

**MONTHLY REPORT FOR MAYOR TAKISHA D. JAMES
BLADENSBURG TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2024**



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Meetings, Events and Updates (October 1 – 31, 2024)

OCTOBER 2024

October 3: Bladensburg Day Meeting | A planning meeting was held to review the organizational efforts for the upcoming parade and Bladensburg Day. We reviewed the parade route as well as discussed areas of the event relating to public works, logistics, and public safety. The plans are coming together, and we have confirmed elected officials to participate in the parade and festival.

October 11: Legislative Open House | Special thanks to Michelle, Regine, and Ray for organizing this event. The Bladensburg Town Council hosted this open house to share our legislative priorities and financial requests with county, state, and federal representatives. While the elected officials did not attend the open house, we were able to have a healthy discussion with the staffers. We also took them on a tour of the town, which was highlighted by a tour of the Bostwick House. Given the historic nature of the building and grounds, many on the tour remarked that it was a highlight to have this opportunity to visit the house and learn more about it. Adding the tour to the open house left a lasting positive impression on the staff members who were in attendance and will go a long way in demonstrating the importance of having their support for our legislative and funding requests.



October 15: Meeting with the Prince George's County Fire Department | The Town Administrator and I participated in this meeting to hear updates regarding the County's summer staffing plan and future staffing efforts. Chief Tiffany Green's office organized this meeting to provide updates to her plan for staffing fire stations moving forward. From her perspective the plan has worked successfully, however from the municipal perspective, it's creating the same problem for the volunteers that is being solved on behalf of career firefighters. Volunteers are being asked to step up to reduce the costs and overtime the county fire department is experiencing. We were able to ask questions, given the long-term implications of this decision.

October 17: PGCMA Meeting | The meeting was held in the City of Laurel in October. Mayor Keith Sydnor welcomed everyone to his community to begin the meeting. He also noted that the City of Laurel has a program at Local 24 that provides young people with job opportunities even if they don't have a GED.

Per the agenda request from elected leaders from the Port Towns, Greenbelt, and Laurel, the project developers for the Northeast Maglev addressed the membership body. They provided an update or, in some cases, an introduction of the project to the 27 municipalities of Prince George's County. We were told this would last for about 20 minutes, but due to the number of questions and comments, this segment lasted approximately an hour. As a next step, I will work with the same group of mayors to schedule a follow-up meeting with our communities to provide the same opportunity to be updated and have questions addressed from our residents and other community stakeholders.

Representatives for Baltimore Washington Rapid Rail in Bill Scott and Ron Young, delivered the presentation. They also had the public affairs representative Andrea Mansfield along with other supporters including Rev. Green (of Baltimore), and Darryl Barnes, a former delegate for Maryland. The end goal of this project is to enable riders to get from DC to NY in an hour or less. The developer asserts that they are going to help the airlines by replacing flights that take these short-haul segments.

Several concerns were raised with the presentation, including the statement that the developer is not planning to use money from states or local municipalities. Given this statement, I asked if they would be willing to support legislation to codify this as outlined in SB 0079: State Finance - Prohibited Appropriations - Magnetic Levitation Transportation System. They responded negatively, which seemed like a major contradiction if they are not planning to use funding from local or state government. Questions around environmental impacts were raised along with their estimate of having this project create 100,000 jobs. There is also no guarantee that Maryland residents of communities directly impacted by the path of this train will receive preferential treatment during the hiring process.

The presenter stated 120 million trips from BWI to DC are taken annually according to usage from cellphone data and a data firm. Northeast Maglev is planning to divert 10% of this traffic

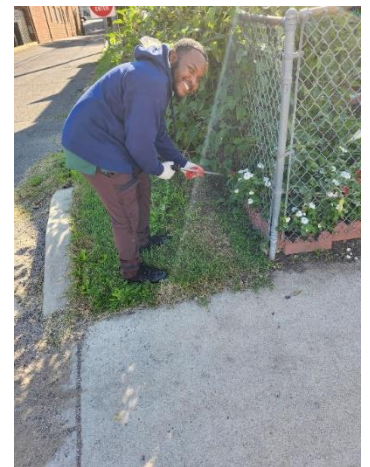
to their train. The developer is looking to create community benefits agreements with the municipalities to offer benefits to residents directly impacted by the train, although they didn't outline what those would be. They also noted they anticipate needing eight years to build this project.

