

1 COUNTY COUNCIL OF TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

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4 Council Meeting

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6

7 November 25, 2025; 5:00 p.m.

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10 Council Chambers, Easton, Maryland

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14 COUNCIL MEMBERS:

15

16 Pete Leshner

17

18 Keasha N. Haythe

19

20 Lynn L. Mielke

21

22 Dave Stepp

23

24 Reported by

25

26 Diane Houlihan

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1	TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS	1
2		2
3	MR. LESHER: Welcome, everyone. I will	3
4	call this meeting to order. Thank you, all,	4
5	for being here.	5
6	Would you all please join me, rise as we	6
7	go through an opening prayer followed by the	7
8	Pledge of Allegiance.	8
9	(Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance.)	9
10	MR. LESHER: Thank you, again, for joining	10
11	us this evening.	11
12	Council has an agenda in front of it. Are	12
13	there any additions or corrections to the	13
14	agenda, any additions or deletions to the	14
15	agenda? If not, the chair will move that the	15
16	agenda be accepted with unanimous consent.	16
17	And we have minutes of the October 28th	17
18	and November 4th meetings. Are there any	18
19	additions or corrections to the minutes?	19
20	MS. MIELKE: Nope.	20
21	MR. LESHER: Hearing none, the chair will	21
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1	move that the minutes be approved with	1
2	unanimous consent.	2
3	We have record of the disbursements of	3
4	November 11th, November 18th, and November 25th	4
5	before us. Are there any questions for staff	5
6	on the disbursements?	6
7	MS. HAYTHE: No questions.	7
8	MR. LESHER: Hearing none, the chair moves	8
9	that the disbursements be approved with	9
10	unanimous consent.	10
11	Next up, we have a Council commendation	11
12	for our, for Hannah Ward, our Maryland 911	12
13	Board Communication Specialist of the Year.	13
14	Holley Guschke, are you here to present	14
15	Hannah to us?	15
16	MS. GUSCHKE: I am.	16
17	MR. LESHER: Please come up to the table.	17
18	MR. LeCATES: Go ahead. Sit down.	18
19	Thank you, Mr. Lesher. Thank you,	19
20	Council.	20
21	MR. LESHER: Welcome, Mr. LeCates.	21

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<p>1 She handles emergency calls with clarity 2 and compassion. Her ability to stay organized 3 and prioritize under pressure ensures that 4 callers receive the critical assistance they 5 need while nothing falls through the cracks.</p> <p>6 Hannah's multitasking skills, attention to 7 detail, and calm demeanor make her a steady 8 trusted presence during even the most chaotic 9 moments. Beyond her technical skill, what 10 truly sets Hannah apart is her attitude. She 11 is a breath of fresh air, supportive, 12 respectable, and generally enthusiastic about 13 her role.</p> <p>14 She provides exceptional customer service, 15 treating every caller and colleague with 16 kindness and empathy. Her commitment to 17 excellence, combined with her humility and 18 willingness to grow, makes her not only a 19 valued team player, but also a clear future 20 leader within our center.</p> <p>21 Hannah Ward is an integral part of our</p>	<p>1 and the respect, kindness, and empathy shown to 2 both callers and colleagues, we hereby bestow 3 upon you as a token of the esteem and gratitude 4 of our community this Certificate of 5 Commendation this 25th day of November, 2025.</p> <p>6 MR. LESHER: Do we have a motion to award 7 the commendation?</p> <p>8 MS. MIELKE: So moved.</p> <p>9 MR. STEPP: So moved.</p> <p>10 MS. HAYTHE: Second.</p> <p>11 MR. STEPP: How about the second? Third.</p> <p>12 MR. LESHER: Would the secretary please 13 call the roll.</p> <p>14 SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher.</p> <p>15 MR. LESHER: Aye.</p> <p>16 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.</p> <p>17 MR. STEPP: Aye.</p> <p>18 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.</p> <p>19 MS. MIELKE: Aye.</p> <p>20 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.</p> <p>21 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.</p>
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<p>1 team and exemplifies the very best of what a 2 911 dispatcher should be. For exceptional 3 service, positive influence, and tireless 4 dedication, she truly deserves the title 911 5 Communication Specialist of the Year.</p> <p>6 MR. LESHER: Well, congratulations.</p> <p>7 MS. WARD: Thank you.</p> <p>8 MR. LESHER: Having heard all that, shall 9 we ask the secretary to read the Commendation 10 into the record.</p> <p>11 SECRETARY: Council's Commendation to 12 Hannah Ward, the Maryland 911 Board 911 13 Communication Specialist of the Year.</p> <p>14 For her outstanding service and dedication 15 to public safety through 911 communications 16 through her demonstration of professional, 17 courteous, and responsive service to county 18 citizens using the Talbot County 911 Emergency 19 System with calmness, clarity, and compassion.</p> <p>20 And for her multitasking skills, attention to 21 detail, and positive attitude toward her job</p>	<p>1 MR. LESHER: Any Council remarks?</p> <p>2 MR. STEPP: I'll start it off if you don't 3 mind.</p> <p>4 So Holley, thank you for your kind words.</p> <p>5 Brian, thank you for your kind words.</p> <p>6 But Hannah, just thank you for what you 7 do. I love the three words in here. I think I 8 want to just call out myself. Right. So where 9 did they go? The three Cs; calmness, clarity, 10 and compassion.</p> <p>11 I just want everyone to just imagine if 12 you've ever had to call into 911. You're not 13 having a good day. Right. People aren't 14 calling to say hi. These are, most of the 15 times, probably one of the worst days of their 16 lives. And for you to just be there to answer 17 them and help them and get them the resources 18 they need is just awesome.</p> <p>19 I love doing this every year.</p> <p>20 Congratulations. Just keep it up. Thank 21 you.</p>

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1 MS. WARD: Thank you.	1 the public is needed to encourage support for
2 MR. LESHER: Anyone else from Council?	2 hunger and homelessness assistance service
3 MS. HAYTHE: Just congratulations, Hannah,	3 providers.
4 and thank you for all that you do.	4 And whereas, there are many organizations
5 MS. WARD: Thank you.	5 in Talbot County committed to sheltering and
6 MS. MIELKE: Thank you for your invaluable	6 providing supportive services, as well as meals
7 service.	7 and food supplies to individuals and families
8 MS. WARD: Thank you.	8 experiencing hunger and homelessness, including
9 MR. LESHER: We know what a valuable link	9 Talbot Interfaith Shelter, Neighborhood Service
10 you are at the very beginning of the emergency	10 Center, St. Vincent de Paul, Midshore
11 services process. And to be recognized by your	11 Roundtable on Homelessness at Midshore
12 own colleagues, that's really something.	12 Behavioral Health, Talbot County Public
13 Congratulations.	13 Schools, McKinney-Vento Homelessness Assistance
14 MS. WARD: Thank you, again.	14 Program, and Midshore Council on Family
15 MR. LESHER: Would you like to come	15 Violence.
16 forward, then, and receive the certificate?	16 And whereas, the theme of Hunger and
17 MS. WARD: Sure.	17 Homelessness Awareness Month is to promote
18 MR. STAMP: Brian.	18 understanding and compassion toward those who
19 MS. KILMON: All right. Ready? One, two,	19 are experiencing hunger and/or homelessness and
20 three. Perfect.	20 to advocate for solutions to end hunger and
21 MR. LESHER: Next we have a proclamation	21 homelessness by providing sustenance and
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1 for Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Month for	1 housing stability.
2 November.	2 And whereas, the County Council of Talbot
3 Would the secretary please read that into	3 County recognizes that hunger and homelessness
4 the record.	4 continue to be a serious problem for many
5 SECRETARY: Proclamation, Hunger and	5 individuals and families in our area.
6 Homelessness Awareness Month, November 2025.	6 And whereas, the intent of Hunger and
7 Whereas, November is recognized as Hunger	7 Homelessness Awareness Month is consistent with
8 and Homelessness Awareness Month to bring	8 the activities of local organizations working
9 attention to the plight of individuals and	9 to address hunger and homelessness.
10 families experiencing hunger and/or	10 Now, therefore, we, the County Council of
11 homelessness, which affects people of all ages,	11 Talbot County, do hereby proclaim November as
12 genders, races, and backgrounds, and is an area	12 Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Month in
13 of concern in our community.	13 Talbot County and encourage all citizens to
14 And whereas, there are a myriad of reasons	14 recognize that many people do not have adequate
15 why people experience hunger and/or	15 food and housing and need support from citizens
16 homelessness, including the shortage of	16 and private/public nonprofit service entities.
17 affordable housing, lack of a living wage,	17 Given under our hands in the great seal of
18 trauma, the ability to no longer work due to	18 Talbot County this 25th day of November in the
19 age or health conditions, expensive or	19 year of our Lord, 2025.
20 inaccessible health care, serious mental health	20 MR. LESHER: I need a motion to issue the
21 challenges, or substance use. And education of	21 proclamation.

