

**ST. MARY'S COUNTY  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING  
GOVERNMENTAL CENTER  
Tuesday, September 11, 2007**

**Present:** Commissioner President Francis Jack Russell  
Commissioner Kenneth R. Dement  
Commissioner Lawrence D. Jarboe  
Commissioner Thomas A. Mattingly, Sr.  
Commissioner Daniel H. Raley  
John Savich, County Administrator  
Betty Jean Pasko, Sr. Administrative Coordinator (Recorder)

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 9:02 AM. Chaplain Danny Purvis, U.S. Navy, provided the invocation and led the Board and meeting attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF CHECK REGISTER**

**Commissioner Raley moved, seconded by Commissioner Jarboe, to authorize the Commissioner President to sign the Check Register dated September 11, 2007, as submitted. Motion carried 5-0.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Commissioner Jarboe moved, seconded by Commissioner Mattingly, to adopt the minutes of the Commissioners' meeting of September 4, 2007, as presented. Motion carried 5-0.**

**RETIREMENT RECOGNITION**

Deputy Sheriff John D. Rhodes, Jr. received a Proclamation and County Seal in recognition of his retirement from the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office with 34 years of service. On behalf of the Employees Association, Janice Blackistone also presented a clock.

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR**

1. Draft Agendas for September 18 and 25, 2007
  
2. **St. Mary's County Public School** (*Dr. Michael Matirano, Superintendent of Schools;*  
*Dan Carney, Chief Financial Office; Theo Cramer, Director, Academic Support*)

**Commissioner Raley moved, seconded by Commissioner Mattingly, to approve the Category Transfers in the Board of Education's FY2007 Budget in the amount of \$186,000 and to approve the Budget Transfer in the Board of Education's FY2008 Budget in the amount of \$47,471.12. Motion carried 5-0.**

**Commissioner Raley moved, seconded by Commissioner Jarboe, to approve the Board of Education's request to re-align funding of \$140,536 and two (2) FTE positions to the Title I, Part A School Grant from the Title I, School Improvement grant, and reduce the restricted fund budget by \$59,464, to reflect the elimination of the Title I, School Improvement grant, which will not be received, and to sign the letter evidencing this action. Motion carried 5-0.**

3. **Dept. of Economic and Community Development** (*Bob Schaller, Director, DECD; Alan Kutz, VP, Economic and Community Dev. Institute, CSM; William Hitte, Regional Director So. MD SBDC; Hans Welch, Mgr., Business Dev., DECD*)

**Commissioner Dement moved, seconded by Commissioner Jarboe, to approve and authorize the Commissioner President to approve and sign the Memorandum of Understanding between the County and the College of Southern Maryland on behalf of its Maryland Small Business Development Center Program for Fiscal Year 2008. Motion carried 5-0.**

4. **Dept. of Public Safety** (*Dave Zylak, Director*)

**Commissioner Mattingly moved, seconded by Commissioner Jarboe, to approve the funding of St. Mary's County's share of facility improvements to the Tri-County Animal Shelter, to sign the letter of commitment, and to authorize the Commissioner President to sign the related Budget Amendment in the amount of \$15,000. Motion carried 4-1.** *Commissioner Raley voted against the motion, stating that while he is fully supportive of the animal shelter's mission, his concern is that the request for additional funds came from outside of the normal budget process and that other nonprofit groups have made similar requests are not being considered. These groups and Tri County Animal Shelter were advised that the policy would be not to fund additional requests until after the Legislative Session and state budget impacts are clearer.*

5. **Dept. on Aging** (*Peggy Maio, Fiscal Supervisor; Rebecca Cranston, Manager, Home & Comm. Services;*

**Commissioner Dement moved, seconded by Commissioner Raley, to approve and authorize the Commissioner President to sign the Application Renewal and Management Plan for the Vivian Ripple Center. Motion carried 5-0.**

6. **Dept. of Public Works & Transportation** (*George Erichsen, P.E., Director*)

