



**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND**

County Administration Building
100 West Washington Street, Room 226
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740-4834
Telephone (Voice/TTY) 240-313-2200
FAX: 240-313-2201

John F. Barr, *President*
Terry L. Baker, *Vice-President*
Kristin B. Aleshire
James F. Kercheval
William J. Wivell

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CONTACT: NORMAN BASSETT
240-313-2077**

**NEWS
RELEASE**

Review of Actions Taken in the Washington County
Board of County Commissioners Meeting
Tuesday, July 22, 2008



THE COMMISSIONERS VISITED SUMMER RECREATION CAMPERS AT MARTY SNOOK PARK AT THE NOON HOUR.

Over 400 campers from all of the Summer Play Camps operated by the Washington County Department of Parks, Recreation and Facilities gathered at Snook Park for the annual visit from the Commissioners on "Happy Campers Day".

CONTRACT AWARD: INTERGOVERNMENTAL PURCHASE OF NATURAL GAS FOR COUNTY FACILITIES

The Board of County Commissioners approved this item by unanimous vote. County Purchasing Agent Karen Luther and Les Lewis of Washington Gas Energy Services, Inc. (WGES) made a presentation to the Board regarding purchase of natural gas services for County buildings. The recommendation was to authorize the purchase of natural gas supply services from Washington Gas Energy Services, Inc. (WGES) of Timonium, Maryland, through a contract between the Howard County Public School System and WGES, at a Fixed Price of \$1.299/therm (\$12.29/Dth) to the "Delivery Point" for the period August 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009. Lewis told the Board that with the recent drop in oil prices to \$126/barrel, natural gas prices fell from \$1.44 per therm to the \$1.29 figure. On December 5th, 2000, the Board voted to piggy-back the State of Maryland contract for natural gas with WGES. It was anticipated that a contract with WGES for natural gas service in 2001 would result in net savings of a minimum of 10%-12%. The contract began in April 2001. Each year since then, the Board had renewed its contract with WGES based on the State of Maryland contract with WGES for natural gas. In 2006, the State relinquished the bid process to the University of Maryland. The Board as well as the Washington County Public Schools System agreed to intergovernmental cooperative purchases using the HCPSS's contract. The award made in July 2007 was \$0.7910/therm (\$7.910/Dth) to the "Delivery Point" for the period July 1, 2007 to July 31, 2007 and \$0.9590/therm (\$9.590/Dth) to the "Delivery Point" for the period August 1, 2008 to June 30, 2008.

ACCEPTANCE OF BISHOP LANE DEDICATION

The Board of County Commissioners approved this item by unanimous vote. On behalf of the Town of Smithsburg, Assistant County Attorney Andrew Wilkinson requested the Board accept dedication of Bishop Lane and associated lands and approve the Maintenance and Responsibility Agreement between the County and the Town. Smithsburg intends to annex Bishop Lane and is interested in receiving ownership of the property. The County was asked to facilitate transfer of ownership by accepting a previous dedication of the property to the County. In September 2001, the current owner of the land offered Bishop Lane to the County for dedication. To date, the County had not formally accepted the dedication. Although Bishop Lane remains privately owned, the Town has been providing maintenance for the road. After the County accepts the dedication, the Town will annex and the County will transfer the property to the Town by deed. As part of the procedure, the Town has agreed to enter a Maintenance and Responsibility Agreement by which it agrees to take all responsibility for the property between the time that the County accepts the dedication and the Town annexes and receives ownership by deed.

