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Public Comments Session Tues, 3/19/24 – Removal legislation; Interlocutory appeal legal fees; Economic Development competition – the business is the customer

I want to mention three (3) things today:

First: Commissioners' March 5 discussion on "Removal of an Elected County Commissioner" legislation.

In November, you reviewed a draft of this legislation and sent staff back to look at some concerns Commissioner Collins had with this legislation. (I assume Commissioner Collins is speaking for Commissioners Coates & Patterson, since all 3 of you voted against the legislation but neither of the others said anything about their reasoning.)

On March 5, staff came back with a proposal that Commissioner Collins said "addressed concerns," and even that staff did an "Outstanding" job with the legislation:

Collins: "I actually appreciate your efforts to address some of the issues that I raised, and I think that for the most part, you did address those."

Commissioner Collins: "And I recognized and acknowledged that you did an outstanding job."

Yet now, your concern is that no other Code Home Rule county in Maryland has such a provision and the precedent it would set.

Considering how often we hear comments about wanting to lead in various aspects of government, it does strike me as incredibly odd that something as important as THIS would be the issue where you decide you DON'T want to lead.

Second: Interlocutory appeal legal fees (Commissioner Coates' legal appeals)

On March 12, you discussed the interlocutory appeal legal fees, and no one moved to do a budget transfer to fund those fees. However, Attorney Kevin Karpinski said that, in the viewpoint of the attorney whose firm incurred those fees, the fees would be due & payable by county. Furthermore, this Board was not explicit in stating that we – the taxpayers of Charles County - are not paying them. I reiterate my prior statements to this Board, that I do not want to be paying Commissioner Coates' appeals fees.

Third: Economic Development (By the way, this is the kind of thing I'd rather be here talking to you about, instead of various legal and ethical issues.)

When I spoke to you during a public comments session on February 27, I mentioned that business decisions are competitive. Today I want to drill down into that a bit more.

This is a critical point: When it comes to location selection decisions, THE BUSINESS IS THE CUSTOMER.

Think about it: normally, we think of ourselves as being the customer. We go to a restaurant, and we are the customer. We buy a car, and we are the customer.

But when it comes to business location decisions, WE are the seller, the BUSINESS is the customer, and the PRODUCT is the county as a business location.

The county and what we have to offer to businesses is our product, and the business is the customer. AND, the customer has choices. We are competing with other jurisdictions both to attract new businesses, and to keep and grow the ones we already have.

And, for locations within the county that are seeking business growth, it's important to keep in mind that they are ultimately competing with other locations within Charles County to land that business. Therefore I encourage all

to really consider the competitive advantages that a location offers to businesses, to the customer.