**Commissioner Mattingly moved, seconded by Commissioner Dement, to approve and authorize the Commissioner President to sign the following Easement Agreement, Public Works Agreement, Public Works Agreement Addenda, Deed and Joint Use Agreement, identified as A through E on the County Administrator agenda. Motion carried 5-0.**

*The motion is in reference to the following:*

- A. *Sign Easement Agreement for the Heritage Manor Subdivision, located in the 1<sup>st</sup> Election District, with Arrowhead, LLC, for the purpose of installing a sign within the County's right-of-way on Heritage Hill Court.*
- B. *Public Works Agreement for Brooks Knolls Subdivision, located in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Election District, with an Expiration Date of July 1, 2008.*
- C. *Public Works Agreement Addendum for Challenger Estates Subdivision, located in the 8<sup>th</sup> Election District, with an Expiration Date of July 1, 2008.*
- D. *Public Works Agreement Addendum for Hickory Hills PUD Subdivision, Section 3D, located in the 8<sup>th</sup> Election District, with an Expiration Date of August 1, 2008.*
- E. *Deed between the Dean Partnership, LLP and the Board of County Commissioners, and Joint Use Agreement between SMECO, Talon LLC, the Board of County Commissioners for St. Mary's County, and Dean Partnership for the construction of a portion of Barbet Drive associated with the Broad Creek Subdivision, located in the 6<sup>th</sup> Election District.*

**Commissioner Jarboe moved, seconded by Commissioner Dement, to approve and authorize the Commissioner President to sign the Budget Amendment in the amount of \$25,000 establishing the budget for State funding received for the Sidewalk Retrofit Project and reducing the use of the County Transfer Tax. Motion carried 5-0.**

7. **Dept. of Recreation, Parks and Community Services** (*Phil Rollins, Director*)

**Commissioner Dement moved, seconded by Commissioner Jarboe, to approve and authorize the Commissioner President to sign the following Program Open Space Development Application and Project Agreements:**

- a. **\$100,000 in funding to assist with the construction of parking areas and walkways at the Piney Point Lighthouse Museum and Park.**
- b. **funding to pave the entrance road and parking areas at Seventh District Park.**
- c. **Phase IV-A of the Three Notch Trail.**
- d. **Tennis Court Improvements at Cecil Park.**

**Motion carried 5-0.**

## **COMMISSIONER'S TIME**

Commissioners reviewed their participation in events held during the previous week and thanked all those involved for their service to the community.

## **MOTION TO ADJOURN AS THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**Commissioner Jarboe moved, seconded by Commissioner Dement, to adjourn as the Board of County Commissioners and reconvene as the Board of Health. Motion carried 5-0.**

## **BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS SITTING AS BOARD OF HEALTH: HEALTH DEPT. ACTIVITIES UPDATE**

Present: Dr. William Icenhower, Health Officer, St. Mary's County Health Department

Dr. Icenhower clarified that purpose for today's presentation was to keep the Board informed regarding Health Department services and funding. Dr. Icenhower provided a brief review and update of Adult Services, Women and Children's Health Services, Wellness and Health Promotion Programs, Environmental Health Services and reviewed the Health Department's organization chart.

Total funding for FY2007 is \$7,729,115. Eight-five percent (85%) of the budget are personnel costs. The four basic sources of funding are grants, collections, core (state) funding, and county funding. For the FY2007, 49% (\$3,753,566) is provided by grants; 19% (\$1,467,868) is core funding; 18% (\$1,382,665) is collections; and 14% (\$1,125,026) is county funding. A detailed description for each funding source was provided. Discussion ensued regarding the impact of the funding shortage, which resulted in cutting 5.7 FTEs (positions), and the resulting impact on services and resources. Issues presented to Board for discussion were: restoring personnel and full programming, vaccines for first responders and school children, school health program for non-public schools, expanded medical transportation program, and electronic data management for Environmental Health.

Dr. Icenhower stated he sees the primary health issues facing St. Mary's County today as cardiac disorders, cancer, and traffic safety.

