.0357 acres - Baltimore Gas and Electric – County Property along Church Ave.

Emily Iacchei, chief of Real Estate Services in Howard County Department of Public Works (DPW), was present to give an overview of CR44 and CR45-2025, along with staff from Baltimore Gas and Electric (BGE).

Sonya Harbaugh, Director of Strategy for BGE, introduced the other BGE staff present, and gave a presentation of the purpose and benefits of larger grid fiberoptic middle-mile infrastructure project that BGE is undertaking. She was assisted by Candace Butterworth, Senior Strategy Manager, Anthony Marshall, Senior Real Estate Representative, and Dan Fleming, Project Manager.

According to BGE, the benefits of the underground fiberoptic included improved capacity & resiliency, greater digital equity and affordability. Other topics discussed included an overview of the Investment Infrastructure and Jobs Act (IIJA) grant award received by BGE and other utilities nationwide, a route overview of the Grid Communications and Connectivity program, the specific sections the CR44 and CR45 easement requests cover, and reasons for the deviation requests.

Ms. Butterworth mentioned the Rockburn Park access is a “Critical Pathway” in meeting internet infrastructure connection, and additional reroutes would be very costly to BGE.

Further discussion and questions amongst Council members ensued. Topics included the factors that lead to increased BGE rates amongst Howard County ratepayers, additional construction costs of the project, offsetting costs for customers and shareholders, potential third-party internet providers and data centers, and meeting future electrifications and communications demand.

The Council requested:

- *Corporate financial disclosure information for BGE shareholders. BGE commented that this information will be disclosed through finalized period of performance with NDIA (2027).*
- *Amount spent by BGE on lobbyists to Maryland State Legislature.*
- *Status of Bills in Annapolis that deal with renewable energy projects and transmission lines.*
- *Total percentage of increased distribution rates.*
- *Information on benefits of underground reclosure networks.*
- *A copy of the letter of support from Howard County to BGE for the IIJA Grant Award, dated August 2022.*

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00pm.

Legislative Work Session - Participants
Monday, February 24, 2025

CR44-2025/CR45-2025

County Administration

Emily Iacchei – Real Estate Services, Howard County Dept of Public Works

BGE

Marche Taylor-Templeton - External Affairs Manager.

Sonya Harbaugh - Director of Strategy.

Danielle Gooden - External Affairs Manager.

Zachary Mitchell - Quality Control Manager for Gas and Electric.

Candace Butterworth - Senior Strategy Manager.

Lynn Fiery – Manager, Rate Administration.

Shaahin Bahmani – Business Manager, Commercial and Industrial.

Dan Fleming – Project Manager.

Anthony Marshall – Senior Real Estate Representative.

Jeff Templeton – Principal Business Program Manager.