

I wish to express my anger at the disrespect shown to me and the other citizens here to provide public comments. We entered the meeting room a bit earlier than usual and observed Commissioner Coates participating virtually in the Board's meeting. As soon as the Public Comments session began, she departed as always. The Commissioners voted 4-1 to continue holding the Public Comments sessions. We hear continually when topics like the Charter Board come up that it was voted on 3-2 and it's a democracy. Yet this continues. I attended a town hall in Bryans Road last week that is Ms. Coates' district but Mr. Bowling conducted the meeting because she never meets her constituents. And the Board treats this as if it is normal not needing any comment. Commissioner Coates has a direct impact on our lives as one of the five commissioners. I am sure that Commissioner Coates will reappear as soon as this session ends (she did). This is insulting to those of us who devote the time to prepare comments, commute here and back, have our paltry 3 minutes, and respectfully listen to other citizens. But it is also insulting to all the citizens of Charles County and it is obviously meant to be. Say something.

I would like to offer my help to any newspapers that may be watching the fiasco here in Charles County. We all depend upon journalism to be informed. I believe that democracy dies in the dark and it has died here. We have seen that with the last election with everything hidden from us then and the continued secrecy. This is a great story for any reporter who wants to pick it up. I am happy to provide them with key moments in the timeline and volunteer to research for them at no charge. I have heard from others who will do this as well. This is a story that needs to be told. We need a light shining on what is going on here because it is not normal.

Commissioner Patterson has become the deciding vote for many issues that come before the Board. He rarely gives a detailed explanation of why he is voting yes or no. When forced to ask questions they seem to usually be ones already answered or peripheral to the subject. Given that he was made Commissioner Vice President despite being the only freshman and that his campaign was funded to a large degree by Commissioner Coates, the citizens are entitled to hear why he has chosen to decide in a particular direction. Otherwise, the logical conclusion is that others are making that choice.

I would also like to state my disagreement with Commissioner Bowling's view on speed cameras along Route 210 in Prince George's County. This has been an extremely dangerous road for a long time. If residents of Charles County choose to make it so by exceeding the speed limit (I believe 13 MPH over is the threshold) then I think most residents have no problem with them paying fines to PG County. If it is seen as a tax then it is one they are freely choosing to pay.