## **MOTION TO ADJOURN AS THE BOARD OF HEALTH AND RE-CONVENE AS THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**Commissioner Mattingly moved, seconded by Commissioner Jarboe, to adjourn as the Board of Health and reconvene as the Board of County Commissioners. Motion carried 5-0.**

## **ST. MARY'S COUNTY HOUSING AUTHORITY: "THE YEAR IN REVIEW"**

Present: Bob Schaller, Director, DECD  
Dennis Nicholson, Executive Director, Housing Authority of St. Mary's County  
Cynthia Phillips, Program Manager for Rental Assistance  
Rhonda Garcia, Program Manager for Community Development  
Douglas Samuel, Chair, Housing Authority Commissioner  
Stephanie Proctor, Housing Authority Commissioner staff member

Mr. Nicholson provided introductions and presented a review of the Housing Authority's 2006 Year in Review report. The report includes an overview of the management and structure (organization chart, there are 22 employees), and Housing Authority objectives and programs. Mr. Nicholson also high-lighted homeownership opportunities (the Gateways, Holland Forrest Landing, and homeownership – education/outreach), neighborhood revitalization (New Phoenix and Colony Square), preservation of workforce and affordable housing, and community partnerships.

Housing Authority of St. Mary's County 2007 Goals:

- Sale of condominiums known as The Gateways to provide quality affordable homeownership opportunities.
- Preservation of affordable housing opportunities
- Rehabilitate and revitalize distressed communities
- Assist households and mobile home communities economically displace by development
- Partnerships that foster community and homeownerships

When asked "how can we help you better", Mr. Samuel responded by maintaining open dialog and involvement. There was discussion regarding managing workload and work scope, the Housing Authority's organizational structure, and work force housing (relative to increased emphasis on infrastructure). St. Mary's County has the largest Section A vouchers, with over 2400 families on the waiting list.

## **ANNUAL SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY**

The Annual September 11 Remembrance Ceremony was held at the Freedom Garden area in front of the Governmental Center Building.

## **MD STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION: BRIEFING ON THE MD 4-THOMAS JOHNSON BRIDGE PLANNING STUDY**

Present: Greg Welker, District 5 Engineer  
Felicia Alexander, Project Engineer  
Natalie Latham, Project Engineer

Briefing by State Highway Administration (SHA) staff on the MD 4-Thomas Johnson Bridge Planning Study included a project overview, review of existing roadway and bridge conditions, traffic analysis of existing and projected volumes, an overview of environmental issues and how this project is being coordinated with related projects in Calvert and St. Mary's Counties. The purposes for the study are to improve existing capacity and traffic operations, increase vehicular and pedestrian safety, and to support existing and planned development.

Ms. Latham presented preliminary, conceptual alternatives and the various options for each for improvements to MD 4 and the Thomas Johnson Bridge. These ranged from "no build" (no major improvements proposed) to converting the existing structure to a one-way, 2-lane bridge and constructing a new parallel structure. The preliminary concepts are subject to change as SHA receives input from public hearings and from the Boards of County Commissioners.

The Thomas Johnson Bridge was last inspected January 24, 2006. The last underwater inspection was August 2005.

Key issues of the study were identified as: minimizing residential impacts; maintenance of traffic; improving pedestrian/bicycle access; minimizing natural environmental impacts; noise abatement analysis; and the navigable waterway.

Next steps will be: Open House Workshop for the public on October 9 at 5 pm, at the Town Creek Elementary School; Alternates Public Workshop in the fall of 2008; Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study in the fall of 2008; Location/Design Hearing in the fall of 2009; and Location/Design Approval in winter of 2011.

In response to inquiries from Commissioner Mattingly, SHA staff responded that: the study could provide for expedition of other improvements along the Rt. 234 and Rt. 4 corridor in the short term (prior to completing the study) rather than slowing them down; base data will be used for the study, so that it will not be a "start from scratch" process; and the current bridge will need to be re-decked, irregardless of the final determination on the construction of a new span.

Commissioner Jarboe requested that SHA consider the concept of a ferry service, possibly at the Solomon's Annex, that could transport commuters twice a day to help relieve traffic during the transition period, or if a decision is made not to construct a new bridge.