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1	MS. MIELKE: So moved.	1 foremost, thank you and all of your partners
2	MR. STEPP: And a second.	2 for all that you do to help Talbot County with
3	MR. LESHER: Would you call the roll,	3 this.
4	please.	4 Just one question. How many does your
5	SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher.	5 shelter house, both of your shelters for
6	MR. LESHER: Aye.	6 homelessness?
7	SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.	7 MS. LOWE: In the family shelter, we can
8	MR. STEPP: Aye.	8 house five families of all different sizes.
9	SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.	9 MS. HAYTHE: Okay.
10	MS. MIELKE: Aye.	10 MS. LOWE: In the single shelter, we house
11	SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.	11 14 individuals. And then in our transitional
12	MS. HAYTHE: Aye.	12 housing, we have 21 units. Some are houses,
13	MR. LESHER: And I see we have Ms. Julie	13 some are apartments. And there's 30 to 40
14	Lowe here.	14 people in those at any given time.
15	Would you like to offer any words, any	15 So at any time, we're housing more than 60
16	further explanation on what we're doing for	16 people.
17	Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Month?	17 MS. HAYTHE: Thank you.
18	Do you have any partners that you brought	18 MS. LOWE: Thank you.
19	today, too?	19 MR. STEPP: I'll just add a quick note, if
20	MS. LOWE: I didn't bring anybody today.	20 I can, Mr. Vice President.
21	I am representing everybody on the	21 So I'll just echo the thanks. Like I
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1	proclamation.	1 said, you're representing a lot of
2	We are very grateful to Talbot County	2 organizations here and lot of organizations
3	Council for making this proclamation.	3 that do a lot of key work in Talbot County. I
4	Homelessness is something that we all need	4 know there's places you can drive in this
5	to consider. As the time goes on, it's growing	5 county you think there would be no way we have
6	more and more. We have 140 people on our wait	6 a homelessness problem. But as you guys are
7	list and we are at capacity in both of our	7 bringing to light, we do.
8	shelters and our transitional housing.	8 And I just want to thank you guys for all
9	We are also looking at senior homelessness	9 that you all do for all the organizations to
10	as a special challenge, shall we say. Because	10 helping out here in the ways that you do. So
11	our program, we encourage people to work and	11 thank you.
12	save their money so they can get back into the	12 MS. LOWE: Thank you, Mr. Stepp.
13	rental market. But with seniors, that's a	13 MR. LESHER: Do you have anything further?
14	totally different picture. So I appreciate the	14 MS. MIELKE: Just thank you for all you
15	Council's concern with that as well.	15 do. Homelessness is a big issue. And the more
16	And I just want to thank you for this	16 problems we have with our economy, the more
17	proclamation and recognizing that November is	17 this problem is going to grow. So I'm glad
18	Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Month.	18 you're all there.
19	MR. LESHER: Thank you.	19 MS. LOWE: Thank you.
20	Any questions or remarks from Council?	20 MR. LESHER: This is indeed the issue of
21	MS. HAYTHE: I have one. Julie, first and	21 our time. And thanks for what you and all the

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1 other partner organizations are doing, as 2 Mr. Stepp said.	1 provides professional, team-oriented care to 2 patients faced with a life-limiting illness in 3 an atmosphere of comfort and dignity.
3 MS. LOWE: We couldn't do it without all 4 of us working on this problem.	4 And whereas, November is recognized as 5 National Hospice and Palliative Care Month. 6 And since its inception 40 years ago, the 7 Festival of Trees has raised more than 8 \$3.7 million for the Talbot Hospice Foundation.
5 MR. LESHER: Indeed, indeed. 6 Well, thank you. And we've got a 7 proclamation for you. Mr. Stepp has it, if you 8 want to come forward for the photos.	9 Now, therefore, we, the County Council of 10 Talbot County, do hereby recognize November 11 28th through December 2, 2025, as Festival of 12 Trees Week and acknowledge the dedicated work 13 of Leslie Ware and Midge Menzies and the entire 14 Friends of Hospice Board and Festival of Trees 15 chairs in arranging this year's events.
10 MR. STEPP: Konner first. 11 CONNER: Thank you. 12 MS. KILMON: Perfect. 13 MS. LOWE: Thank you very much. Thank 14 you, all.	16 And further, the Council urges all 17 citizens to support Friends of Hospice and, 18 therefore, the Talbot Hospice Foundation by 19 purchasing tickets for the Festival of Trees 20 and participating in the many events planned.
15 MR. LESHER: Thank you. 16 MS. LOWE: And Happy Thanksgiving. 17 MR. LESHER: And that's not the only 18 proclamation for this evening. We also have 19 one for the 40th Anniversary of the Festival of 20 Trees. 21 If the secretary would read the	21 Given under our hands in the great seal of
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1 proclamation into the record, please. 2 SECRETARY: Fortieth Anniversary, Festival 3 of Trees, 2025. 4 Whereas, the Friends of Hospice will be 5 hosting the Festival of Trees from Friday, 6 November 28th, through Tuesday, December 2, 7 2025, in the Gold Room of the Tidewater Inn at 8 Easton with the theme of 40 Years of Silver and 9 Gold. 10 And whereas, the Festival of Trees was 11 started by Leslie Ware and Midge Menzies. 12 And whereas, the Festival of Trees offers 13 many events for everyone to enjoy, including 14 the signature event, the Festival of Trees, in 15 the Gold Room of the Tidewater Inn, the preview 16 gala, Carols by Candlelight, Santa's 5K run, 17 poinsettia sale and luminary sale. 18 And whereas, 2025 marks the 40th 19 anniversary of the Festival of Trees. And 20 funds raised from the Festival of Trees help 21 support the Talbot Hospice Foundation, which	1 Talbot County this 25th day of November in the 2 year of our Lord, 2025. 3 MR. LESHER: We have the proclamation 4 before us. Is there a motion to approve? 5 MS. HAYTHE: So moved. 6 MR. STEPP: And a second. 7 MR. LESHER: Would the secretary call the 8 roll, please. 9 SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher. 10 MR. LESHER: Aye. 11 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp. 12 MR. STEPP: Aye. 13 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke. 14 MS. MIELKE: Aye. 15 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe. 16 MS. HAYTHE: Aye. 17 MR. LESHER: And that is approved. 18 And we have congratulations. Who is here 19 from Festival of Trees? 20 You have exciting news to tell us about 21 how Festival of Trees is going for its 40th

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1 anniversary this year?	1 magical room there. If you all walked in right
2 Would you like to introduce yourselves and	2 now, you would see how wonderful this
3 the group?	3 community, the sponsors, the decorators, the
4 MS. WARE: Yes. I'm Leslie Ware.	4 volunteers, everyone that partakes in this
5 MS. MENZIES: Midge Menzies, Karla Cherry,	5 amazing event. And we're very proud of what we
6 Dale Jafari. Who is behind me? Brenda Forbes	6 have done in the 40 years.
7 and Alisha Saulsbury.	
8 MS. WARE: So we are busy at work over in	7 MR. LESHER: Well, you've got a wonderful
9 the Gold Room the last 48 hours setting up for	8 event. I get there year after year. And it is
10 our 40th Anniversary of the Festival of Trees.	9 a community event. It's more than simply a
11 And we are overwhelmed by the support that	10 fundraiser. It's a wonderful gathering of
12 this amazing community has given us for 40	11 community.
13 years.	12 MS. WARE: It is.
14 And for those of you who didn't know, the	13 MR. LESHER: One of my reasons for getting
15 seed that started all of this was we witnessed	14 there has been the musical performances by all
16 firsthand 42 years ago the compassionate care	15 the students with Easton Middle School band or
17 that Talbot Hospice gave to Midge's	16 with various private teachers in the community.
18 mother-in-law, Virginia Fuller.	17 It's really a wonderful occasion for all
19 And after she passed away, we went to	18 of that that showcases not only the skills of
20 Talbot Hospice. And at that point, it was a	19 the decorators of various trees but so much of
21 little corner office in the Health Department.	20 our community.
	21 So thank you for all you do.
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1 And we walked down the hall and saw this door	1 MS. WARE: Thank you.
2 that said Talbot Hospice. And Midge and I	2 MR. LESHER: Any other Council members?
3 walked in and said what can we do.	3 MS. HAYTHE: I'll echo what Mr. Lesher
4 And it was Millie Parrot, Betts Guthrie,	4 said. This is a wonderful community event.
5 and...	5 And I look forward to attending this year with
6 MS. MENZIES: Dr. Guthrie.	6 my grandson, who will be two.
7 MS. WARE: Yeah, Dr. Guthrie.	7 MS. WARE: How wonderful.
8 And Kathy Foster. And we said what can we	8 MS. HAYTHE: So I'm excited about that.
9 do. And they said we need to spread the word	9 So thank you all, the committee, for all
10 of what hospice care is and we also need to	10 that you do. And Midge, for the two of you for
11 raise money.	11 starting this 40-plus years ago.
12 And hence, the Festival of Trees was born	12 MS. MENZIES: Yes. Thank you.
13 at that point. We went down and there was one	13 MS. WARE: Thank you.
14 in the country down in Wilmington, North	14 MS. MIELKE: I'm proud to say that I was
15 Carolina. And Midge and I flew down and spoke	15 involved with hospice from the very beginning.
16 to the chairman there and spent the next year	16 MS. WARE: Yes.
17 writing how we were going to do this and	17 MS. MIELKE: And my new father-in-law
18 forming committees and forming Friends of	18 unfortunately was diagnosed with cancer and he
19 Hospice.	19 was in hospice and he passed. And the Mielkes
20 And so here we are in our 40th year. It's	20 got together, and I think they decorated the
21 40 years of silver and gold. And it is a	21 first trees with the lights. You know, they

