

Regular Meeting of County Commissioners
Wednesday July 12, 2023 (Legislative Day)

The regularly scheduled meeting of the County Commissioners was convened in hybrid format, virtually and in person, at 1:03 p.m. with the following persons in attendance:

Reuben B. Collins II, Esq., President, County Commissioner
Ralph Patterson, II, M.A., Vice President, County Commissioner
Amanda M. Stewart, M.Ed., County Commissioner
Deborah Hall, Acting County Administrator
Wes Adams, County Attorney
Carol A. DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners

**Gilbert O. Bowling, III, County Commissioner, was absent*

**Thomasina O. Coates, M.S., County Commissioner, was absent*

Call to Order/Pledge

Commissioner Collins called the meeting to order and began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

A roll call was taken. Commissioners Stewart, Patterson and Collins were present. **Commissioners Bowling and Coates were not present.*

Approval Items

Action on Boards, Commissions and Committees

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed with Commissioners Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present voting in favor appoint Christine Gonzales to the Animal Matters Hearing Board. **Commissioners Bowling and Coates were not present for the vote.*

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed with Commissioners Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present voting in favor to reappoint Granville Johnson to the Charles County Police Accountability Board. **Commissioners Bowling and Coates were not present for the vote.*

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed with Commissioners Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present voting in favor to appoint James Akwarandu and Taquanda Dixon to the Commission on Individuals with Disabilities. **Commissioners Bowling and Coates were not present for the vote.*

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed with Commissioners Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present voting in favor to reappoint Francis Gray and Maria Kane and to appoint Ruby Thomas and Travis Wright to the Historic Preservation Commission. **Commissioners Bowling and Coates were not present for the vote.*

A motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed with Commissioners Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present voting in favor to reappoint Kate Heichler,

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Rebecca Michela, Mohammad Mugal and Donald Zimmer and appoint Sherry Burks to the Interfaith Commission. **Commissioners Bowling and Coates were not present for the vote.*

Letter of Support and Financial Funds: Tri-County Council and Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) Grant for Lothian Mills 2

(Ms. Kelly Robertson-Slagle, Director, Department of Economic Development, and Mr. Craig Sewell, SSM Marketing & Livestock Specialist, SMADC).

Ms. Kelly Robertson-Slagle, Director, Department of Economic Development, explained that there has not been enough opportunity to reach out to Charles County Farmers to gauge their participation in this program. She believed in the project in concept.

A motion was made by Commissioner Patterson to approve the letter of support but with no funding. There was not a second, so the motion dies.

Discussion: Maryland Cannabis Legislation Implementation

Delegate C.T. Wilson, Maryland House of Delegates; Mr. William Tilburg, Acting Director, Maryland Cannabis Administration; Mr. Jerome Spencer, Counsel, and Lt. John Elliott, Charles County Sheriff's Office; Ms. Deborah Carpenter, Director, and Mr. Jason Groth, Deputy Director, Department of Planning and Growth Management; Ms. Danielle Mitchell, Associate County Attorney, Office of the County Attorney for Charles County; and Mr. Joseph Green, Lobbyist, GS Proctor joined the Commissioners for a discussion on the recent legalization of cannabis in Maryland. Delegate C.T. Wilson summarized how legalization was approved by public referendum and proceeded through a legislative process to become law. Stakeholders from the Maryland Cannabis Administration, Charles County Sheriff's Office, County Attorney's Office and Department of Planning and Growth Management reviewed key facts on the law regarding licensed sales and distribution, as well as restrictions on its quantity and use.

**Break 2:25 p.m. - 2:35 p.m.*

Briefing: Affordable Housing Strategy Update

Ms. Deborah Carpenter, Director, Mr. Charles Rice, Planning Director, Mr. Michael Jurkovic, Planner III, Department of Planning and Growth Management presented an update on the work of the Affordable Housing Workgroup whose mission is to devise a comprehensive affordable housing strategy for Charles County. They recommended including both mandatory measures and incentives, a plan for implementation, a flexible approach with realistic goals, and broad community engagement in the planning process. Staff presented the Affordable Housing Work Group's work plan which has five phases and shared the results from its first phase of completed work, as well as a summary of the outcome of its latest meeting. A Comprehensive Affordable Housing Strategy is anticipated for completion by May 2024.

At 3:11 p.m., a motion was made by Commissioner Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Patterson and passed, with Commissioners Stewart, Patterson, and Collins present, voting in favor to adjourn.

**Commissioners bowling and Coates were not present for the vote.*

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Carol A. DeSoto, Clerk to the Commissioners

Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq., President