



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

Minutes – Approved

Legislative Work Session

Thursday, November 20, 2025

Hybrid Meeting (Virtual and In-Person Meeting)

Video Streamed on <https://cc.howardcountymd.gov/watch-us>

9:30 a.m. – 12:30pm

Council Members present: Liz Walsh; Opel Jones; Christiana Rigby; Deb Jung; and David Yungmann.

Staff present: Michelle Harrod, Council Administrator; Gary Kuc, County Solicitor; Amanda Mihill, Assistant County Solicitor; Theo Wimberly, Administrative Manager; Isaiah Anderson, Executive Assistant; Melinda Massey, Fiscal Manager; and Owen Kahn, Fiscal Manager.

Administration and other witnesses present: Please see full list below.

Chair Walsh opened the meeting at 9:34 a.m.

Agenda

CB74-2025 (ZRA 217) - Introduced by The Chairperson at the request of the County Executive
Co-sponsor(s) David Yungmann

Short Title: (ZRA 217) Amending Agricultural Land Uses in Howard County

Representatives from the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ), the Administration, the Farm Bureau, and the Economic Development Authority (EDA) responded to questions from the Council on what amendments may be under consideration as a result of the public hearing; if sponsors would be supportive moving to table the legislation for consideration in January 2026; the rationale behind allowing festivals to be hosted on farm properties and the capacity of current farms to host festivals as defined in the proposed ZRA; the differences between small scale and large scale agritourism businesses and how definitions compare to other jurisdictions; if festivals could be differentiated from music festivals; how the public will react to agritourism concerts; potential amendments for driveways and shared driveways provisions; maintenance agreements and waivers for shared driveways that could be agreed to between property owners; public comments on potential noise enforcement and how compliance with existing noise limits could be enforced; the different roles DPZ and the Police Department play in enforcement, in particular at large scale events; how agritourism business owners might make use of the proposed changes; how the bill would affect the Manor Hill business and if passage of ZRA 217 would alleviate conflicts with existing zoning regulations; the State regulations governing farm brewery businesses and if State legislation is needed to strengthen enforcement of alcohol laws; and the status of Manor Lane.

- CB69-2025** - Introduced by The Chairperson at the request of the County Executive
Short Title: Amendment – Budget Ordinance – to strike a condition - L0020, New HCLS Central Branch & Relocation; and
- CR223-2025** - Introduced by The Chairperson at the request of the County Executive
Short Title: Central Library, Development Rights and Responsibilities Agreement (DRRA)

The Administration, the Howard County Library System, and the Housing Commission responded to questions from the Council on why CB69 was filed as emergency legislation; if the State grant funding expires if it is not spent by the County; the necessity of adjusting the FY2026 budget ordinance as opposed to proposing changes in the FY2027 budget; if constraints placed on capital funds expire at the end of each fiscal year; the role of emergency legislation as it relates to changes in adopted budget ordinances; the proposed amendments from housing advocacy groups that focused on the affordable housing provisions of the legislation and what the Housing Commission has planned for the land acquired; the DRRA's originally designated parcel and timeline for a new library and for housing; if the County can sign purchase and sale agreements before budget appropriations are available; if any of the whereas clauses in the legislation are legally binding; how the construction of a new library can affect long term library programming and County operating budgets; if the Council is supportive of construction of the new Central Branch Library at the Columbia Lakefront; when will an update be given on the TIF model and the updated expected operating costs for the new library; if the Howard Hughes initial schematic design remains the design plan for the new construction; how TIF funds can be generated and spent, including a priority on school projects; and ownership opportunities and the total number of affordable housing units in the proposed housing.

Council requested follow ups:

- *A written opinion from the Office of Law on the requirements for removing constraints on capital funds, including the number of votes needed during budget adoption.*
- *When available in March or April, an updated TIF model and how it would cover the debt service and operating cost of the library.*
- *Documentation that TIF money is spent on school construction as a matter of priority.*

- CR215-2025** - Introduced by Deb Jung
Short Title: Appointment – Andrea LeWinter – Board of Appeals
Title: A RESOLUTION appointing Andrea LeWinter to the Howard County Board of Appeals to fill a term ending on December 31, 2027

Ms. LeWinter responded to questions from the Council on potential professional conflicts of interest and the need for recusal on certain cases; how any potential future gas station cases would be handled; histories with conditional use cases; the ethical guidelines for Board of Appeals Members; what specific factors would result in a recusal for a case; how professional experience as a hearing examiner for Montgomery County would be relevant for a position on the Board of Appeals; how appeals of prior hearing examiners' decisions would be handled; if previous conversations about Board of Appeals cases had been held with Council Members,

hearing examiners, or Council staff; how any potential bias or external pressure would be handled; what community groups in Howard County may present a conflict of interest, including in a potential future Glenelg Country School case; if a recusal would be warranted in certain cases; and the independence of the Board of Appeals.

CR224-2025 - Introduced by Liz Walsh

Short Title: Amend Scenic Roads Inventory – Add portions of Old Frederick Rd and Main Street in Ellicott City

The Council reviewed a map of existing scenic road inventory and the proposed additions in Ellicott City. The Council discussed where existing scenic road designations end and where the proposed designations begin; if the proposed additions conform to scenic road requirements; and the criteria for scenic roads and how new development must conform with the scenic road requirements. Carolyn Parsa expressed the Sierra Club's position on the legislation. The Council reviewed a video of the roads proposed to be added to the scenic road inventory.

Chair Walsh adjourned the meeting at 12:30 p.m.

Legislative Work Session - Participants
Thursday, November 20, 2025

CB74-2025 ZRA 217

Lynda Eisenberg, Director of Planning & Zoning
Hannah Weber, Planning Specialist II
Julia Sauer, Planning Supervisor
James Zoller, Administrative Manager
Brian Shepter, Deputy Chief of Staff
Leslie Bauer, Farm Bureau
Jennifer Jones, Chief Administrative Officer – EDA
Kathy Johnson, Director of Agricultural Business Development - EDA
Cathy Hudson, Chair of Agricultural Preservation Board

CB69-2025/CR223-2025

Felix Facchine, Deputy Chief of Staff
Brian Shepter, Deputy Chief of Staff
Tonya Aikens, President & Chief Administrative Officer of Howard County Library System
Peter Engel, Executive Director – Howard County Housing Commission
Katie Parks, MEDCO
Jackie Eng

CR215-2025

Andrea LeWinter
Alex Andelsman, Government Affairs Manager – Maryland Building Industry

CR224-2025

Carolyn Parsa, Sierra Club