

2013 Legislative Address Council President Billy Boniface

February 5, 2013

Welcome everyone. Tonight is a special one for this Council. After spending 2 years in exile we have returned home to the promise land and this meeting is our first with our entire offices consolidated under one roof. No more lack of parking or meeting space for us or our constituents which has been an ongoing complaint of both the public and my colleagues. No more hauling all the materials needed to run these sessions up and down the street each meeting. Most importantly, no more opening up my office to only find Mr. Guthrie at my table because there was no other place for him to use. We are now a one stop shop on the 2nd floor here at 212 with every Councilmember and their support staff in the same location along with the offices of the County Auditor and Council Attorney. I would again like to thank ICT Director Pibil and his many technicians along with Chief Myers and his staff at Facilities for a smooth transition. I would like to thank Vice President Slutzky and Council Administrator Meister for spearheading the effort. I would also like to thank County Executive Craig for his support on the many changes made from the funding of the Auditor's office to supporting the Charter amendments needed to execute many of our plans. It could have been a very difficult process without his support but as a former legislator himself he had the foresight to direct his administration to work with us instead of against. For that we are grateful. With amply meeting rooms and an extensive library of Council archives we hope the public will take advantage of the many resources that are available for their use. It doesn't stop there. In the near future we will be launching many new initiatives that we hope will continue to improve our ability to keep those we serve better informed. I know I speak for all seven members of this Council that we are proud of the many advances made on several fronts during the last two years. I can't say there hasn't been a bump in the road from time to time, but by staying together and on mission adversity has made us stronger as a group. It has always been our goal during our time here to remove the stigma of the Council Office from being a step child of County Government and elevating it to the proper stature a Legislative Branch of the people should hold. We firmly believe our actions today will better prepare those that choose to lead tomorrow.

Now what's on the horizon for this upcoming year? The biggest issue this Council deals with each year remains the same, the budget and our review and ultimately approval of the County Executive's proposal. While we as a County have done well over the years managing what revenues have been available to meet the needs of our citizens during this volatile economy, the variable has always been the State and to a certain extent the Federal Government. It's well known that The State giveth and the State taketh away. It's also well known for last several years there has been a whole lot more taketh away than giveth. While our State Senators and Delegates do their best to lessen the damage and bring home our fair share, they are small group fighting an uphill battle. As we await the outcome of the General Assembly's legislative session, it's critical that we the Council, County Executive, Sheriff, Health Department, Library System, Board of Education, Community College, States Attorney's office, Court System and all

those agencies that rely on funding from the County keep in communication with one another and prioritize our needs.

That brings me to what we the Council feel is a critical need, a County Facilities Master Plan. During last year's budget this Council approved funding of a project to bring in an outside consultant to review the entire County's current facilities infrastructure including all the outside agencies that require funding from the County for capital improvements. It is our hope that this project would produce an unbiased and realistic report of the status of our current facilities, needs of the future, and most importantly recommendations on what priorities should be dealt with first as funding becomes available. It is our hope to take the politics out of the Capital Improvement Program process. While getting this project off the ground has been a challenge, I'm happy to report its back on track and I'm personally representing the Council in the procurement process to select the firm that ultimately will be presented to the Board of Estimates for approval.

As district representatives my colleague's interest and priorities vary as much as their ages and personalities.

When not trying to see how far he can push me before I scream, Mr. Guthrie is busy representing the citizens of Edgewood and Joppatowne. He continues to lobby for a Community Center to be shared between the two areas that will enhance the quality of life of his constituents. Check out his weekly newsletter. Other than his picture at the top it's very informative. He also asked me David to lobby for better lighting for the Edgewood Boys and Girls Club parking lot but in Mr. Guthrie style, I'm sure that's not the first time you have heard that request.

Mr. Woods plans on to continue to lobby for the replacement of Youth Benefit Elementary School, preserving the Graham Property in Abingdon as a natural passive county park, and work with the State Highway Association on many of the road issues thru out his district. Joe continues to be a strong advocate for the protection of property rights. As one of our MACo representatives Mr. Woods will be spending long days over the coming weeks in Annapolis to ensure the Council's voice is heard.

Councilman McMahan also has many State Road issues thru out his district that he diligencely continues to work with SHA on. Recently he was able to convince the State to designate MD 924 as a school safety zone from Ring Factory to Plum Tree Road to protect our children in the three schools along that route. Captain Jim as well as Mr. Slutzky and Ms. Lisanti are concerned with what the impact of any proposed Regional Water & Sewer Authority will have on their respective municipalities. I've asked Director of Public Works Mr. Whittie to meet with the three on a regular basis over the coming months to keep the lines of communication open. I could go on and on with the issues Mr. McMahan has brought to me for future legislation. Each one with one common denominator; not how we can make things better but how can we make Harford the best. Checkout his newsletter also...very informative and no picture.

My Councilman Mr. Shrodes priorities for the upcoming year include lobbying for a Senior/Recreation Center in Whiteford, Safer Roads through the implementation of the goals

and strategies of the Traffic Safety Task Force spearheaded by himself and Sheriff Bane, creation of design standards to enhance the character of the communities throughout his district, update APF standards, enhancement of the current TDR program and improved Internet access to Northern Harford County through the current HMAN Project being done by the County. As always Mr. Shrodes continues to join me in promoting the importance of Agriculture to the County's economy and landscape.

When I asked Vice President Slutzky his priorities for this coming year besides his critical role to this Council of Education Liaison, I should have guessed his answer because it's equally mine; Improve the traffic conditions along the Route 22 corridor from Route 543 to APG. Hopefully together we can continue to convince the State to implement some of the recommendations from the recently completed Route 22 Study lead by Planning and Zoning Director Gutwald. Mr. Slutzky's support of me both personally and professionally over the last year has been rock solid and I can't thank him enough. While not a marine, Wrestlers still have that unspoken code of sticking together.

Among the many initiatives Ms. Lisanti is working on, she plans to bring before the Council legislation to implement the recommendations of the Obesity Task Force which she is very much involved with. Mary Ann also continues to work on Chesapeake Bay initiatives through not only this Council but the many Federal and State Boards she has a seat on with the main objective of finding balance to ensure that no one sector carries the responsibility of protecting the Chesapeake Bay for generations to come.

My role...making sure each one of them accomplishes their goals. Finding common ground to achieve successful results. My goal is always 7-0 votes but more importantly respect of each other regardless of the outcome. God bless.