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1 didn't get trees with lights. All the trees 2 had to be lit. So we were all doing that. 3 And it was just wonderful. It was just a 4 wonderful thought and a wonderful recognition 5 of the citizens of Talbot County and, of 6 course, you all for what you do.	1 MR. LESHER: Are we happy with just the 2 title on this one? 3 MS. HAYTHE: Yes. 4 MR. LESHER: Let's just read the title. 5 SECRETARY: Administrative resolution 6 authorizing the use of the general fund 7 reserve, if required, for the payment of debt 8 service for the County's general obligation 9 bonds, MWIFA project.
7 MS. WARE: Thank you. 8 MS. MIELKE: Thank you so much. 9 MS. MENZIES: Thank you. 10 MS. WARE: Thank you very much. 11 MR. STEPP: This is definitely a week of 12 thanks. No ifs, ands, or buts about it. These 13 are always my favorite parts of our meetings. 14 Right. 15 We all have a lot of business to get 16 through. But just the fact that we can 17 recognize folks like yourselves, who are just 18 taking on important causes that we have in our 19 community. It's nice to make sure we can 20 recognize you, praise you guys, give thanks to 21 you all. And just keep doing what y'all are	10 MR. LESHER: All right. And we have 11 Ms. Sparks with us from our Finance Office to 12 explain why we thought we accomplished this 13 last time but we've got to go through this 14 again. It's not sufficient to wear a belt. We 15 need suspenders, too. 16 MS. SPARKS: Yes. Exactly. That's the 17 best analogy for this. 18 Good evening, Council. Martha Sparks, 19 finance director for Talbot County. 20 Talbot County is working with the Maryland 21 Department of the Environment to secure a
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1 doing. It's wonderful. 2 MS. WARE: Okay. 3 MS. MENZIES: Thank you. 4 MS. WARE: Thank you very much. 5 MR. LESHER: All right. 6 MS. KILMON: Look over here first. 7 SPEAKER: Sorry, Sarah. My apologies. 8 MS. KILMON: No worries. 9 SPEAKER: I'm the designated photographer 10 today. Self-designated. Thank you. 11 MS. KILMON: All right. Ready? One, two, 12 three. Perfect. 13 MS. WARE: Thank you. 14 MS. MIELKE: Thank you for all you do. 15 MS. MENZIES: Thank you all very much. 16 MR. LESHER: Next we have the introduction 17 of an administrative resolution. If the 18 secretary would please read that into the 19 record. 20 SECRETARY: You want me to read the entire 21 thing or just the caption, just the title?	1 funding package that is a combination of 2 grants, bonds, and loan forgiveness. This 3 funding assists with the financing of 4 improvements to Talbot County Sanitary 5 Districts Region II sewer system extension 6 Resolution 235. 7 As you know, the Council has authorized 8 the issuance of \$7,018,942 in general 9 obligation bonds in Bill Number 1619 and an 10 administrative resolution that was passed on 11 October 28, 2025. 12 The debt service for these bonds will be 13 paid from the revenues from the Talbot County 14 Sanitary District. The county is issuing 15 general obligation bonds that are backed by the 16 full faith, credit, and taxing authority of 17 Talbot County because general obligation bonds 18 provide the strongest assurance that that debt 19 will be repaid. 20 However, upon further review by MDE staff, 21 they've requested additional assurance through

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1 another administrative resolution. This 2 resolution is requesting that the County 3 Council preapprove the use of reserves in the 4 county's general fund.	1 MR. LESHER: Aye. 2 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp. 3 MR. STEPP: Aye. 4 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke. 5 MS. MIELKE: Aye. 6 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe. 7 MS. HAYTHE: Aye. 8 MS. SPARKS: Thank you very much. 9 MR. LESHER: Thank you. And good luck as 10 we proceed to closing on these bonds. And 11 hopefully we can get these connections made. 12 MS. SPARKS: Yeah. Fingers and toes 13 crossed. 14 MR. LESHER: All right. We have just a 15 couple of minutes before we are allowed to open 16 up our public hearings scheduled for 5:30. 17 To make good use of time, can we proceed 18 with the first item under county manager 19 report, Mr. County Manager. 20 MR. STAMP: Sure. Thank you, Council. 21 Under county manager report this evening,
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1 MS. SPARKS: 235. 2 MR. LESHER: 235 area. 3 MS. SPARKS: Yes. That's correct. Yes. 4 And as soon as we get this resolution 5 passed by Council, we'll be able to get that 6 bond closing schedule. 7 MR. LESHER: Okay. We need to introduce. 8 MR. THOMAS: Once it's introduced, it can 9 be adopted by a vote. 10 MR. LESHER: Yes. But do an introduction 11 by show of hands first? 12 MR. THOMAS: Yes. 13 MR. LESHER: All right. Who is 14 introducing this resolution? It is introduced 15 by Council. 16 And since this is eligible for an 17 immediate vote, are there any discussion on 18 this before we proceed with the vote? 19 Hearing none, would you please call the 20 roll. 21 SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher.	1 boards and committee appointments. I have 2 three for you this evening. 3 The first one is regarding the Economic 4 Development Commission. We're requesting the 5 appointment of Dr. Michael Meier as a Town of 6 St. Michaels representative to that board or 7 commission. 8 MS. HAYTHE: Motion to approve. 9 MS. MIELKE: Second. 10 MR. LESHER: Motion and second. Would the 11 secretary the roll. 12 SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher. 13 MR. LESHER: Aye. 14 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp. 15 MR. STEPP: Aye. 16 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke. 17 MS. MIELKE: Aye. 18 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe. 19 MS. HAYTHE: Aye. 20 MR. LESHER: That one is approved. 21 Mr. Stamp.

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1 MR. STAMP: The next would be the Mid	1 MR. STEPP: Aye.
2 Shore Behavioral Health Board of Directors.	2 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.
3 We're requesting the appointment of Amy	3 MS. MIELKE: Aye.
4 Hoffman, director of the University of Maryland	4 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.
5 Medical System Shore Regional Health,	5 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.
6 behavioral health unit. And the reappointment	6 MR. LESHER: All right. And we are at
7 of Shanez Jenkins from Peace of Mind Mental	7 5:30. So we will continue on with flip back to
8 Health Service.	8 the public hearings.
9 MS. HAYTHE: Motion to approve the	9 First up is Bill Number 1621. Would the
10 appointment.	10 secretary please read the title into the
11 MS. MIELKE: Second.	11 record?
12 MR. LESHER: And that is for both	12 SECRETARY: Bill Number 1621, a bill to
13 appointments?	13 amend Chapter 190, zoning, subdivision, and
14 MS. HAYTHE: Yes. Correct.	14 land development, sections 190-25.2, table of
15 MR. LESHER: Appointment and	15 land uses, and 190-29, commercial uses,
16 reappointment.	16 regarding funeral homes and crematoria.
17 Would the secretary please call the roll.	17 MR. LESHER: All right. This was
18 SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher.	18 introduced. Now I will open the public hearing
19 MR. LESHER: Aye.	19 on this.
20 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.	20 Is there anybody who wishes to come
21 MR. STEPP: Aye.	21 forward and speak on Bill 1621, on this
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1 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.	1 amendment to the zoning?
2 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.	2 We have Mr. Showalter here. And if you
3 Oh, I'm sorry. I was distracted.	3 are speaking for yourself as an individual,
4 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.	4 you'll have three minutes. If you're speaking
5 MR. LESHER: Your vote.	5 for an organization and will be the only one
6 MS. HAYTHE: Your vote.	6 speaking for that organization, you can have
7 MS. MIELKE: Yes.	7 five minutes.
8 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.	8 MR. SHOWALTER: Thank you very much for
9 MS. HAYTHE: Yes.	9 your time this evening. Ryan Showalter, 100
10 MR. STAMP: And finally, the Planning	10 North West Street, Easton, Maryland.
11 Commission. We are requesting your	11 Appearing on behalf of the applicant, and
12 consideration for the reappointment of Mr. Chip	12 I have Mr. Curt Helfenbein with me.
13 Councell to the Planning Commission.	13 The staff report that you have summarizes
14 MS. HAYTHE: Motion to approve the	14 the history of this text amendment. As you
15 appointment of Chip.	15 know, there were some initial comments that
16 MR. STEPP: Second.	16 were provided to the Planning Commission.
17 MR. LESHER: We have a motion and second.	17 The text amendments was refined to address
18 Would the secretary please call the roll.	18 the few minor suggestions that came out of
19 SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher.	19 discussions both with this Council and the
20 MR. LESHER: Aye.	20 Planning Commission.
21 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.	21 And it's before you now with the unanimous

