

**BLADENSBURG TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, MAY 8, 2023**

**Mayor Takisha D. James
Monthly Report on Meetings and Activities**

Monthly Meetings & Activities

For the Month of April

April 3: PGCMA Legislative Committee Meeting | During the meeting we discussed final pieces of legislation to consider supporting including SB116, Property Tax - Municipal Corporation Business Personal Property Tax Rate and HB 1105, Public Schools – Water Safety and Swimming Course – sponsored by Delegate Karen Toles and a host of delegates including our own Delegate Julian Ivey. We canceled the April 10 meeting as the legislative consultants were focused on the last day of the 2023 session and making final pushes for bill passage. We held our April 17 meeting to recap the end of the 2023 legislative session. We learned the street lighting bill did not receive a favorable report nor did it make it out of the Senate. The legislative consultants anticipate this will be filed early in the next session to help increase the chance of passage in 2024. We also learned SB 0011, Motor Vehicles - Establishment of School Zones, did not make it out of the Senate. The challenge with this bill was the attempt to decrease school zones from 0.5 miles to 0.1 miles from schools. This would've been detrimental to students walking to school along streets with heavy traffic and a history of speeding. The proposed bill would've decreased the school zone boundaries thus decreasing the area for school zone speed enforcement measures including speed cameras leaving pedestrians further exposed to speeding traffic. We also discussed the disappointing outcome with the Maglev bill which has not made it out of committee for the last several sessions.

April 4: Parkview Tenant Council Meeting | Council Member McBryde, Chief Collington and I attended the meeting to provide updates from the Town and also hear the concerns of the residents. In addition to the community updates, we encouraged residents to get more involved in the Town through our volunteer opportunities.

April 8: Meeting with Port Towns Mayors & Commission Chair | Connecting with this group of leaders providing an opportunity to brainstorm regarding themes to share during the upcoming Port Towns meeting with council members, commissioners and staff of the Port Towns. I proposed that we consider as an option branding the Port Towns as the historic gateway to Prince George's County as well as the state of Maryland. My colleagues also recommended the inclusion of arts and sustainability into the rebranding of the Port Towns. We agreed to bring these concepts before our collective teams at the Port Towns meeting scheduled for the end of April.

Town of Bladensburg Eggstravaganza | The Bladensburg Community Action Team did a wonderful job with this annual event. Residents were able to bring their children to the David C. Harrington Community Park and experience family fun on Easter holiday weekend.

April 10: Maryland Sine Die Day | This day marks the end of the Maryland legislative session. This is usually filled with a last-minute rush where legislators are working hard to get their legislation passed before midnight. Governor Wes Moore rang the ceremonial bell to celebrate Sine Die 2023 at 11:59 PM.

April 14: Meeting to discuss next steps for the Rain Barrel Program | Council Member McBryde and I had a chance to follow up with Green Mechanics regarding next steps for the Town's Rain Barrel program. We are drafting the application and application process so we can obtain legal and Council review before launching this program in the community this spring/summer.

April 18: Meeting with DCAO Holt and Prince George's County Municipal Mayors | Council Member Brown and I attended this meeting where we learned about the Government Infrastructure, Technology & Environmental Services (GITES Cluster), led by Deputy Chief Administrator Lloyd

Holt. We were also joined by the Chief Administrative Office Tara Jackson who reports directly to the County Executive. For reference, the G.I.T.E.S. Portfolio of Agencies includes Department of the Environment, Department of Public Works & Transportation, Office of Information Technology, Prince George's County Board of Elections and the Board of License Commissioners.

We also learned of the core services for DOE, which include:

- Improve water quality to comply with the County's federal and state NPDES MS4 Permit and implement flood control projects.
- Collect, process and divert waste from the County operated landfill, commercial facilities and households to comply with the County's staterequired Ten Year Solid Waste Plan.
- Educate the community on litter reduction, pollution prevention, climate change and environmental best practices.
- Facilitate pet adoptions, manage an animal service facility, issue licenses, investigate cruelty complaints and conduct humane outreach and education events.