All in all, the presentation created more questions so I will definitely follow up to schedule another meeting with residents of our communities.



October 19: Growing Green with Pride

| I'm grateful for the staff and volunteers who supported this effort. While we were small in numbers, we accomplished a lot with removing dead trees, planting winterberry trees, daffodils and removing litter. The event offered a great time to beautify the David C. Harrington Park in advance of the Bladensburg Day Event scheduled for the following weekend. We were also visited by Senator Malcolm Augustine during the event and appreciate his support.



October 21: Quarterly Check-in | As a follow up to the Town Council's Retreat held in September, we agreed to schedule a separate quarterly check-in to discuss upcoming events, programs and any legislative policies to ensure we're communicating regularly on these matters. The first quarterly check-in was held and enabled us to discuss the balance of events for 2024 and start reviewing events for Q1 and Q2 of 2025. The discussions helped us ensure we're putting sufficient resources toward these events.

October 21: Bladensburg Town Council Closed Session | The Town Council held a closed session regarding General Provisions Article 3-305 (b) (4) of the Maryland Code to consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain in the State and (7) consult with counsel to obtain legal advice.

October 24: Planning Meeting for the Thanksgiving Food Giveaway | I had a conference call with Mr. Jerald Williams, Executive Director of NOW Foundation, to discuss this year's holiday meal distribution events for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Unfortunately, Victory Grace Center will not be able to offer the same level of support as provided during prior years, so NOW Foundation will step in, playing a greater role in the organization of purchasing the food items and storing them until the distribution dates. We are excited to make this program possible to help less fortunate residents enjoy the holiday season.

October 24: Bladensburg Day Meeting | The team held our final planning meeting to ensure all the necessary plans were in place for the upcoming event.

October 24: Special Council Meeting | The focus of this meeting was to discuss annexation for the Town.

October 25: Trunk or Treat Hosted by the Bladensburg Community Action Team | I joined Council Members Brown and McBryde in attending this event for the youth in our community. The event provided a safe and fun environment for them as well as positive interactions with members of the Bladensburg Police Department and our community partners. Thank you to the office of Calvin Hawkins (Prince George's County Council Member at Large), Bladensburg Fire Volunteer Department, The Prince George's County Sheriff's Department, and Capital Plaza Starbucks for supporting this event for our youth!

October 26: Bladensburg Day | This was a special day for the town, with the return of the Town's parade as part of Bladensburg Day for the first time in nearly 30 years. The parade was led by the Bladensburg Honor Guard and the Town Council. We were also joined by the Bladensburg High School Dance Team, Bladensburg Volunteer Fire Department, Bladensburg Police Department, Prince George's County Sheriff's Department, Delegate Diana Fennell's office, Edmonston Mayor Tracy Gant, Cottage City Commission Chair Wanda Wheatley and Town Manager John Hoatan, Town resident and business owner Eloisa Guzman and several others. During the festival, residents enjoyed competing in a pie eating contest, visiting local vendors, the sounds of DJ Flava of WKYS radio station, pumpkin decorating, a petting zoo, a trivia game highlighting Bladensburg's history, demonstrations by the Tai Kwon Do Ramblers and so much more.





I am immensely grateful to the incredible team of staff members who worked so diligently to organize this event and ensure residents had a safe and wonderful time. From the parade to the festival, the event was a rich celebration of our community and residents had nothing but positive things to say about the event.



Prince George's County Legislative Updates:

Prince George's County Council Bill CB-097-2024 | AN ACT CONCERNING LANDLORD-TENANT REGULATIONS - PROHIBITION OF RENT GOUGING for the purpose of preventing landlords exempt from rent stabilization regulations from raising rents excessively by capping annual increases at fifteen percent. This new law will cap rent increases and provide permanent protections for renters.