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<p>1 favorable recommendation from the Planning 2 Commission. So if there are any questions from 3 the Council, we'll be happy to answer those 4 questions. Otherwise, we appreciate your 5 support.</p> <p>6 MR. LESHER: Are there any questions?</p> <p>7 MR. STEPP: None here.</p> <p>8 MS. MIELKE: No.</p> <p>9 MR. SHOWALTER: Thank you.</p> <p>10 MR. LESHER: Thank you. Anybody else who wishes to speak on Bill 1621?</p> <p>12 Seeing none, I will close the public hearing on this bill but leave the record open for written comments until noon on Friday, December 5th.</p> <p>16 This will be eligible for a vote on December 9th.</p> <p>18 Next up we have Bill Number 1622. Would the secretary read the title into the record, please.</p> <p>21 SECRETARY: Bill Number 1622, a bill to</p>	<p>1 the Planning Commission.</p> <p>2 The differences from what was initially presented, that the proposed increase in minimum night stay for certain zoning districts from three days to seven days was removed, the proposal requirement for a landline telephone was removed, and the proposal requirement for keeping a log of rentals was removed.</p> <p>9 MR. LESHER: Okay. Any questions from Council?</p> <p>11 MS. MIELKE: For?</p> <p>12 MR. LESHER: For Bill 1622.</p> <p>13 MS. MIELKE: I just wanted to clarify that when the bill was first presented to the Planning Commission and it came back with suggestions, most of those changes or many of the changes were made as a result?</p> <p>18 MR. THOMAS: Those were three changes that, those were three requirements in the original version that you all voted to send to the Planning Commission that had been removed</p>
<p>1 amend Chapter 190, zoning, subdivision, and 2 land development, of the Talbot County Code for 3 the purposes of providing for classes of 4 short-term rental licenses and amending certain 5 provisions pertaining to short-term rental 6 licenses, including, one, the composition and 7 term of the Short-Term Rental Review Board; 8 two, contents of new applications; three, 9 hearings, decisions, and appeals; four, 10 renewal; five, grounds for denial; and six, 11 additional restrictions.</p> <p>12 MR. LESHER: Okay. I seem to have skipped over this step. But Mr. Thomas, do you have anything that you'd like to give for background on this one?</p> <p>16 MR. THOMAS: I can briefly, as I stated at the introduction.</p> <p>18 So this bill simply reflects the proposal that was initially brought forward by Vice President Lesher and Council Member Mielke with three changes, all of which were recommended by</p>	<p>1 based on the Planning Commission's recommendations. But it otherwise contains the language that was originally in what you forwarded.</p> <p>5 MS. MIELKE: Just wanted that to be clear for the record.</p> <p>7 MR. THOMAS: Sure.</p> <p>8 MS. MIELKE: Thank you.</p> <p>9 MR. LESHER: Okay. If there are no further questions, we can open the hearing on Bill 1622.</p> <p>12 If you are coming forward to speak, I'll ask you to speak into the microphones at this table here. If you are speaking as an individual, you will have three minutes. If speaking for an organization and you are the only one speaking for that organization, you may have five.</p> <p>19 MS. MIELKE: Sign-up sheet.</p> <p>20 MR. LESHER: Do we have a sign-up sheet for this one?</p>

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1 MS. KILMON: We do.	1 MR. LESHER: Okay. We'll move on to
2 MR. LESHER: Thank you for your patience.	2 Flaneur.
3 And we'll open this in just a moment.	3 MS. BROWN: Hello, everybody. I'm
4 I'm sorry?	4 speaking on behalf of an organization. So five
5 MR. STAMP: Jessica has it. She's coming	5 minutes would be great.
6 in the back way.	
7 MR. LESHER: Thank you. And we'll take	6 Good evening, Members of the Council. My
8 folks in the order that you've signed up. And	7 name is Emma Brown, and I'm speaking on behalf
9 if you haven't signed up in advance, you'll	8 of Flaneur, the vacation rental company and the
10 have an opportunity after those who have signed	9 many homeowners and guests we serve across
11 up have spoken.	10 Talbot County.
12 First up is Bill Morrison.	11 I want to begin by underscoring something
13 MR. MORRISON: Thank you, Council. Bill	12 critically important. The Talbot County
14 Morrison, 303 Manor Street, St. Michael's,	13 Planning Commission did not view most of the
15 Maryland. Literally across the street from the	14 proposed changes in this bill as necessary or
16 Town of St. Michael's.	15 appropriate. They conducted months of review,
17 I have a short-term rental unit in my	16 gathered public input, and made thoughtful
18 primary residence. It's an auxiliary unit,	17 recommendations, yet the current proposal
19 houses two people at maximum. I've been	18 stands in direct opposition to those
20 licensed, I've been renewed, and I've been	19 recommendations and does not incorporate the
21 renewed a second time.	20 Planning Commission's evaluation or guidance.
	21 That alone should give us all pause.
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1 I just want to comment on the specific	1 Beyond the procedural concern, the
2 section 63.3, paragraph five, subparagraph III,	2 substance of this bill presents an even larger
3 which requires me to notify all of my neighbors	3 issue. There is no quantitative or factual
4 within 1,000 feet.	4 evidence that short-term rentals cause
5 I have 213 neighbors within 1,000 feet.	5 measurable harm to Talbot County neighborhoods.
6 So three times now in the last four years, I've	6 To date, no study, no report, no data-driven
7 had to provide notices and solicit signatures	7 assessment has shown that STRs increase crime,
8 from 213 neighbors times three. I've spent	8 reduce housing availability, or disrupt
9 over \$1,000 in postage for this. I've gone	9 communities.
10 door to door. I've got a lot of email	10 The arguments driving this proposal appear
11 addresses now so that I can comply with this	11 to rely almost entirely on personal opinion and
12 rule.	12 anecdotal complaint and not objective analysis.
13 I would ask you to consider dropping the	13 Policy that reflects thousands of homeowners
14 requirement to 1,000 feet or a maximum of 50	14 should never be built on speculation.
15 neighbors when you're going through the renewal	15 It's also important to acknowledge
16 process. That would alleviate a lot of owner's	16 reality. Short-term rentals are already
17 effort. Thank you.	17 heavily and thoroughly regulated in Talbot
18 MS. MIELKE: Thank you.	18 County. Obtaining a short-term rental license
19 MR. LESHER: Next is Jennifer Brown. Is	19 requires inspections, testing, documentation,
20 Ms. Brown here?	20 and compliance with strict safety and zoning
21 MS. BROWN: I am, but I'm not getting up.	21 requirements. These processes can take up to