URBAN AREA REZONING

No formal action or motions were required or requested for this item. Mike Thompson, Director of the Department of Planning and Community Development, Chief Planner Steve Goodrich, and members of the Urban Growth Area Rezoning Committee brought this discussion before the Commissioners. The Planning staff has completed an initial draft of zoning proposals for the Urban Growth Area as a step toward implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. The proposal is under review by the Urban Growth Area Committee and will soon be presented to the Planning Commission for

recommendations prior to public hearings. The Land Use Plan map from the Comprehensive Plan has been the primary guidance for assignment of zoning districts but there are locations where changes in conditions may warrant different proposals from the current plan. Several distinct issues continue to surface in preparing and discussing this draft zoning proposal. They include Transferable Development Rights, The Office, Research and Technology (ORT) zoning district and a recent proposal for significant amendment, limitation on the amount of commercial development in the Highway Interchange district and specific interchange development proposals. Discussion centered on Transfer of Development Rights and methods of implementation in the rural and urban areas. Commissioner Jim Kercheval discussed whether zoning classifications would be consolidated or expanded, citing changes that have occurred since adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. State Agencies have had different ideas on controlling growth and staff is continuing discussions with the Maryland Department of Planning and the Maryland Department of the Environment. The City of Hagerstown's opinion on use of TDR's is also being sought. The Board will review the initial draft of the proposals and provide further direction for Staff and the Committee.

THE BOARD HELD AN EVENING MEETING WITH THE MAYOR, COUNCIL AND CITIZENS OF THE TOWN OF BOONSBORO AT 7:00 P.M. AT THE TOWN COMMUNITY CENTER

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS AND COMMENTS

Commissioner Bill Wivell reported on contacting Mary Baykan, Director of the Washington County Free Libraries, regarding refuse and recycling information.

Commissioner Kristin Aleshire commented on a meeting of members of the Historic District Commission and the Planning Commission to discuss the Brumbaugh farm at Hagerstown Regional Airport. The groups are asking the FAA to comply with historic preservation regulations for that property. Further discussions are needed, Aleshire said. An update is needed on the proposed communications tower at Sandy Hook, and citizens in the Broadfording road area are satisfied with the second application of tar/chip paving, the Commissioner said. A forum last Friday in Frederick sponsored by Congressman Roscoe Bartlett focused on Green energy solutions for governments, businesses and citizens, Aleshire said.

Commissioner Jim Kercheval reported that the PenMar Development Corporation and the Fort Ritchie museum committee are looking at plans to cover operating costs for that facility. The Commissioner requested a follow up on contracting out lawn maintenance for foreclosed homes in the County. County Administrator Greg Murray stated that the process has begun. Costs for the services will be paid by liens on properties that become eyesores as a result of the sub prime lending crisis. Commissioner Kercheval thanked the Town of Boonsboro for hosting the meeting.

Commissioners' President John Barr reported on Hagerstown Regional Airport playing host to a number of participants in the Leadership Maryland (LM) program last week. The Airport, Economic Development Commission staff, the Chamber of Commerce and airport businesses briefed the group on the county's economy and opportunities for business expansion. Barr commented on attending a Board meeting of the Center for Business and Training at the Elizabeth Hager Center last week. That center

encourages telecommuting and provides training for business and government. Barr also commented on attending the Green Symposium hosted by Congressman Bartlett last week, and on attending the Cake Auction at the Ag Expo last weekend. The "Bone to be Wild" fundraiser for the Humane Society brought 230 motorcyclists together for a ride through Washington County, Barr said. Sheriff Doug Mullendore and his staff were thanked for the services provided during that event. There are still many unknown factors about the PATH project, which would construct new power distribution lines from West Virginia to Eastern Maryland, and a meeting is being set by Allegheny Power in Frederick County to discuss issues, Barr reported.

OTHER BUSINESS

County Administrator's Comments: County Administrator Greg Murray reported that the Leadership Maryland (LM) class that visited the airport last week contains a number of state cabinet-level officials who got their first look at Washington County's potential for economic growth. A presentation by experts in wind and solar power at the LM retreat discussed small power generating systems that could be used by businesses and homeowners. A day-long tour of waste energy facilities in Montgomery, Howard and Baltimore Counties was held last week, and testing has begun on equipment that will be used to stream video of Commissioners' meetings over the internet, Murray said.

