



Councilman Todd Crandell District 7 Newsletter



March 2015

Volume 3

Rain Tax

One thing that rang loud and clear last November 4th was the electorate's views on the storm water management fee, or "Rain Tax." I have been opposed to the principle and the execution of the Rain Tax since it was first enacted two years ago.

While it impacts every person in our county, perhaps nowhere is it felt more than by the business community, which is especially detrimental to our district as we seek to attract the return of industry and jobs at the largest industrial redevelopment project in the country at Sparrows Point.

As the Sparrows Point project moves forward, the Rain Tax is a hindrance to their success. I am committed to find ways to assist in the new owner's efforts, and the success of our district's economic future.

The county has a budget surplus, and they have funds already present in the rain tax fund which have not been used. Additionally, many seem to forget that storm water projects have existed since the 1970s, and have been completed and funded just like every other capital project without the need for a separate fund.

I am disappointed that the county used fear and doomsday scenarios to reject the idea of a full repeal of the Rain Tax by threatening capital projects in order to defeat my amendment that would have effectively repealed the fee. I will continue to explore alternative ways of further reducing or eliminating this onerous tax.



Eastwood/Berkshire Meeting

I am pleased to announce an event that occurred a few weeks ago at Berkshire Elementary School. Two community associations: Berkshire and Eastwood, came together along with Police, county code inspector Adam Whitlock, Doug Anderson from my office, and the owner of our local sanitation company. The focus of the meeting was how to fix the chronic problems afflicting the neighborhoods, and how to network and pool our resources to do so.

In short order, the meeting focused on code violations and how to combat rats and trash. Having both code and solid waste in the same room allowed for a meaningful and insightful exchange and highlighted the link between trash and rats. Adam also elaborated on the status of an ongoing extermination project that had been hampered by poor winter weather. While these efforts are important, I must remind you that the only way we can get rid of rats is by citizen's taking control of their trash and dog feces. Rats are here because people feed them by poor practices.

This may be a first in our district, two community groups collaborating with numerous other county agencies to move forward. I look forward to sharing in the results of this effort and hope that other communities will also realize that we can achieve more together than we can alone. We are seeing more cooperation among community groups than ever before, and good projects are coming about due to that cooperation, so let's keep it up.



Police cooperation, Community walk-throughs

On March 20th, I joined the new Precinct 12 Commander Captain Orlando Lilly on a tour of North Point Village and Eastwood. We walked with community leaders and other outreach officers to discuss specific problem areas in each community. Captain Orlando's commitment to service and creating relationships in the community will be an asset to us all as we focus on cleaning up our neighborhoods.

Over the next four weeks, five more communities are scheduled for this same walk-through as we gather input and ideas and identify problem areas in the kind of way that only a concerned resident of the community can express.

Community Cleanup

While I have spoken about how the Rain Tax is an impediment to new business in our district, there is another impediment: litter and dumping. Our district's waterways, roadsides, empty lots and even residential yards and streets. Our district has a few organizations that have done community cleanups for decades. We are looking to expand upon their efforts and attract new resources.

A small committee has been formed, already they have sought and obtained business sponsorships and expanded their reach to make previously scheduled cleanups more effective as well as create new ones. In just the next 2 months there are now 5 weekend cleanups scheduled. Please if you wish to volunteer, contact Doug in my office: wdanderson@baltimorecountymd.gov or (410) 887-3383. Our first cleanup is right around the corner, and you would be surprised at how easy it is to get involved and make a difference.

Dumping Legislation



Another way to attack problems is with legislation. I introduced legislation which aggressively raises the penalties for illegal dumping. While we are restricted by state statute on the maximum fine, there is no restriction on adding jail time. My bill adds the option of a judge adding up to 6 months jail time to a first offender caught dumping in our district. The council will vote on that bill on April 6th at 6pm.

North Point Government Center

The North Point Government Center Planned Unit Development (PUD) is now in the hands of the judicial branch of Baltimore County Government, with the Administrative Law Judge beginning hearings on March 26th.

As I have written before, when I took office the first thing I did in early December was to investigate what power I had to stop, amend, or restart the process involving the government center – because I was, and continue to be - in opposition of the sale of recreation and parks assets to private development. The results of my review included the fact that the PUD was executed in such a timeframe that the issue was completely out of the Council’s purview and moved to the Executive Branch of county government and it now resides in the Judicial Branch. I await the Administrative Law Judge’s decision.

When one takes office, one deals with the good and bad decisions of your predecessor. Please know that under my watch nothing resembling this lack of communication and lack of transparency will happen to us again.

“Shake off any dust that may accumulate from lack of purpose.”

- Cpl. Chris Coffland, US Army, KIA Afghanistan, 2009

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Todd Grubel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, prominent initial "T".