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<p>1 multiple months.</p> <p>2 At Flaneur, we have personally submitted</p> <p>3 hundreds of new and renewal applications. We</p> <p>4 know the system inside and out. And we can</p> <p>5 competently say that this robust,</p> <p>6 comprehensive, and effective system ensures</p> <p>7 properties meet every county requirement.</p> <p>8 Many homeowners spend thousands of dollars</p> <p>9 each year just to remain compliant</p> <p>10 (indiscernible) to additional administrative</p> <p>11 costs.</p> <p>12 We fully support reasonable, balanced</p> <p>13 regulations that promote safety and</p> <p>14 accountability, but the current process is</p> <p>15 already vigorous and financially burdensome.</p> <p>16 This proposed bill does not solve a</p> <p>17 problem. It creates new ones. By imposing</p> <p>18 additional restrictions without evidence, the</p> <p>19 county risks harming a thriving local industry</p> <p>20 that supports cleaners, contractors, small</p> <p>21 businesses, restaurants, and shops. Short-term</p>	<p>1 homeowners and small businesses.</p> <p>2 We ask instead for continued balanced,</p> <p>3 data-driven oversight, not reactionary</p> <p>4 regulation.</p> <p>5 Thank you for your time and consideration.</p> <p>6 MR. LESHER: Thank you. The next is Emma</p> <p>7 Tiernan. Emma Tiernan, if I'm reading that</p> <p>8 correctly. Emma Tiernan.</p> <p>9 If not, we can move on to Leslie Steen.</p> <p>10 MS. STEEN: I brought written copies,</p> <p>11 copies of my topics, what I'll speak to. And</p> <p>12 what the second is is what I submitted before.</p> <p>13 I have extras.</p> <p>14 MS. KILMON: Thank you.</p> <p>15 MS. STEEN: Hi. My name is Leslie Steen,</p> <p>16 and I live at 21748 Camper Circle in Tilghman.</p> <p>17 I urge you to vote for this bill. Changes</p> <p>18 that I would like to make, the bill, after six</p> <p>19 years of experience, accomplishes a number of</p> <p>20 things that need to be done. I'd like to set</p> <p>21 the framework a bit.</p>
<p>1 rentals bring tourism, support local jobs, and</p> <p>2 increase spending throughout our community.</p> <p>3 Weakening this economic engine based on</p> <p>4 unsupported claims would be a costly mistake.</p> <p>5 Finally, I want to address something</p> <p>6 difficult but necessary to say. A very small</p> <p>7 group of individuals have managed to drive much</p> <p>8 of a narrative behind this bill. Their</p> <p>9 concerns were valid to discuss, do not</p> <p>10 represent the broader community, nor are they</p> <p>11 backed by data. It is concerning to see</p> <p>12 limited perspectives carry disproportionate</p> <p>13 influence over countywide policy.</p> <p>14 In closing, I urge Council to reject this</p> <p>15 proposed legislation. Short-term rentals are</p> <p>16 already rigorously regulated, beneficial to the</p> <p>17 local economy, and operating without any</p> <p>18 evidence of causing harm. Moving forward with</p> <p>19 a bill that contradicts the Planning</p> <p>20 Commission's findings, lacks factual support,</p> <p>21 would place unnecessary burdens on responsible</p>	<p>1 What are the complaints against this bill?</p> <p>2 They're not very specific.</p> <p>3 The bill does not burden owners, agents,</p> <p>4 nor staff. It doesn't put STRs out of</p> <p>5 business, as some people have complained. It</p> <p>6 grandfathered them and improves the</p> <p>7 administration of the licensing.</p> <p>8 The parts that the industry is complaining</p> <p>9 to be most erroneous were removed; the minimum</p> <p>10 seven-day stay requirement, the occupancy log,</p> <p>11 the required landline. All removed.</p> <p>12 What are the actual additions to the law?</p> <p>13 The bill requires the owner to provide</p> <p>14 readily available written information in the</p> <p>15 application to make it easier and more</p> <p>16 transparent for the staff, the board, and the</p> <p>17 public. Things like how many occupants can be</p> <p>18 in the property.</p> <p>19 The bill clarifies how the STR Board</p> <p>20 operates and makes decisions. For example,</p> <p>21 allowing video conferencing. Notice of</p>

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<p>1 application information, contact information,</p> <p>2 application requirements that must be met for</p> <p>3 the license to be approved, conditions can be</p> <p>4 imposed, investor licensing rules are aligned</p> <p>5 with those of homeowners.</p> <p>6 By limiting the density of STRs, this bill</p> <p>7 takes steps to address the important impacts</p> <p>8 that STRs have on the affordability of our</p> <p>9 workforce housing. Concentrations of STRs</p> <p>10 cause prices in rents to go up, freezing out</p> <p>11 the local long-term income tax paying</p> <p>12 population.</p> <p>13 The social fabric of our neighborhoods and</p> <p>14 communities are impacted. The ins and outs can</p> <p>15 overwhelm neighborhoods, change the very</p> <p>16 character of them, and change how we interact</p> <p>17 and support each other. Our volunteers can</p> <p>18 disappear. We had good evidence of volunteers</p> <p>19 this evening.</p> <p>20 Things we still need in the bill. Town</p> <p>21 residential zone needs to have the same</p>	<p>1 MR. LESHER: Sure.</p> <p>2 MR. HARTMANN: Kevin and Angeline</p> <p>3 Hartmann. We're with Ferry Bridge House in</p> <p>4 Easton, Maryland.</p> <p>5 Get my notes real quick. Sorry.</p> <p>6 So we have a short-term rental and we've</p> <p>7 had it for about two and a half years. Just</p> <p>8 one. We manage it ourselves.</p> <p>9 We've tracked the progress of this bill</p> <p>10 since April. So in April, the bill was, the</p> <p>11 draft was submitted to the Planning Commission.</p> <p>12 And there was a lot of letters submitted</p> <p>13 pertaining to it. And we attended the hearing</p> <p>14 in which a number of people, some of the same</p> <p>15 people I'm sure will be here tonight, spoke</p> <p>16 about the matter.</p> <p>17 And then in June, on June 10th, they had a</p> <p>18 meeting with you guys. I also attended that</p> <p>19 meeting.</p> <p>20 What I could see was that the Planning</p> <p>21 Commission basically disagreed with just about</p>
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<p>1 limitations as villages, no more than one STR</p> <p>2 per every 500 feet. TR zones are very similar</p> <p>3 in characteristics as villages, providing</p> <p>4 affordable housing for the workforce and close</p> <p>5 communities with small lot sizes, narrow yard</p> <p>6 setbacks. We can't afford to lose this</p> <p>7 valuable asset.</p> <p>8 Board and staff can accomplish more</p> <p>9 without legislation if they want to. A better</p> <p>10 means to collect complaints and improve</p> <p>11 enforcement. Public is instructed to go to the</p> <p>12 owners and the agents with their complaints,</p> <p>13 not the county. We have no records --</p> <p>14 MR. LESHER: Ms. Steen, we do have your</p> <p>15 written comments and they are part of the</p> <p>16 record. So I'll just ask you to wrap up if we</p> <p>17 can. Thank you.</p> <p>18 MS. STEEN: I'm done. Thank you.</p> <p>19 MR. LESHER: Next up is Kevin Hartman.</p> <p>20 MR. HARTMANN: Okay if I bring one other</p> <p>21 with me speaking on the same matter?</p>	<p>1 everything in the bill. Not just the things</p> <p>2 that were removed, but everything in the bill.</p> <p>3 They commented in the negative that would be --</p> <p>4 that would not only would be more burdensome,</p> <p>5 but they thought that the existing already</p> <p>6 rigorous procedures should be even softened a</p> <p>7 little bit because they are so rigorous.</p> <p>8 I think I just want to in my time here</p> <p>9 just tell you, I'll have our hostess here tell</p> <p>10 you just a little bit about some of the people</p> <p>11 that have stayed at Ferry Bridge House.</p> <p>12 MS. HARTMANN: Our guests love Talbot</p> <p>13 County. And we work hard to give them a good,</p> <p>14 positive experience of the area. They've come</p> <p>15 to Talbot County to experience a number of</p> <p>16 things. Not only the county, but just to</p> <p>17 celebrate birthdays, to experience Waterfowl,</p> <p>18 to just experience the unique nature of this</p> <p>19 county. And it's our honor to be able to host</p> <p>20 them. And so we want to continue that positive</p> <p>21 experience.</p>