One of the key challenges they are working to address includes residential flooding. As intense, more frequent storms like the one experienced on September 10, 2020, become the norm, the County will need to develop a rapid response to include provision of roll-off containers in communities to enable residents to clean flooded basements. DoE was able to do so following the September 2020 event but only through curtailing provision of existing services with already limited staff. More resources will be needed in the future. Also, the County will need to redefine the target audience for flood insurance promotion to include property owners countywide as well as develop promotional materials to support the purchase of flood insurance for recovery assistance following loss and damage due to flash floods.

We received an overview from DPW&T which included an overview of their maintenance efforts and initiatives. The county maintains over 2,000 miles of roads, 900 bridges and 3,000 acres of grassy areas. They also are responsible for TheBus and Vision Zero. The county receives approximately 18,000 storm drainage complaints annually, manages 8 levees, 5 pumping stations, and 67 permitted channels.

The tree canopy has been declined in the County by roughly 4.3% from 2014 to 2018. The Maryland General Assembly established a goal to plant 5,000,000 trees by 2031. The County has the goal to maintain the county's existing tree cover through 2030 and increase tree cover to 55% by 2050.

We also were informed about median beautification pilot programs to help address habitat and biodiversity issues. I'll be following up to learn more and ascertain if similar projects could be added throughout the town to help the town address flooding challenges.

There was also mention of the upcoming Growing Green with Pride event in celebration of Earth Day on Saturday, April 22. The Town of Bladensburg is coordinating to plan an event as part of this effort.

DPW&T shared their Neighborhood Traffic Management Program (NTMP)

DPW&T uses a Pavement Assessment Management System (PAMS) methodology to evaluate asphalt conditions. Staff then develops a list of roads to receive a resurfacing treatment. Examples of pavement preservation techniques include:

- Crack Seal
- Slurry seal
- Asphalt Cut and Patch
- Pothole Repair

They also have a Pavement Survey Vehicles which survey the roads and collect data and photos to update the PAMS database. The vehicles scan every 50 feet of county road surfaces and detect cracks as small as one mm in width. The most recent scan of roads was completed in March 2023.

DPW&T is also conducting a review of all 311 requests for concrete repairs.

Office of Information Technology shared their priorities for the County which are to create customer centric digital experience, agile IT to benefit PGC functions and operations, innovation and growth, cost optimization, integrate IT with County strategy and initiatives, and access and equity.

Port Towns Sector Plan Kickoff Meeting | Josephine Selvakumar, Project Manager, MNCPPC and her team walked us through understanding what a sectional map amendment is. The Sector plan is a long-term policy plan of strategies for growth for targeted areas. It includes elements such as economic prosperity, natural environment, transportation, land use, housing community heritage, culture & design.

Goals of the Sector Plan along with the Sectional Map Amendment are:

- Analyze the existing conditions, and reexamine the Port Towns area (Bladensburg, Colmar Manor, Cottage City, and Edmonston) for redevelopment possibilities based on the current zoning, market conditions, and environmental constraints.
- Replace the 2009 Approved Port Towns Sector Plan with a new plan that identifies community-supported, achievable, and realistic vision, goals, policies, and strategies that support existing and new development.
- Define the Port Towns Neighborhood Center.

Outline the Planning Process:

- Overview of planning process
- The timeline/schedule will be determined at time of official project initiation
- Where are we now?
 - Early stage
 - Background and research
 - Pre-planning activities

We also discussed the proposed sector plan boundary and possible areas to define as the Neighborhood Center.

April 17 & 24: Town Council Budget Worksessions | The meetings were held via Zoom to work with staff on walking through expected revenues and expenditures for the department budgets covering the Mayor & Council, the Town Administrator, Town Clerk, Finance, Public Safety and Public Works. At the next budget work session, we'll cover the ARPA budget at the next work session.