SHA currently has \$1.5m in hand for project planning and anticipates they will another \$4m to get to the next level and keep the project moving forward. It was estimated that it could take 8-9 years to see relief on the MD 4/Thomas Johnson Bridge traffic issues.

## **MOTION TO ENTER EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Commissioner Raley moved, seconded by Commissioner Dement, to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing Real Property Acquisition,**

**specifically acquisition of options for properties as part of the Lexington Manor  
Redevelopment Project. Motion carried 5-0.**

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

### Real Property

Present: Commissioner Francis Jack Russell, President  
Commissioner Kenneth R. Dement  
Commissioner Lawrence D. Jarboe  
Commissioner Thomas A. Mattingly, Sr.  
Commissioner Daniel H. Raley  
John Savich, County Administrator  
Christy Chesser, County Attorney  
Robert Schaller, Dir., Dept. of Economic & Community Development  
Robin Finnacom, Exec. Dir., Community Development Corporation  
Donna Gebicke, Recorder

Authority: Article 24, Section 4-210(a)11  
Time Held: 2:15 pm – 2:39 pm  
Action Taken: Commissioners discussed real property acquisition matters.

### **PUBLIC HEARING: PROVISION RELATING TO RESIDENTIAL SPRINKLER SYSTEMS FOR ALL NEW ONE AND TWO FAMILY DWELLINGS**

**Present:** Denis Canavan, Director, Dept. of Land Use and Growth Management  
Adam Knight, Code Coordinator, Dept. of Land Use and Growth Management

The public hearing was held at the Bay District Volunteer Fire Department's Social Hall, 46900 South Shangri-La Drive, Lexington Park for the purpose of receiving public testimony and to consider a proposed change to Chapter 203 of the Code of St. Mary's County, to add a provision relating to residential sprinkler systems for all new one and two family dwellings.

Commissioner President Russell called the public hearing to order at 6:30 PM. Commissioner Raley offered a motion resulting from the Executive Session held earlier at the Governmental Center.

**Commissioner Raley moved, seconded by Commissioner Mattingly, to direct staff to proceed as discussed in Executive Session regarding acquisition of options for properties as part of the efforts to bring about the redevelopment of the Lexington Park Manor Northern Parcel and surrounding properties. Motion carried 5-0.**

Mr. Knight announced for the record that the public hearing was advertised in the August 24 and 29, 2007 editions of the Enterprise newspaper. Mr. Knight reviewed the proposed legislation and provided specifics about the proposal. It was stressed that one-half of the State of Maryland has adopted a sprinkler ordinance, including Charles County.

On March 13, 2007, the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) observed a presentation from the St. Mary's County Emergency Services Committee outlining the need for residential sprinklers. The committee requested the BOCC approve the development of an ordinance, requiring all new one and two family dwellings to be built with automatic fire sprinklers. The BOCC authorized the Department of Land Use & Growth Management (LU&GM) to draft an ordinance, which was forwarded to the Planning Commission for review and recommendation.

On June 25, 2007, the Planning Committee held a public hearing and continued discussion at the July 23, 2007 Planning Committee meeting. The draft ordinance was subsequently revised to include mobile or modular homes and to remove the exemption for homes that are connected or powered by electricity of 50 volts or less. Staff proposes the requirement for interior sprinkler systems will not apply to homes that are not connected or utilize commercial power until July 1, 2008.

The Planning Committee voted four (4) ayes, three (3) nays, adopting PC Resolution No. 07-10 "Residential Sprinklers Recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners for Amendments to Chapter 203 of the St. Mary's County Code".

The proposed ordinance requires automatic fire sprinkler system installation in accordance with NFPA-13D "Standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems for One and Two Family Dwellings", as adopted by the State of Maryland Fire Prevention Code. Staff is proposing a January 1, 2008 effective date.

The requirement for interior automatic fire sprinkler systems will not apply to uninhabitable accessory structures (e.g., detached carports, garages, greenhouses, and sheds).