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1 MR. HARTMANN: So in the minute we have 2 left, I would just reinforce two things. 3 One, the Planning Commission almost 4 unanimously disagreed with this bill. 5 Two, and more recently, in this room, in 6 September, the Department, the Talbot County 7 Department of Economic Tourism and Economic 8 Development and Tourism stated that visitors 9 generated \$320 million in spending, supported 10 1,960 jobs, and 62 million in taxes. 11 What I would submit is if this bill 12 passes, it really puts in jeopardy about 200 13 jobs. If you would just round down to save one 14 job per unit, you're talking about knocking out 15 ten percent of the tourism jobs in the county. 16 That's really what you risk by passing this 17 bill. 18 Anything else? And just close with that. 19 I think the first two resolutions you 20 heard tonight, I think it will affect those two 21 things, hunger and homelessness. I think we	1 problems with it. We've had another one right 2 up the lane from us. We've had no problems 3 with it. The one thing I will say is it's nice 4 for us to look out occasionally and see lights, 5 where most of the time we see darkness. And 6 with the Airbnbs, there are a lot of these 7 properties would never be rented for longer 8 terms, they do bring in some traffic that puts 9 a few extra sets of eyes and ears around the 10 neighborhood. And we all know it's always good 11 to have people looking out for things and 12 notice things. Maybe a house caught on fire. 13 Maybe a house's plumbing blew up and is 14 flooding the place. We had a lot of instances 15 of that. 16 So there is that other thing. And I think 17 that by limiting densities and things like 18 that, you'll also cut out the public through 19 the public hearing process. What goes on on 20 Camper Circle in Tilghman might be entirely 21 different than what happens out in Bozman area.
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1 need the jobs. Tourism provides the jobs. 2 That's what's at risk. Thanks. 3 MR. LESHER: Thank you very much. 4 Next is Dennis Forney. 5 MR. FORNEY: Good evening, folks. Thanks 6 for the opportunity to make a few comments. 7 I'll keep them brief. 8 I agree that I've reviewed the legislation 9 proposed and the existing regulations, which 10 are already extensive and I don't see really a 11 need to add further to the bureaucracy, which I 12 think that this proposed legislation would do. 13 A little bit of a different take on this. 14 We live out in Bozman. Throughout that area, 15 people are scattered around. There's a lot of 16 second homes out there. A lot of them are dark 17 a lot of times of the year. 18 We're down a lane, and there's not that 19 much traffic along there. 20 The thing about some of the Airbnbs, and 21 we have one across the creek and we've had no	1 And they all might be legitimate concerns. 2 That's why we have a fairly extensive and 3 notification process to bring the public into 4 the decision-making process. So let the public 5 hearing process take care of all that instead 6 of trying to add more and more and more 7 bureaucratic language to determine every little 8 single thing that could happen. 9 So let the public hearing process do its 10 job. Let's cut down on the extra bureaucracy 11 that this would bring. 12 Thank you. 13 MR. LESHER: Thank you. 14 Next is Jody Weinstein. Jody Weinstein. 15 MS. WEINSTEIN: Hello. My name is Jody, 16 and I live at 24687 Yacht Club Road in 17 St. Michaels. 18 MS. MIELKE: Could you speak a little 19 louder, please? 20 MS. WEINSTEIN: Sure. 21 I decided to make St. Michaels my

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<p>1 permanent home in 2016.</p> <p>2 And the theme of my discussion tonight is</p> <p>3 don't kill the goose that lays the golden eggs.</p> <p>4 I took the liberty last June when this</p> <p>5 bill began of walking up and down Main Streets</p> <p>6 Tilghman Island and St. Michaels, and I</p> <p>7 surveyed 37 shops and restaurants. And I asked</p> <p>8 them point blank will decrease in tourism,</p> <p>9 which this will cause, this bill will cause,</p> <p>10 decrease in short-term rentals, will it have a</p> <p>11 negative effect on your business. Thirty-seven</p> <p>12 signed this saying yes, here is my phone</p> <p>13 number, here is my email.</p> <p>14 I made five packets and made sure they</p> <p>15 were all distributed to your offices. So I'm</p> <p>16 hoping some of you have took the liberty of</p> <p>17 calling some of them to actually talk to them</p> <p>18 about how this bill will affect their business</p> <p>19 and their livelihoods.</p> <p>20 I spoke to Lori, who is the director of</p> <p>21 the new beautiful St. Michaels Community</p>	<p>1 to you is once we --</p> <p>2 MR. LESHER: Just to be clear, in public</p> <p>3 remarks, you're addressing the full Council</p> <p>4 here.</p> <p>5 MS. WEINSTEIN: My question is if money is</p> <p>6 decreased in our public funds due to the</p> <p>7 decrease in tourism, which will surely happen</p> <p>8 if this bill goes forward, are you going to</p> <p>9 increase our property taxes to make up the</p> <p>10 difference? That's my question, because money</p> <p>11 will have to come from somewhere or you have to</p> <p>12 cut services, both of which I don't think are</p> <p>13 ideal. Thank you.</p> <p>14 MR. LESHER: Thank you.</p> <p>15 Next is Eric, Eric Weinstein.</p> <p>16 MR. WEINSTEIN: Thank you for the</p> <p>17 opportunity to address this legislation.</p> <p>18 I want to say that I think it's really</p> <p>19 misguided, very misguided and shortsighted.</p> <p>20 And I think that it's underestimated the impact</p> <p>21 that it's going to have on the local economy.</p>
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<p>1 Center. And they have a new program called</p> <p>2 Workforce Development. And that program is</p> <p>3 they interviewed all the shops and restaurants.</p> <p>4 What kind of help do you need. They set up a</p> <p>5 beautiful commercial kitchen. They're bringing</p> <p>6 in professionals. Their hope is to train</p> <p>7 people who have never had a job before, maybe</p> <p>8 the youth, to develop skills so these people</p> <p>9 can go into our community and perhaps have a</p> <p>10 job for the first time. That also is a direct</p> <p>11 impact to the previous conversation with</p> <p>12 homelessness I think.</p> <p>13 So tourism supports nearly 2,000 local</p> <p>14 jobs in Talbot County. Talbot County collects</p> <p>15 \$1.93 million in lodging taxes. Short-term</p> <p>16 rentals participate in the collection of that</p> <p>17 money. That's money that goes towards our</p> <p>18 police, schools, local services. Cut tourism,</p> <p>19 cut jobs, cut opportunity.</p> <p>20 And my last thought is directed at Lynn</p> <p>21 Mielke, the author of this bill. My question</p>	<p>1 My wife Jody just spoke to that. I know</p> <p>2 she spoke personally with a good number of</p> <p>3 businesses in St. Michaels on Main Street.</p> <p>4 And almost, almost all of them said this would</p> <p>5 be very detrimental to their, to their</p> <p>6 livelihoods.</p> <p>7 I want to also say that I was here at the</p> <p>8 last meeting, and it was clear that the</p> <p>9 Planning Commission was by and large opposed to</p> <p>10 most of the content of the bill. They removed</p> <p>11 the three things, some of them I think got</p> <p>12 laughter in this room. The idea of the</p> <p>13 landline being required for a quick response</p> <p>14 was one example.</p> <p>15 But I want to also -- I know the time is</p> <p>16 limited here. I've had 20 years? experience</p> <p>17 with short-term vacation rental and never had a</p> <p>18 complaint, not a single one. And I know from</p> <p>19 the data that's been distributed amongst some</p> <p>20 other homeowners, short-term vacation rental</p> <p>21 owners, there have been minimal complaints. I</p>

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1 think it's under ten in the number of years. 2 And I believe there's a hotline set up to 3 address that. 4 And I guess I don't understand what 5 motivates this legislation. It's going to have 6 a negative impact on the economy and it kind of 7 imposes a one-size solution across all of 8 Talbot County. And I think situations are 9 unique. And if there are individual complaints 10 or problems, there's a commission, a process 11 for dealing with that. 12 So I just want to echo what somebody else 13 said, that there's plenty of regulation 14 already. It doesn't need to be more burdensome 15 or cumbersome. Thank you.	1 down that driveway. And these people disgorge, 2 and then they are on vacation. They aren't 3 used to having a pool, they aren't used to 4 having a dock, and they are there to have a 5 good time. And they do have a good time. 6 I'm the one who pays for it because it's 7 loud and there's, you know, just things going 8 on. I've had drones over my pool. I've had 9 people with paintball guns on my property, all 10 sorts of toys. I've had people on my dock. 11 If I go talk to them, they'll sometime 12 quit. But they really don't -- they're not 13 going to see me again. They don't care. 14 I can go to the owner, which I have done, 15 which the STR tells you that's what you should 16 do. And he's not a bad guy. But sometimes 17 they do something, sometimes they don't. 18 I don't go to the county, though, because 19 I do have to maintain some relationship with 20 this owner next door. We share a bond with the 21 property.
18 MR. LESHER: Thank you. Next is James 19 Flood. 20 MR. FLOOD: Oh, my. Good afternoon, and 21 thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak before this group. My name is James Flood.	Page 63
1 I was born here 71 years ago. My 2 grandfather, Dr. Storch from New Jersey, came 3 down here in the 1920s, fell in love with the 4 area. It was peaceful. It was quiet. It was 5 tranquil. So much so that he bought the home 6 on 7969 Tilghman Island Road. That's on Harris 7 Creek. That home has remained in our family 8 for almost 100 years. I've been coming down 9 here all my life. 10 Twenty years ago, I decided I'd like to 11 have my own place here. And so I looked in the 12 areas where the zoning was residential because 13 I wanted a quiet place. And I found a place 14 also on Water Hole Cove. And it was great. 15 And then a short-term rental came in next 16 door, a hotel, a small hotel really. They have 17 customers coming in and out all the time. They 18 allow 12 people in a house under 2,000 square 19 feet. That's pretty crowded. 20 So they show up every Saturday afternoon 21 now in season. We wait for the caravan to come	Page 65
	1 I pay \$12,695 a year in property taxes. 2 All I want is quiet enjoyment of my property. 3 I'm not asking for anything else. Just quiet 4 enjoyment. 5 Why -- I'm in an area zoned residential. 6 Why am I having to fight for that? I hope you 7 vote for this bill. 8 And really, we need to move further ahead 9 with other support for the homeowners who are 10 paying the taxes. 11 You know, people are throwing out numbers. 12 Look at the number of how many dollars 13 homeowners are paying in property taxes versus 14 the money coming in from the short-term 15 rentals. But that to me is just a matter of 16 fairness. 17 I thought I did everything I was supposed 18 to and still I'm -- 19 MR. LESHER: Mr. Flood, you are wrapping up there? Thank you. 20 MR. FLOOD: Thank you.

