



For Immediate Release

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Talbot County Council Hosts Meeting with Incorporated Municipalities

On Tuesday, June 6, the Talbot County Council hosted elected officials and staff from local municipalities including Easton, Oxford, Queen Anne, St. Michaels, and Trappe.

This roundtable meeting, held periodically, brings elected officials and related staff together to share information, provide updates related to their specific jurisdiction, and to discuss county and regional issues.

Adequate Public Facilities Ordinances (APFO)

Tracey Gordy, Lower Eastern Shore Regional Office, Maryland Department of Planning, and David Dahlstrom, Upper Eastern Shore Regional Planner, Maryland Department of Planning were invited to provide a summary on Adequate Public Facilities Ordinances (APFOs) and their application throughout Maryland.

An APFO is a legislative tool that helps counties or municipalities manage growth and development to ensure that adequate public facilities like roads, parks, schools, water, sewage, fire, EMS, etc. are in place to meet the needs of the anticipated growth and development in a jurisdiction. When used in conjunction with locally adopted comprehensive plans, the APFO, when adopted, can tie those service needs directly to development and zoning approvals.

For more information on APFOs, visit the Maryland Department of Planning website. The summary that was provided to those in attendance can be found here:

<https://planning.maryland.gov/Documents/mg24.pdf>

Maryland Cannabis Reform Act (HB556/SB516)

Officials and staff also briefly discussed the effect that legalization of cannabis would have on the County and municipalities.

With the passage of the Maryland Cannabis Reform Act, effective July 1, 2023, Maryland residents 21 and older may possess, use, and grow cannabis. The Towns of Oxford and St. Michaels have put moratoriums in place while they consider and enact appropriate zoning and other regulations. The Town of Trappe also plans to introduce a moratorium.

The County Attorney, Patrick Thomas, stated that the Cannabis Reform Act authorizes political subdivisions (e.g., counties and municipalities) to establish “reasonable” zoning requirements for cannabis businesses; however, such zoning and other regulations may not “unduly burden” a cannabis licensee.

The Act also prohibits political subdivisions from imposing licensing, operating, or other fees or requirements on cannabis licensees that are disproportionately greater or more burdensome than those imposed on other businesses with a similar impact on the area in which the cannabis licensee is located.

Town Updates

Each town provided brief remarks on updates, issues, and opportunities.

Most notably, several towns have received federal and State grants for flood mitigation and planning, wastewater and sewage planning, and wastewater treatment.

The next meeting with the municipalities is scheduled for Tuesday, October 3, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. at the Talbot County Free Library – Easton Branch, 100 W. Dover Street, Easton.