Reports from County Staff: Sheriff Doug Mullendore responded to Commissioner Aleshire's request for an update on the Public Safety Communications System project. Mullendore said that a meeting is being scheduled with the National Park Service at the end of August to continue the dialog on possible sites for the tower, and that the delay has taken place to allow NPS to review additional information provided by the system contractor. The Sheriff said that the system will go on line as scheduled, but without coverage in the southernmost area of the County, at first. Mullendore also reported on a meeting with Hagerstown Regional Airport officials to discuss security of that facility. A consultant will be brought in to prioritize those security needs.

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION

Each week the Board of County Commissioners sets aside time to hear from citizens of Washington County on matters of importance to the community.

Janeen Solberg reported on the Boonsboro Recycling Task Force survey of homes regarding curbside recycling. 40% of the town's 1200 homes were surveyed, and 86% of those polled stated they would be in favor of such a program, even if it meant an increase in fees. Solberg distributed results from that survey to the Board.

Kathy Vesley of Boonsboro commented on a recycling effort at Boonsboro High School that has handled 6,000 pounds of paper and 400 pounds of plastic and glass bottles, and requested similar programs be started in all schools.

School Board member Donna Brightman responded that recycling initiatives are underway system-wide, that students receive service hours for volunteering with the programs, and that there is a staff person in charge of overseeing those projects.

TOWN DISCUSSION ITEMS

Boonsboro Mayor Skip Kaufman and members of the Town Council brought several items to the Board for discussion.

Town Councilman Richard Hawkins reported a 183% increase in use of the Town Library branch since the new facility opened. Hawkins requested installation of 17 concrete traffic barriers in the parking lot at the side facing the stormwater management pond for safety reasons. Commissioner Kristin Aleshire made a motion to use \$1,200 from the Commissioners' contingency fund for that project, and the measure was approved by unanimous vote. Hawkins also requested assistance with signage for the Library, stating that the existing signs cannot be viewed at night. Commissioner Kercheval requested that the Town Library Board create a design for the signs and cost out prices, and make a presentation to the Commissioners. Hawkins requested additional funding from the County for the upgrades underway to Shafer Park. Phase I of that project is out for bid at a cost of \$1.5 million, and would provide multi-purpose fields and other playing fields. Hawkins requested consideration of a no-interest loan from the County for further park development.

Councilman Frank Nuice and Town Planner Megan Clark commented on problems encountered in getting permits passed through the County system and on issues relating to rehabilitation of older structures. County Permits and Inspections Director Dan Divito stated that status of any permit can be checked online through the Velocity Hall system, and that lines of communication should be opened between the municipalities and his office when snags occur. Divito also explained the Maryland Rehabilitation Code's provisions for older structures and requirements under the International Building Codes. Towns using the County Permit and Inspection system must conform to the IBC or the MRC as adopted by Washington County, Divito said.

Councilperson Barb Wetzel requested information on the feasibility study the County is doing on management of solid waste. Commissioners explained that Waste Energy and a Sorting Facility were two items recently added to that study. Commissioner Wivell said that a cost-benefit analysis would look at the feasibility of curbside recycling versus a sorting facility. Such a facility would remove recyclables from the waste stream at the landfill, rather than individual citizens having to remove and sort recyclables in the home. County Administrator Greg Murray stated that a Request for Proposal for that study will be issued within 6 weeks, and projects recommended by that study could be underway in as little as 6 months.

Mayor Skip Kaufman thanked the Board for holding the meeting in the Town, commented on the open dialog between the Town and Permits & Inspections, and the support the County is providing to the Library branch. Kaufmann lauded Commissioner's President John Barr, County Administrator Greg Murray and Sheriff Doug Mullendore for the support provided during the Boone Hotel fire in February, and called the actions a good example of intergovernmental cooperation. Kaufman stated that more Town citizens need to get involved on County Boards and Commissions, and commented on park expansion needs, water and sewer issues, and school needs. Kaufman also cited a need for County Commuter public transportation to the town. Commissioner Jim Kercheval provided a report prepared by Transit Director Kevin Cerrone on the federal-state transportation funding process and rural routes. Transportation service was formerly provided to Boonsboro, but was discontinued due to lack of ridership after a 1996 survey revealed that an average number of riders for the twice per week service was less than 5 per trip.

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