Following Mr. Knight's presentation, the hearing moved into discussion from the Board at 6:45 PM.

Mr. Knight clarified that the requirement (for interior automatic fire sprinkler systems) does not apply to attached garages or attached, enclosed porches. It does apply to unfinished accessory units (over top of the garage) and unfinished basements.

Commissioner Raley requested staff (Adam Knight) prepare a report specifically addressing the following:

1. Cost data relevant to St. Mary's County (the July 17, 2007 Public Hearing Staff Report provides average cost data for Carroll County).
2. The average home size (square footage) being built in St. Mary's County today.
3. Insurance premium savings. Staff is requested to contact five or six local insurance agents, based on a typical wood frame house.
4. What are the certification costs? (there are no certified installers in St. Mary's County).

5. If the ordinance amendment passes, what will be the maintenance requirements?  
Mr. Knight indicated that maintenance requirements are being worked on.

It was clarified that although the proposed ordinance is different than Charles County's, both adopt the same legislation (NFPA-13D). This was presented as a concern for contractors that work in both St. Mary's and Charles Counties.

Commissioner Raley requested Denis Canavan meet with the County Attorney and County Administrator regarding the County's enabling authority to grant a tax credit. What are staff's implementation recommendations and/or opinions?

Commissioner Jarboe said he understands that the Emergency Services Committee needed a starting point (new homes) and suggested considering 50% of cost based on square footage.

There was discussion regarding retrofitting requirement to existing, more expensive homes and sprinkler system design/configuration scenarios. Commissioner Raley questioned when the best sprinkler design option would be determined. Mr. Knight responded during permit review; a checklist is currently being developed.

Commissioner Mattingly added that there is strong momentum throughout the state, we are not alone. Regarding training, Commissioner Mattingly suggested staff and the Emergency Services Committee could make training certification available, there are a number of local plumbers interested. Commissioner Mattingly called attention to the recent tragedy at Talbot County and that tragedy affects not just those that live in homes, but those that go into those homes as volunteers.

### **Public Testimony**

#### **Keith Fairfax, 46516 Walnut Ct., Lexington Park, MD 20653**

Mr. Fairfax is the Chairman, Emergency Services Committee and presented testimony in support of the proposed ordinance. Mr. Fairfax provided a PowerPoint presentation highlighting life safety, property conservation, community safety, firefighter safety, and technical and economic issues. Mr. Fairfax provided an update on the adoptions of residential sprinklers in Maryland, with the latest being Charles County in 2006.

#### **Bill Rymer, 23391 Esperanza Circle, Lexington Park, MD 20653**

Mr. Rymer stated that he has lived in St. Mary's County full-time since 1967 (at the Base since 1962) and presented testimony against the proposed ordinance (stating that it should be optional). Mr. Rymer presented a PowerPoint presentation, identifying the ordinance as a "mandatory expenditure of other people's money by County decree", stating that the ordinance is unjustifiable, not practical, and not economical, and that it tramples rights. Mr. Rymer further stated that he feels the ordinance was "uniquely crafted", calling attention to one Commissioner being a fireman, and that application to new construction is the only chance of passage. Mr. Rymer provided statistics regarding death (due to

residence fire) is down by 25% in the last 10 years. There are six times as many murders, five times as many die in falls, and 10 times as many die because of suicide. Regarding economics, Mr. Rymer provided a figure of 75k for a six unit condo. The exemption for Amish and Mennonites was characterized as 'innovative'. Stating that one in six sprinkler systems fail, Mr. Rymer suggested a good alarm system with a sensor in every room and coming up with a new way to detect fires as alternates.

**Jim Bacot, 24707 Garmmes Lane, Hollywood, MD**

Presented neutral testimony regarding the proposed ordinance. Mr. Bacot offered smoke detection systems as a less expensive alternative and suggested including the ordinance on ballot (to find out what constituents want). Mr. Bacot stated making sprinkler systems mandatory will create a tremendous expense that will probably be put into cost of the (30 year) mortgage.

