



# Howard County Council

George Howard Building  
3430 Court House Drive  
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043-4392

## COUNCILMEMBERS

Christiana Rigby, Chair  
District 3  
Deb Jung, Vice Chair  
District 4  
Opel Jones  
District 2  
Liz Walsh  
District 1  
David Yungmann  
District 5

### Monthly Meeting – Approved minutes

Hybrid Meeting (Virtual and In-Person Meeting)  
Video Streamed on <https://cc.howardcountymd.gov/watch-us>  
Monday, November 13, 2023  
9:30 a.m.

Chair Rigby opened the meeting at 9:36 a.m.

**Council Members present:** Chair Christiana Rigby; Vice-Chair Deb Jung; Liz Walsh; Opel Jones; and David Yungmann.

**Council Staff Present:** Theo Wimberly, Administrative Manager; Isaiah Anderson, Executive Assistant; Owen Kahn, Legislative Analyst; Trish Hammond, Administrative Staff; Charity Respass, Administrative Staff; Craig Glendenning, County Auditor; Owen Clark, Deputy County Auditor; Amanda Mihill, Office of Law; and Administration staff noted below.

### **Agenda**

#### **1. MACo Briefing**

County Executive Ball, as President of the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo), provided an overview of MACo initiatives and introduced Michael Sanderson, the Executive Director of MACo. Mr. Sanderson gave an overview of the ongoing work of MACo, including the fiscal situation of Maryland and how a change in the fiscal situation could affect County services. Mr. Sanderson discussed the new State cannabis law, changes to Maryland's paid leave law, ways to strengthen the fire service, transparency in education spending, options for the County to create a bracketed income tax structure, accessible and affordable housing, and what the State could do to alleviate the housing crisis. County Executive Ball outlined his four MACo priorities: investment in the fire department, transparency in education funding, taxing flexibility, and work at the State level to address housing affordability.

County Executive Ball and the MACo Executive Director responded to questions from Council Members on efforts to force more transparency in education spending and what might be able to be accomplished; money to implement Blueprint; plans to change the capital budget process to meet new needs in the education system and what the role the State could play; and highway user revenues.

## **2. EDA Annual Report Update, including Gateway Update**

Francine Trout from Workforce Development gave an overview of the Howard County workforce, including the low unemployment rate, the challenges facing the people served by the office, upcoming budget needs for ongoing programs the summer youth program, and State goals for apprenticeship and job readiness. Ms. Trout responded to questions from Council Members about how the County tracks data on the results of the workforce development programs and the major career focuses of the workforce training.

Jennifer Jones gave a presentation on the economic situation of Howard County, including population changes, the employment situation post-COVID, business and industry health, the 2024 strategic initiatives for the EDA, recent business development activities, the purpose and activities of the Catalyst Fund and the LIFT Fund, recent business finance projects, the Maryland Innovation Center, and BRITE entrepreneurship programming. Ms. Jones responded to questions from the Council on the financials of the Catalyst Fund and the Innovation Center, the purpose of the office park in Long Reach to be converted into a medical campus, EDA involvement in the TedCo tech hub, what industries in Howard County attract the most out-of-County commuters, and the timeline for the Route 1 Development Authority.

The Department of Planning and Zoning stated the Department needed another month to discuss the expression of interest and the negotiations with consultants. Ms. Jung asked Mr. Jannati if there were initial steps that could be taken to energize the area for development. Ms. Rigby discussed infrastructure opportunities to connect Gateway to nearby neighborhoods and Mr. Jannati discussed progress with CSX and property owners on implementing those changes. There was a general discussion about other opportunities for “third spaces” in Gateway.

## **3. Minimum Wage as Required by Sec. 12.2204**

Ms. Rigby gave introductory remarks on the need to study minimum wage and the code requirements for the minimum wage discussion.

Kelly Cimino discussed the relationship between the County average income and the average cost for apartment units and single family homes and the moderate and low income housing programs. Jackie Scott discussed how under-resourced households face disproportioned challenges in securing childcare and the current childcare shortages in the County. Ms. Rigby and Mr. Yungmann discussed the source of the statistics on the cost of living and minimum wage. Mr. Yungmann asked for a comparison to other central Maryland counties and the regional approach to housing. Ms. Jung asked about access to affordable healthcare. There was a general discussion about the application process for affordable housing units. Ms. Rigby asked about the coordination done to connect residents with the needed services.

#### **4. Reports**

a. Chair Report

Ms. Rigby had no report.

b. MACo/NACo

Ms. Jung pointed to the report earlier in the agenda.

c. BWI Roundtable

Ms. Jung had no report.

d. Council Administrator

Ms. Rigby and Mr. Wimberly highlighted technological advancements in the Council facilities.

e. County Auditor

The County Auditor had no report.

Chair Rigby closed the meeting at 11:43 a.m.

Persons needing accommodations to fully participate in the meeting, please contact the Council Office, 410-313-2001 or email [CouncilADA@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:CouncilADA@howardcountymd.gov)

Legislative Monthly Meeting - Participants  
Monday, November 13, 2023

**MACo**

Michael Sanderson

**EDA**

Jennifer Jones

Jason Jannati

**Minimum Wage**

Kelly Cimino – Housing

Jackie Scott – DCRS

Lynda Eisenberg, Mary Kendall - DPZ

Jeff Bronow (unavailable 11/13/23) – DPZ

Francine Trout – Workforce Development

Jennifer Jones - EDA

Jason Jannati – EDA

Linda Ostovitz – Howard County Chamber

Cheryl Brown – Howard County Chamber