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<p>1 MR. LESHER: Next is Thomas Mitchell.</p> <p>2 MR. MITCHELL: Thank you, all, for your</p> <p>3 service. My name is Tom Mitchell, and I've</p> <p>4 been a resident of Talbot County for 25 years.</p> <p>5 I want you to know that I support tourism.</p> <p>6 I'm actually in the hospitality business. And</p> <p>7 I love Talbot County. It's the most beautiful</p> <p>8 place in the world as far as I'm concerned.</p> <p>9 I do believe, though, that the short-term</p> <p>10 rental situation is slightly out of balance and</p> <p>11 needs some fine tuning and some either</p> <p>12 additional restrictions or additional</p> <p>13 enforcement.</p> <p>14 And the number one area I believe needs to</p> <p>15 be tightened up is the qualifications to serve</p> <p>16 on the Short-Term Rental Review Board. My</p> <p>17 understanding is you have to be a full-time</p> <p>18 resident with a principal residence in Talbot</p> <p>19 County. And I agree with that. You have to</p> <p>20 have skin in the game. You have to understand</p> <p>21 the neighborhood and the environment.</p>	<p>1 And then the third has to do with the</p> <p>2 recordkeeping. And I think it's very important</p> <p>3 that they keep detailed records just for</p> <p>4 transparency's sake. If there is an issue with</p> <p>5 a problem with a neighbor, as the last</p> <p>6 gentleman spoke, it seems like it's up to the</p> <p>7 neighbors to enforce the law. And it's quite</p> <p>8 difficult because of the transparency, lack of</p> <p>9 transparency.</p> <p>10 We really need to be able to show up at</p> <p>11 the renewal of the license and question certain</p> <p>12 uses and other details of the use of the</p> <p>13 property during the previous year.</p> <p>14 So those are the three points. And I hope</p> <p>15 that they will get some serious consideration.</p> <p>16 Thank you all very much.</p> <p>17 MR. LESHER: Thank you.</p> <p>18 MS. MIELKE: Thank you.</p> <p>19 MR. LESHER: Next one simply reads</p> <p>20 Tidewater Vacations. Tidewater Vacations.</p> <p>21 MS. HOYLE: Hi, good evening. I'm a</p>
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<p>1 But there's also, it should be a</p> <p>2 requirement that you cannot be a holder of a</p> <p>3 short-term rental license or an owner of a</p> <p>4 short-term rental property or properties,</p> <p>5 whether it be directly or through an LLC. So I</p> <p>6 believe that's got to be tightened up. And I</p> <p>7 believe there are conflicts right now on the</p> <p>8 Short-Term Rental Review Board because of those</p> <p>9 two qualifications.</p> <p>10 The seven-day minimum, I can understand</p> <p>11 that. But there's another perspective there.</p> <p>12 And that is if you had a motel or a hotel and</p> <p>13 you invested millions of dollars and you're</p> <p>14 paying taxes and employing people, you're going</p> <p>15 to lose a lot of weekend business because the</p> <p>16 seven-day minimum is beneficial to them and a</p> <p>17 lot of other benefits, too. But by eliminating</p> <p>18 that, you're going to hurt the motel and hotel</p> <p>19 industry. And I suggest you talk to some of</p> <p>20 those investors to see what they think about</p> <p>21 it.</p>	<p>1 business. So five on the clock. All right.</p> <p>2 Good evening. My name is Michelle Hoyle.</p> <p>3 I am the owner of Tidewater Vacations, a family</p> <p>4 run agency that personally manages a curated</p> <p>5 collection of licensed high-end waterfront</p> <p>6 homes right here in Talbot County.</p> <p>7 We are not some faceless corporation. We</p> <p>8 are neighbors deeply invested in the wellbeing</p> <p>9 of this community.</p> <p>10 Tonight I stand before you not just for</p> <p>11 Tidewater Vacations but for the entire</p> <p>12 responsible short-term rental community in</p> <p>13 Talbot County, more than 160 licensed</p> <p>14 properties that together generate over</p> <p>15 2 million a year in lodging and accommodation</p> <p>16 taxes for the county, while sustaining nearly</p> <p>17 2,000 local tourism-related jobs.</p> <p>18 I respectfully ask that you vote no on</p> <p>19 this bill even in its revised form for three</p> <p>20 straightforward reasons.</p> <p>21 First, there is simply no evidence of a</p>

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<p>1 widespread problem. In the last six years, the 2 county has recorded fewer than ten complaints 3 across the entire license program. That's an 4 average of fewer than two per year, an 5 exceptional track record of compliance, not a 6 crisis demanding drastic new regulations.</p> <p>7 Second, this bill crushes the local 8 families and small businesses under an 9 avalanche of new red tape, without improving 10 housing, without improving neighborhoods, and 11 without improving anything at all.</p> <p>12 The proposed new rules would drive up 13 costs and push responsible owners into either 14 unregulated platforms or out of the market and 15 the community completely.</p> <p>16 Licensed short-term rentals make up less 17 than two percent of Talbot County's total 18 housing stock. Even if half of them vanished 19 tomorrow, fewer than 80 homes would enter the 20 long-term market, a mere drop in the bucket 21 compared to the county's real housing crisis.</p>	<p>1 directly benefits our community. 2 If real issues emerge in the future, the 3 responsible owners and operators in this room 4 tonight stand ready to work with you on a 5 targeted data-driven solutions.</p> <p>6 This bill is a misguided solution in 7 search of a problem. It's a hammer looking for 8 a nail, and the only thing it will hit is the 9 heart of our community.</p> <p>10 You have the power and the evidence to 11 protect our neighborhoods and the tourism 12 economy that makes Talbot County thrive. 13 Please vote no on this bill.</p> <p>14 Thank you for your time and your dedicated 15 service.</p> <p>16 MR. LESHER: Thank you. 17 Next is Minda Goldberg. 18 MR. GOLDBERG: She's here's, but I'll 19 (indiscernible).</p> <p>20 MR. LESHER: You're next. You're Stephen 21 Goldberg. Okay.</p>
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<p>1 Meanwhile, the tourism revenue from these 2 properties keeps housekeepers, landscapers, 3 restaurants, and retail shops thriving, 4 enjoying local residents year-round.</p> <p>5 Employing.</p> <p>6 And third, Talbot County already has one 7 of the strongest and most effective short-term 8 rental programs in the state. Every property 9 is licensed, inspected, actively monitored, and 10 remits ten percent of every booking in tax 11 revenue. We maintain 24-hour hotlines, enforce 12 strict quiet hours, and carry substantial 13 liability insurance.</p> <p>14 If any property becomes a genuine problem, 15 revoke its license. We fully stand behind 16 that. But please don't punish the 99 percent 17 of owners and managers who consistently follow 18 the rules.</p> <p>19 Council Members, the data couldn't be 20 clearer. Near zero complaints, near perfect 21 compliance, millions in tax revenue that</p>	<p>1 MR. GOLDBERG: Good evening, Members of 2 the Council. My name is Steve Goldberg. Thank 3 you for this opportunity. Let me see if I can 4 open my notes real quick.</p> <p>5 First, and I echo what was just said. 6 This was said in a lot of the prior hearings. 7 But this bill feels like a solution in search 8 of a problem.</p> <p>9 This is a well-regulated business in 10 Talbot County and has been for some time. 11 We've been doing it for 15 years without 12 incident.</p> <p>13 And I'm particularly -- I'm opposed to the 14 whole bill, but I'm particularly concerned 15 about the restrictions on non-residents.</p> <p>16 We don't live here full time. We live in 17 Baltimore, but we're here a lot. We spend a 18 lot of money here. We spend more money, my 19 wife was telling me, locally than we do back in 20 Baltimore, the restaurants and all those other 21 things. I don't like the sense that somehow</p>