Prince George's County recently announced the enactment of the Permanent Rent Stabilization and Protection Act of 2024, a landmark law designed to safeguard renters from excessive rent increases. The new law, which took effect on October 17, 2024, sets strict limits on how much landlords can raise rents each year, bringing stability to thousands of residents across the county.

"The Permanent Rent Stabilization and Protection Act is an important step in addressing the housing affordability challenges our residents face," said County Executive Angela Alsobrooks. "This law will provide renters with the security they need, ensuring they are not burdened by steep rent hikes while landlords can continue to maintain their properties."

Under the new law, rent increases for most rental units in Prince George's County are capped at the lesser of either the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria Area (CPI-U) plus 3% of the annual rent, or 6% of the annual rent. For residents living in age-restricted senior housing, rent increases are limited to the lesser of the CPI-U or 4.5% of the annual rent. For this year, October 17, 2024 to June 30, 2025, the rent cap is 6% for non-senior units and 3.3% for senior units.

Exemptions: While the Act provides broad protections for renters, there are specific exemptions for certain types of properties. Units not subject to the new law include:

- Newly constructed units completed on or after January 1, 2000
- Units in medical, religious, and nonprofit facilities
- Owner-occupied group houses, Accessory Dwelling Units, and certain condominiums
- Hotels, motels, dormitories, and licensed assisted living facilities

Residents are encouraged to review the full list of exemptions to confirm if their rental unit qualifies under the law.

"This law strikes a balance between protecting renters and allowing landlords to make necessary investments in their properties," added Aspasia Xypolia, Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development. "It also includes provisions for fair rent returns and capital improvements, ensuring that the quality of rental properties across the county remains high."

The Department of Permitting, Inspections, and Enforcement (DPIE) will oversee enforcement of the new law and will issue notices regarding allowable rent increases each year. Beginning May 1 of each year, DPIE will notify landlords and tenants of the upcoming year's rent increase limits, which will be effective from July 1 through June 30.

For more information about the Permanent Rent Stabilization and Protection Act of 2024, visit mypgc.us/rentprotection or residents can call PGC311 or (301) 883-4748 (for outside of the County) for questions about the law.

Prince George's County Council Bill CB-016-2024 | AN ACT CONCERNING LATE-NIGHT BUSINESS SAFETY PLAN

Bill Summary: AN ACT CONCERNING LATE-NIGHT BUSINESS SAFETY PLAN for the purpose of requiring certain businesses that operate between 12:00 a.m. and 4:00 a.m. to obtain a late-night safety plan from the Prince George's County Police Department; that requires the business to obtain an approved late-night safety plan before operating; that the business must operate under the terms of the approved late-night safety plan; that an approved late-night safety plan authorizes the business to operate for three (3) years; that at the expiration of the three (3) period the business will need to obtain a new approved late-night safety plan; and that businesses operating without an approved late-night safety plan are subject in a civil fine for each day it operates without an approved late-night safety plan.

Proposers/Sponsors: Krystal Oriadha, Wanika Fisher, Ingrid S. Watson, Eric C. Olson, Edward P. Burroughs, Calvin S. Hawkins, Thomas E. Dernoga, Sydney J. Harrison

Note: The hearing date for this bill is on November 19 at 10:00 AM.

Prince George's County Council Bill | AN ACT CONCERNING PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY RE-ENTRY EMPLOYMENT INCENTIVE PROGRAM:

Meeting Date: 11/19/2024

Bill Summary: AN ACT CONCERNING PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY RE-ENTRY EMPLOYMENT INCENTIVE PROGRAM for the purpose of expanding the Re-Entry Employment Incentive Program to County government agencies; providing for regulations and qualifications to the Re-Entry Employment Incentive Program for County agencies; establishing the Re-Entry Employment Incentive Program Fund; requiring a minimum annual appropriation; ; providing an exception to the hiring preference requirement; requiring reporting requirements; and generally relating to re-entry hiring.

Proposers/Sponsors: Krystal Oriadha, Wala Blegay, Edward P. Burroughs, Calvin S. Hawkins, Thomas E. Dernoga

Note: The Public Hearing Date is November 19, 2024 at 10:00 AM.