**Robin Finnacom, 44090 Ct. Andrews Church Rd., California, MD**

Presented testimony in support of the proposed ordinance. On behalf of the Habitat for Humanity, Ms. Finnacom read excerpts from a letter address to the BOCC from Gary Williams, President of Patuxent Habitat for Humanity. The letter states the Habitat for Humanity has decided to include sprinkler systems in houses built in St. Mary's County. The first house to include an automatic sprinkler system will be located in the South Hampton neighborhood.

**David Smiley, 21660 Forest Park Rd., Lexington Park, MD**

A member of the Bay District Fire Dept., Mr. Smiley presented testimony in support of the proposed ordinance. As a reference, Mr. Smiley displayed a picture of a large house and explained the challenges faced when responding to a fire; e.g., determining the layout and if there are any trapped occupants. Also, building materials are a significant factor. Travel time, can take 10 – 15 minutes to get to a fire that's been in progress. Mr. Smiley also referenced two incidents that resulted in loss of life, one in 1983 (a three year old, and five year old, and a 20 year old relative) and the other in 1989 (at Old Bay View Trailer Park).

**Mark Miller, 22223 Golden Rod Drive, Great Mills, MD 20634**

A member of the Lexington Park Volunteer Rescue Squad, Mr. Miller provided testimony in support of the proposed ordinance. Mr. Miller reiterated that sprinkler systems save lives and reduce the risk of volunteers. He expressed that he understands that things need to be considered and referenced changes resulting from 9/11/2001.

**Thomas Spalding, 18732 Holly Way, Valley Lee, MD 20692**

A St. Mary's County resident and President of the 2<sup>nd</sup> District Fire and Rescue Squad, Mr. Spalding said he wholeheartedly supports the proposed ordinance; and that a price can't be put on human life.

**Shannon Snead, 7179 Old Alexandria Pkwy Rd, Clinton, MD 20735**

A student studying fire protection engineering, Ms. Snead provided testimony in favor of the proposed ordinance. Ms. Snead suggested a cost benefit analysis could be done (as part of managing a new house project) and agreed with starting with new homes. Ms. Snead added that the purpose of sprinklers is not to put out the fire, but to suppress the fire to allow the occupants to get out and time for the fire department to get there. Regarding the "loss of freedom", seat belts are now worn out of habit. No one has ever died in a house with a sprinkler system.

**Lee Sachs, Maryland Sate Fireman's Assoc., P. O. Box 548, Owings Mills, MD 21117**

Former President of the MD State Fireman's Association, Mr. Sachs presented testimony in support of the proposed ordinance. Mr. Sachs stressed the ordinance as a "significant and absolute need". Referenced the Marble Mountain movie, Mr. Sachs reiterated the importance and encouraged the commissioners to give careful consideration (for adoption).

**Dan Stevens, 3245 Old Washington Rd., Waldorf, MD 20602**

Fire Chief for Waldorf with 45 years of fire service, Mr. Stevens presented testimony in support of the proposed ordinance. A sprinkler system ordinance was passed last year in Charles County. In relation to gaining public support, Mr. Stevens said the problem with the public is that most have never experience a fire fatality. As Fire Chief, his first priority is that his folks go home at the end of a fire. Mr. Stevens referenced a fire west of Waldorf where the building collapsed and was close to not getting the fire fighters out in time. Cannot place a price on human life. Commissioner Mattingly asked a question about if enacting legislation was delayed relative to licensed installers. Mr. Stevens said he was not aware of any problems.

**Joe Guyther, 28395 Lockes Hill Rd, Mechanicsville, MD**

Presented testimony in support of the proposed ordinance. Mr. Guyther suggested the cost for new construction is down 2.2% , off-setting the estimated 1-1.5% cost (based on cost of the house) for a sprinkler system. Greenbrier offers upgrades such as hardwood floors, gas fireplace, etc. Would like to see sprinkler systems on the amenities list. Starter homes are usually town homes; should not move up to a home with less fire protection. When there is a fire in the Amish / Mennonite community, every man, woman, and child is affected (support to rebuild). They are self-insured. Mr. Guyther as talked with some Amish who were "curious" and are "capable of installing power" to support a sprinkler system. University of MD, Fire Engineering School and the Fire Marshall's Office will work to support. Mr. Guyther closed by saying he knows if it's an engineering problem, it can be solved. Hopes the county can solve the bureaucracy.

