



For Immediate Release

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New Talbot County Planning Officer Appointed

Talbot County Government announces the retirement of Mary Kay Verdery as Planning Officer and the appointment of Miguel Salinas, Assistant Planning Officer, as Talbot County's new Planning Officer.

"We are so fortunate to have had both of these individuals in our Planning and Zoning Department. Mary Kay was dedicated to serving the citizens of our county and helped the County move forward with so many initiatives. Through her 28 years of service, she has never shied away from seeking improvement and fostering change and we wish her all the best in her retirement," states Clay Stamp, Talbot County Manager.

Verdery began her career with the Talbot County in early 1992 as an entry-level Correctional Officer. In February 2000, after achieving the rank of Lieutenant and Chief of Security for the Office of Corrections, she transferred to the Department of Planning and Zoning as a Zoning Coordinator. She was appointed to the position of Planning Officer in November 2014.

She credits her service to her community and a profound understanding of the responsibility in the administration of duties to her military background. She served in the United States Navy for six years. As a Correctional Officer, she helped develop and put into operation the County's first Court Ordered Community Service Program and participated in many educational and religious inmate programs. Her achievement in Planning and Zoning included obtaining grant funding for many planning initiatives to include developing the Axis Geospatial public mapping resource; updating critical area and Flood Insurance Rate Maps; drafting and adopting multiple Comprehensive Plans and Zoning Codes; implementing several village master plans; and developing a code compliance division and hearing officer process, as well as providing education and outreach to groups and individual citizens.

"I have always strived to keep the mission of the County, the safety of its citizens, and the objective of maintaining our rural character and economic health in the forefront of every decision I made," Verdery comments.

"A resilient leadership team, which is held high by a strong base of dedicated employees, manages the daily operations of Talbot County. However, Talbot County's greatest strength is in its citizens. Those that sit on our commissions, boards and committees, as well as those that attend meetings and get involved. As they say in the Navy, the best ships are 'friendships.' I am very grateful for every friendship developed in nearly 29 years of service to Talbot County."

Miguel Salinas, who previously served as Talbot County's Assistant Planning Officer, will replace Verdery. For the past four years, he has managed the completion of village master plans in Bellevue, Tilghman, and Cordova, building surveys, risk assessments and mitigation recommendations of historic structures in the water-oriented villages of Neavitt, Newcomb, Royal Oak and Tilghman, and implemented the County's update to the new zoning ordinance.

Salinas is currently leading efforts in the Department to support its marine-based and marine-supportive industry sector through a new working waterfront zoning district. He is also working to update the County's Green Infrastructure Plan to identify strategies and projects that have the potential to abate the effects of flooding, storm surges and shore erosion, and preserve areas of high conservation value.

"We have been so fortunate to have Miguel on our team. He brings years of experience to his new position, as well as a creative approach to streamlining our processes and solving some of the County's most urgent planning needs," adds Stamp.

Salinas is a community development specialist with a background in urban, rural, and regional planning; neighborhood revitalization; and land development. He worked in Loudoun County, Virginia as Deputy Director for the Department of Economic Development and as Program Manager in the County's Department of Planning and Zoning, where he also managed the County's heritage preservation program and the administration of western Loudoun's seven historic districts. He also has worked in planning in Rio Rancho and Taos County, New Mexico, as well as Milwaukee, Wisconsin and has a certification in charrette management and facilitation by the National Charrette Institute.

"I firmly believe that the role of local government is to build the capacity of its citizens, institutions, and businesses to help shape and create their communities," Salinas states.

"I am very excited to step in the role of Planning Officer and work with a great team of people. I intend to focus my efforts on ensuring the development review process is seamless, efficient and transparent for both our customers and our staff. I also want to ensure our zoning regulations nurture economic development opportunities while still preserving what makes Talbot County so special."

Brennan Tarleton, previously a Planner in the Department, has been appointed Talbot County's Assistant Planning Officer to replace Salinas. A graduate of Salisbury University, with a bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies and a focus in Environmental Land Use Planning, Tarleton began his career working with Southern Maryland Resource Conservation and Development. While with Talbot County, he has served as a technical reviewer of development projects and assisted in the public outreach processes for the most recent County Code update. More recently, he was a Senior Development Review Planner with Queen Anne's Department of Planning and Zoning, while also serving as the liaison for Queen Anne's County Economic Development Commission. Tarleton's experience has included managing several large-scale residential and commercial development projects.