

JANUARY 2023

Monthly Report

**Happy New Year! May 2023 bring you a renewed
sense of hope and positivity!**



**Takisha James
Town of Bladensburg, Maryland**

Activity Report for January 2023 Meetings, Events & Updates

January 4: Maryland Municipal Association Executive Committee Meeting | The monthly meeting was held to review the upcoming MMA Winter Conference. The plan is to structure the conference with time to hear from the head of the legislature (both the House and Senate), the Comptroller, and hold the highly popular economic outlook session.

January 9: Attended the Parkway Condominiums Annual Meeting | Senator Augustine, Chief Collington, members of the Maryland Attorney General's Office and I joined homeowners of the association as they held their annual meeting. This meeting came after months of intervention from the Prince George's County Office of Community Relations Common Ownership Division, Senator Augustine, and the Town of Bladensburg. This election was the association's first election in several years. We will continue to work with the new Board to support them as they work to make progress for the residents of Parkway.

January 10: Black History Month Planning Meeting | Council Member Brown and I began working with Ray Jeffries on this year's program. The event will be our first in-person Black History Month Program since 2020 just before the pandemic forced us to stop gatherings to remain compliant with Executive Orders from the Governor and Prince George's County Executive. We are so pleased to be back in person as we celebrate Black history as part of Bladensburg's history.

January 10: Emerson House New Tenant Council Takes Office | I had the privilege of installing the new Tenant Council at the Emerson House. Congratulations to each of the residents who stepped up to serve their fellow residents!

I also want to give thanks to the previous Council Members who did an outstanding job serving the residents!

- **Ms. Amy Beckley, President**
- **Ms. Lenora Seaton, Secretary**
- **Isatta Nicholas, Treasurer**
- **Marilyn Pray, Sargent at Arms**

January 11: MML Opening Legislative Session Reception | Council Member McBryde, Council Member Route and I attended this reception to kick off the 2023 legislative session and have the opportunity to connect with legislators. This is an important opportunity to discuss important issues with key leaders in the legislator and Moore-Miller Administration. Council Member Carrol McBryde, Mayor Tracy Farrish-Gant and I at the Reception.----->



January 14: 295 Coalition Meeting with Delegate Nicole Williams |

The Special Guest Speaker was Prince George's County State's Attorney Aisha Braveboy. She reported carjacking incidents increased 23% from December 2021 and December 2022 going from 441 up to 541. There were 356 carjacking related cases indicted in Prince George's County Circuit Court and 65 of those cases were waived to Juvenile Court. 125 of those cases were resolved with guilty findings. 108 are pending trial and 15 cases are in warrant status.

With respect to juvenile cases, as of December 31, 2022 there were 483 petition in Prince George's County Circuit Court.

- 15% were carjacking-related offenses.
- 18% were robbery-related offenses.
- 5% were assault-related offenses.
- 10% were handgun-related offenses.
- 53% are comprised of other violent/dangerous and/or serious offenses (such as murder, sex cases, drugs, theft, property, DUI/DWL).

A well-drafted RICO statute will be an effective tool to disrupt criminal organizations that engage in carjacking, distributing illegal guns, or traffic fentanyl on the streets of Prince George's County. To this end House Bill 1138 sponsored by Delegates Toles, Williams, Charles, Smith, and Taylor is going before the House Judiciary Committee for consideration.

The SAO's established a Carjacking Task Force inclusive of local, state and federal law enforcement, agencies, elected officials and private sector representatives. The purpose is to explore the root cause of violent crime and work together to establish solutions to reduce it. The SAO has also developed an initiative to reduce gun violence in the County with Our Streets, Our Future gun violence prevention campaign, which the Town of Bladensburg also participated in.

The final topic of the coalition meeting was regarding the MAGLEV. Council Member J. Davis noted the City of Greenbelt is continuing to work with an attorney on this matter. The developer tried to get on the agenda for an upcoming PGCMA meeting but that ultimately was shut down. They are continuing efforts to try to get inroads with communities that have been opposed to this project.

Delegate Williams noted she has submitted HB 106 and asked for support with written and oral testimony when it goes before the Environment & Transportation Committee.

January 16: National Day of Service Event | The Town partnered with the Friends of Quincy Run, Washington Rowing School and the Bladensburg Waterfront Park for the National Day of Service to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. The Town of Bladensburg Team was well represented by Chief Collington, his wife Mrs. Collington, Council Member Carrol McBryde, First Gentleman Walter James, Jr., and me. We were fortunate to be joined by a great group of volunteers from the Washington D.C. Sierra Club, Washington Rowing School, and Elizabeth Seton High School. Our work focused on taking steps to help mitigate urban flooding in our community.



We worked on young trees planted a few years ago at the Bladensburg Waterfront Park. These trees play an important role in the environment because the leaves provide canopies, which help reduce erosion caused by falling rain. They also provide surface area where rain water lands and evaporates. The tree roots take up water which is of particular importance during periods of heavy rains. Volunteers cleared away invasive species from the trees which pose a threat if not removed. We had a successful event supported by approximately 40 volunteers.

January 18: Inauguration of Governor-Elect Wes Moore and Lieutenant Governor-Elect Aruna Miller | It was a distinct honor to be invited to witness the historic inauguration of the first African American Governor and first Indian American Lieutenant Governor of the State of Maryland.