**Richard Wood, 42324 River Ridge Dr., Hollywood, MD 20636**

Declined to provide testimony.

**William Barnard, 1201 Reisterstown Rd, Pikesville, MD 21208**

MD State Fire Marshall, presented testimony in support of the proposed ordinance. Mr. Barnard described some of the technology associated to NFPA-13D. Sprinkler technology has been around for years. In the mid-1980s, improved with "quick activation" sprinkler technology. Was the Fire Marshall in Prince George's County; was over 100 fire deaths (no sprinkler), 50k sprinkler units installed, made a high degree of difference. Went to the scene of the recent fire in Talbot County (crawl space, had to sift through). Sprinklers won't work 100% of the time. But consider the experience of the other communities. Urged careful consideration, five counties already have. Montgomery County is considering a tax proposal, for up to a 50% rebate on taxes for that particular year.

**Richard Green, Sr., 1846 Deer Park Rd., Finksburg, MD 21048**

President of Carroll County Volunteer Emergency Services, with over 33 year in fire services, Mr. Green presented testimony in support of the proposed ordinance. A public hearing will be held in Talbot County on September 25<sup>th</sup>. October, presenting to other counties, including Dorchester and Cecil. Presented statistics (80% deaths in residential fire, 20% auto, suicide, other). Fire sprinkler system required in commercial buildings, but more likely to die in residential fire. Carroll County enacted ordinance 7/1/2006. Within a couple of months, had a ‘non event’, candle left burning, got on carpet, and was put out by sprinkler. Residents came home and reported. One commissioner was on the fence (with adopting the ordinance). However, when you call 911, you are inviting the government (responders) into your house. Reference three fatal fires related to smoking. In Carroll County, determined that 50% of the smoke detectors didn’t work. Trying to get sprinkler initiative statewide.

**John Gatton, 48811 Curley Rd, Ridge, MD 20680**

President of the Ridge Volunteer Fire Dept, supports the proposed ordinance stating the first priority is to bring people (volunteer responders) back home.

**Gerald Gardner, Leonardtown (not on sign-up sheet)**

Past Chief and Vice President of the Leonardtown Volunteer Fire Dept., provided scenario of equipment and personnel that respond to a fire call (typically three companies, two rescue squads, 30 personnel). With sprinkler system, significant less (one company to clean up and investigate). Mr. Gardner also suggested less emergency equipment responding to a call improves safety (potential for incident or fatality responding to a call). A fire truck costs anywhere from .5 to 1m. Relative to costs, the same argued with smoke detector requirement years ago. Sprinkler systems save lives and property.

It was questioned if, like smoke alarms, can sprinkler systems be turned off. There was discussion regarding residential and commercial sprinkler systems; e.g., heat needs to stay on to vacant building so the sprinkler system won’t freeze.

State Fire Marshall William Barnard added that it depends on the occupancy type. As a result of the fire at a nightclub in Rhode Island (100 where killed), changes were made (base code), Annapolis has a zero tolerance. 13D systems are primary for the safety of life, property protection is secondary.

The public hearing was closed at 8:20 PM. Commissioner President Russell declared the record remain open for a period of ten days, for additional written comment. There were 31 individual names on the sign-in sheet. Twenty-seven (27) indicated on the sign-in sheet they were in favor of the proposed ordinance.

Mr. Fairfax presented a video, “Marble Mountain”, which emphasized the importance of sprinkler systems. The video showed a set fire in a room without a sprinkler and the same room with a sprinkler.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Commissioner Dement moved, seconded by Commissioner Mattingly, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried 5-0.**

Minutes Approved by the Board of County Commissioners on \_\_\_\_\_

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Betty Jean Pasko, Senior Administrative Coordinator