



Frederick County Council News

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June in review:

The Frederick County Council met three times in June, with meetings on the 3rd, 17th, and 24th.

Following a press briefing by the County Executive, the County Council began deliberating on a compromise bill associated with siting for Critical Digital Infrastructure (CDI), or more widely accepted, data centers. Previously, the Council debated how to best deal with the placement of CDI, with two options before us: establishing a floating zone OR limiting development to Limited Industrial (LI) and General Industrial (GI) on our use table. The announcement of an overlay bridged the gap between both ideas with all Council Members originally agreeing to co-sponsor the legislation. An overlay district is a zoning tool that is placed on top of existing zones within a determined geographical area to impose additional regulations or limit/control the development of a specific use, such as a data center. The bill currently before the Council does NOT create a CDI overlay zone but would authorize the Administration to begin the process of creating a CDI overlay zone. If passed, the Department of Planning and Permitting would draft an overlay map and then forward it to the Planning Commission for a workshop and 60-day review, including a public hearing, before making an official recommendation to the County Council. At that point, the County Council would workshop the map, hold a public hearing, and then make a decision. All properties situated within the CDI overlay zone that does not already have LI or GI zoning will still need to apply for a rezoning if they desire to have a data center on their property. It is my desire to have the CDI overlay be as closely limited to the East Alcoa growth area as possible to ensure the integrity of our priority preservation and rural legacy areas that exist around the site.

In January, I raised, and passed, two amendments to the Frederick County Council Rules of Procedures. First, I moved that the County Executive's nominees to the Planning Commission shall be interviewed in a public open session. This rivals our old process which saw such interviews done in closed session. As a quasi-judicial board, the Planning Commission engages in such activity that requires a higher level of screening and public involvement. Second, the Council unanimously passed my amendment to expand public comment at workshop meetings. These rule changes are a step in the right direction for this government to affirm its support for open and transparent meetings and processes.

During this busy month, I made stops in Thurmont, Emmitsburg, and Woodsboro to attend their town meetings. Our various municipalities throughout Northern Frederick County have demonstrated their commitment and dedication to the betterment of our residents, and I could not be prouder of their work. Alongside Thurmont Town Commissioner Bill Blakeslee, I made my second trip to the Thurmont Senior Center for lunch and bingo. Although Commissioner Blakeslee and I did not have much bingo luck, we engaged in several productive conversations with Thurmont seniors and informed them of valuable resources to decrease the cost of living. Lastly, I joined several members of our community at the grand opening and ribbon cutting of the new Frederick City Police Department Headquarters. I was so encouraged by the number of people present, underscoring the Department's commitment to building strong relationships with the people they serve every day.

If you have any questions, or if I can be of service, please do not hesitate to email me at MCarter@FrederickCountyMD.gov