It was moving to learn from the Master of Ceremony, Anne Arundel County Executive Steuart Pittman that his family once owned the land now occupied by the State House and Governor's House was once owned by his forefathers who were slaveowners. He noted the State House and Governor's Mansion were both built with free labor from enslaved workers so to see how far we've come with the election of Governor Moore and Lt. Governor Miller. The event was attended by numerous dignitaries and VIPs including Attorney General Anthony Brown (the first African American elected to this role), Comptroller Brooke Lierman (the first woman elected to this office), Oprah Winfrey and Chelsea



Clinton. The historical significance of this moment and enthusiasm in the crowd was palpable for all who were in attendance.

On the same evening, First Gentleman James and I had the opportunity to attend the People’s Ball to celebrate the historic inauguration. The event was very well attended and provided a positive environment to connect with community leaders from across the state.

January 19: PGCMA | During the meeting Mayor Celina Benitez shared that she joined CASA, Council Member Martin Mitchell (Laurel, MD) and other community members to testify regarding CB-007-with the Prince George’s County Council regarding the need for rent stabilization. The County Council is discussing rent stabilization. Some people went to testify regarding CB-

007-2023: AN ACT CONCERNING RENT STABILIZATION ACT OF 2023 for the purpose of temporarily amending the Landlord-Tenant Code to limit landlords’ ability to increase rent for certain tenants above a certain amount; providing for certain exemptions; providing that existing obligations or contract rights may not be impaired by this Act; and generally relating to rent restrictions for residential leases and rental dwelling units.

I placed this issue on the February 13 Council Worksession agenda in order to discuss submitting a letter of support for this bill from the Town Council.

January 20: Bladensburg High School Girls Soccer Team | Congratulations to the Girls Varsity Soccer Team on winning the Regional Championship! Chief Collington, First Gentleman Walter James and I joined the team and coaches for their annual banquet to celebrate the success of their season. It was so nice to be with parents and students celebrating their successful season!

January 23: Newton Green Tenant Council Officer Installment | I had the distinct honor of installing the new officers elected to serve at Newton Green. It was wonderful to see a fresh new group of volunteers stepping up to serve on the Council. Congratulations to:

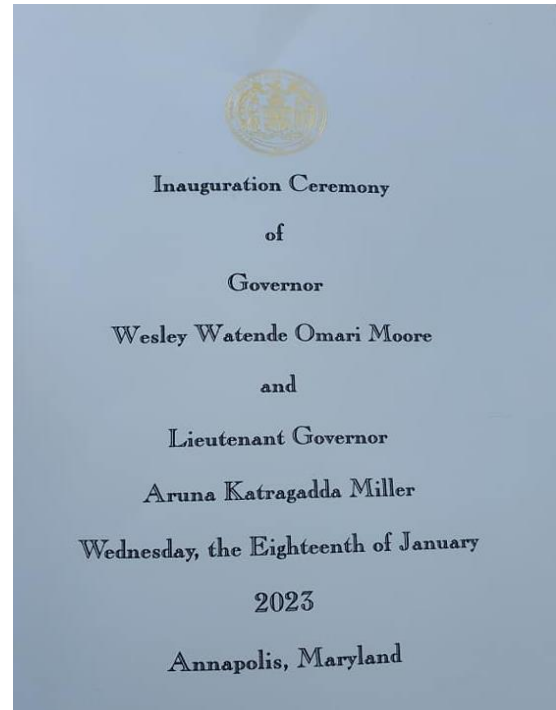
President: Ms. Phyliss Ramsey

Vice President: Ms. Monique Paris

Secretary: Ms. Della Solomon

Treasurer: Ms. Ruby White

Chaplain: Ms. Patricia Smith



January 24: Women’s History Month Event Meeting | I met with Ms. Montford of the Bladensburg Police Department to brainstorm about holding an event for the Town of Bladensburg during Women’s History Month. We reached out to Elizabeth Seton regarding hosting the event at the school. This event will offer a great opportunity for us to honor women who are doing outstanding work in the Bladensburg community.

January 25: Maryland Senate Budget & Taxation Committee Hearing | I submitted testimony in support of SB0050 previously sponsored by Senator Paul Pinsky before his Moore Administration appointment. Currently Senator Pamela Beidle and Senator Malcolm Augustine are the bill sponsors for SB0050 State Finance – Prohibited Appropriations – Magnetic Levitation Transportation System. This legislation is being proposed for the purpose of prohibiting the State and certain units and instrumentalities of the State from using any appropriation for a magnetic levitation transportation system in the State; providing that the prohibition does not apply to certain expenditures for salaries; and generally relating to State appropriations for magnetic levitation transportation systems.

January 27: Mrs. Diane Griffin-Horn Retires After 22 Years! | The Town staff did a beautiful job of planning the retirement party for Diane. I want to extend a huge THANK YOU to all of the residents, staff, community members and Town Council members who took time to join the celebration of her service. Diane was provided such a warm presence in the office and she will truly be missed in the front office!

January 30: Port Towns Quarterly Meeting | The Town of Bladensburg hosted the quarterly meeting via Zoom. We invited MNCPPC to address the Port Towns leaders and make them aware of the new Port Towns Sector Plan process which will commence this year. Additionally, we welcomed Ms. Michelle Kokolis, (Program Manager, Environmental Finance Center, University of Maryland) to update the group on deliverables associated with the Walkable Watershed Grant secured for the Port Towns. We will be holding the kickoff meeting in the next few weeks. The group also brainstormed on ways to partner with the Port Towns and show our collaboration. We’ll send out a survey to gather input on the preferred options for collaborating this year.