April 22: Growing Green with Pride: Clean Up Green Up | In celebration of Earth Day and in partnership with the County's Growing Green with Pride Event, the Town of Bladensburg hosted a few activities to help residents clean up their homes as well as help beautify the Town. Code Enforcement led efforts to host a bulk trash collection at Town Hall on Saturday, April 22 followed by a paper shredding event on Sunday, April 23. Residents also gathered to help plant flowers in front of the Town Hall sign on Edmonston and Tilden Roads. We also planted flowers and trees at the Sunnybrook entrance as well as flowers at the welcome to Bladensburg sign on Annapolis Road. We are so grateful for all of the residents who participated in this year's event.

Bladensburg Police Department holds the Bladensburg Bike Olympics | The Community Action Team hosted another successful event to highlight bike safety for our youth. The event was a wonderful opportunity for getting residents outdoors and active with their children.

April 25th: Elizabeth Seton High School Hosts the Hispanic Business Reception | This event brought together local Latino business owners and elected officials to celebrate the accomplishments of the Latino students at the high school. The featured speaker for the event was Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk (D-21). She encouraged Latina students to be proud of their heritage and to work hard to achieve their dreams now matter how big they may be.

Thursday, April 27th: Elizabeth Seton High School's Inaugural Student Small Business Expo | This event highlighted roughly 13 students who showcased their ideas for start-up businesses. We also had the opportunity to ask questions of each student as well as leave them notes of encouragement or purchase some of their goods.

Meeting with Sheriff John D. B. Carr & Prince George's County Mayors | Sheriff Carr hosted Prince George's County mayors and walked us through the priorities of his office and provided an understanding of elements of the legal process surrounding some of the duties of his office. He noted the majority of crimes are carjackings and robberies. He noted the majority of violators are from the District of Columbia. As a rule, his officers are not allowed to pursue these criminals in a car chase. He also noted they are finding squatting throughout the County is a huge problem. He also provided stats regarding the municipalities and eviction cases.

April 28: Be a Volunteer Fire Fighter/EMT for a Day | I had the privilege of attending the Prince George's County Municipal Leaders "Be a Volunteer Firefighter/EMT for a Day". This event was organized by the Prince George's County Volunteer Fire & Rescue Association (PGCVFRA) in partnership with the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute to give attendees insight into the services that volunteer firefighters and EMTs provide County residents every day. In addition to learning in a classroom setting, we experienced highlights with practical learning by suiting up and experiencing a controlled building fire with expert instructors conducting demonstrations on how to extinguish fires. Temperatures at some points exceeded 500-600 degrees just giving us a small insight into the knowledge, experience and grace under pressure required to keep themselves safe as they're walking through thick smoke and trying to locate survivors during real fire emergencies.

Those in attendance also had a chance to simulate a vehicle accident rescue using the jaws of life to cut away car doors and the roof as well as remove the windows. The firefighters walked us through this exercise in about 30 minutes, however when duty calls, they're able to perform this process and have the victim/s extracted in about five minutes.

I am grateful to President Jeremy Jordan (PGCVFRA), Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute Executive Director Michael Cox, Jr., the Prince George's County Ladies Auxiliary and the entire team of volunteer firefighters and EMTs who provided this exceptionally educational and fun experience.

April 28: Cops & Teens Event | I enjoyed attending the skate night party with local teens and members of our police department. This offered a fun way for the officers to connect and continue fostering positive relationships with our youth.

April 29: Prince George's County Office of Community Relations Hosts Christmas in April | I had the opportunity to volunteer for this annual event which is a partnership between Christmas in April and Prince George's County government. A senior citizen was selected who need major work completed on his yard and the exterior of his home. Over volunteers from across the county

including members of the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority volunteered for this event. The resident and his family were so grateful to have been selected for this opportunity.

April 29: Elizabeth Seton Theater Company Presents The Wiz | I attended this production to support the Elizabeth Seton Theater Company and was treated to a fantastic experience. The students did an incredible job of singing, acting, and creating the set designs. I look forward to attending more of their productions in the future!