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1 non-residents are carpetbaggers.	1 It's, each time it's double. About 900 feet
2 You could have someone who has their	2 property line to property line. 1,850 feet
3 principal residence in Talbot County, lives	3 dwelling to dwelling.
4 here eight months of the year, goes away from	4 And I'm happy to give those notices, but I
5 May to September and rents their house every	5 don't think that the limits should be -- in
6 week and gets treated differently than I do	6 terms of notices, that's fine. But in terms of
7 because they're a resident.	7 the proximity of STRs, we should be allowed to
8 And they pay fewer property taxes. I	8 be closer together in the less dense zone.
9 don't claim a homestead exemption here. I pay	9 Then the other thing that no one has
10 more property taxes than they pay.	10 really addressed but I think is really
11 So I think that favoring residents is	11 important, and I did submit comments on this,
12 unfair because there's this huge loophole that	12 is the transfer restrictions. I don't see any
13 enables them to do that.	13 reason why my family shouldn't be entitled to
14 In addition, I believe this is the case	14 inherit my property and continue the STR
15 under the law, and that is that if you have	15 business that I've had all these years and to
16 someone in a residential zone who rents their	16 continue to use my property. I think that's
17 own property, it's their primary residence, I	17 really important.
18 don't think any of the limitations on distance	18 We want to keep this as a family retreat.
19 apply to them. So you could, if it's a primary	19 And being able to rent it is an important part
20 residence, you could have five primary	20 of that ability.
21 residences in a row renting to each other. I	21 MR. LESHER: Thank you very much.
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1 don't think that's fair.	1 Next is Sarah Jones.
2 I also don't think that it's fair that in	2 MS. JONES: Good evening. My husband and
3 a less dense zone, you can only have licenses	3 I have operated a short-term rental for about
4 1,000 feet apart. The 500-foot thing, you can	4 ten years, and we're here to voice our
5 have STRs much closer to each other than in	5 opposition to this bill.
6 1,000-foot zone. I don't know why in the less	6 In 2015, we renovated a small waterfront
7 dense zones we don't have the same 500-foot	7 home built in about 1890. And at the time we
8 regulation.	8 acquired it, this teardown of a house had been
9 And a lot of it's sort of random. It	9 deteriorating for decades and had been a
10 depends on the shape of your street.	10 long-term rental to a series of tenants who
11 In my -- we measured all these distances	11 were less than ideal neighbors.
12 from property lines according to the statute.	12 But we felt it had charm and potential.
13 They should really be measured from dwellings	13 So we hired local electricians and contractors,
14 in these less dense zones. When you measure	14 spent tens of thousands more on building
15 from the property lines, I'm on a circle, this	15 supplies, landscaping and home decor, and
16 is exact figure, the nearest STR to me is	16 continue to spend to preserve this historic
17 400 feet property line to property line and	17 captain's cottage, which is now up to code,
18 about 1,100 feet dwelling to dwelling. I did	18 cute as a button, and very much in character
19 this on the county's mapping charts. I used	19 with the small village of Neavitt.
20 the county's own tool.	20 Our neighbors were thrilled with our
21 Another house a little further down.	21 renovation and the transformation of this

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1 former eyesore. 2 We were able to make this investment with 3 the expectation of renting this property as a 4 short-term rental. 5 We are very selective in our guests. We 6 have house rules that are designed to ensure 7 our neighbors are not disturbed. The house 8 rules are clearly communicated. And in ten 9 years, we've had no complaints. 10 We as owners have paid over \$45,000 to 11 Talbot County in property and short-term 12 accommodation taxes. During our initial 13 application and then each year or each time we 14 subsequently renew, we spend well in excess of 15 \$1,000 to mail the certified notices and meet 16 required testing requirements. 17 So we spend tens of thousands -- I'm 18 sorry. We spend thousands each year to 19 maintain this property to a high level of 20 aesthetic beauty. And I would suspect that 21 most vacation rentals are among the best	1 of community. In Neavitt, as in Bozman, almost 2 a third of our homes are weekend homes with 3 non-permanent residents. Tilghman, Oxford, 4 St. Michael's all have high numbers of 5 part-time residents. This has a much bigger 6 impact on the fabric of our towns than 7 short-term rentals, and there's no regulating 8 around that. 9 As much as we might yearn to, we cannot 10 turn back the clock to Mayberry-type towns 11 where everyone has close relationships with 12 their neighbors. Life in 2025 is more isolated 13 for reasons that have nothing to do with 14 short-term rentals, and over regulating 15 short-term rentals to reduce their number will 16 not make a meaningful improvement in the 17 character of Talbot County communities. 18 The two aspects of the bill, proposed bill 19 we find most troubling are the rewriting of the 20 section about short-term board members. It 21 provides limitations to important voices at the
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1 maintained properties on their blocks and bring 2 up the property values of the other properties 3 in their neighborhood. 4 You've heard about what our guests do to 5 the local economy. 6 We've heard maybe that there's a challenge 7 to the business of local hotels. However, 8 we're filling a niche in the hospitality realm 9 by allowing guests to visit with their pets. 10 Those tourists would not be visiting Talbot 11 County without being able to travel with their 12 pets and spending their money here. 13 Most people don't have seven days to take 14 a vacation. Or if they have a long-term 15 vacation, they don't want to come somewhere 16 local. They want to go to the Caribbean or 17 somewhere exciting like that. So I am very 18 pleased that you lowered that requirement to 19 three days. 20 There are concerns about short-term 21 rentals destroying our neighborhoods or sense	1 table, namely short-term rental owners. 2 And finally, section 63G, requiring a 3 public hearing is a huge waste of time. 4 Everything is addressed in the application 5 process. There's no new information to be 6 gained by having a public hearing. And that 7 would require us all to basically get attorneys 8 because we're not going to show up at a hearing 9 where we can possibly lose our livelihood 10 without an attorney. 11 So thank you very much. 12 MR. LESHER: Thank you. 13 Next is Charles Jones. 14 MS. JONES: I spoke for both of us. 15 MR. LESHER: Okay. And next is Andy 16 Warner. 17 SPEAKER: You said Andy? 18 MR. LESHER: Andy Warner. 19 SPEAKER: I think he's sitting outside. 20 MR. LESHER: He was sitting outside. 21 If we don't have Andy Warner here, I can

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1 now open the floor for those who did not sign 2 up in advance over here.	1 had for 15 years because there's another 2 neighbor, which they're entitled to it, but we 3 would lose it. As a result, he would then have 4 to sell the house and this family home would no 5 longer be.
3 MS. GOLDBERG: I didn't sign up, but I'm 4 going to do a little cleanup. My husband, 5 Stephen Goldberg, spoke.	6 My husband is from the Eastern Shore. We 7 have roots here. And this would destroy that 8 root. Thank you.
6 MR. LESHER: Would you introduce yourself 7 for the record, please?	9 MR. LESHER: Thank you. Anyone else? On 10 Bill 1622, anyone else wish to speak at this 11 point in the back?
8 MS. GOLDBERG: My name is Minda Goldberg. 9 I live on Ingleton Circle.	12 MR. TROUTMAN: Representing Eastern Shore 13 Vacation Rentals.
10 And although I'm not a county resident, 11 I'm a Maryland resident and I'm on the board of 12 my homeowners association. I am an active 13 participant in Talbot County.	14 MS. MIELKE: Your name? Name? 15 MR. LESHER: You'll introduce yourself for 16 the record, please.
14 That said, I want to focus on the 15 restrictions that apply for our neighborhood, 16 which is 1,000 feet.	17 MR. TROUTMAN: My name is Brian Troutman, 18 and I represent Eastern Shore Vacation Rentals, 19 a company that has managed short-term rentals 20 in Talbot County for 23 years.
17 My husband addressed that 1,000 feet from 18 property to property line is not really the 19 standard. The house that -- I'll point out 20 clearly why I'm here. There is another house 21 four or five doors down that got a license	21 We currently oversee one of the largest
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1 three years ago. We're both grandfathered. 2 Their house is within the thousand feet 3 only because of property lines. We can't see 4 their house. They can't see our house. It is 5 more than 1,000 feet apart.	1 groups of licensed STR properties in the 2 county. And because of that, I see firsthand 3 how these regulations affect homeowners, 4 neighborhoods, and our local economy.
6 But what's crucial to us is that we've 7 been here for 15 years. We plan on owning this 8 and then we plan on leaving it to our children. 9 Our children live out of state. They will need 10 the income that we have and the business that 11 we have created so that they can continue to 12 own it.	5 Tonight I'm asking you to vote no to Bill 6 1622. Not because I oppose regulation, but 7 because this bill is unnecessarily, 8 unnecessary, unsupported, and a misuse of the 9 county's time and resources.
13 The problem is the way this legislation is 14 now written, I am grandfathered. I can keep my 15 license as long as I renew and I'm in good 16 standing. But my son, who is here very 17 frequently, helps me manage it, he wasn't on 18 the application from 15 years ago.	10 Bill 1622 is a solution in search of a 11 problem. In the last ten years of operating 12 here across hundreds of properties, the county 13 has received fewer than ten documented 14 complaints, ten in a decade. There's no 15 crisis, no pattern of neighborhood disruption, 16 no evidence that short-term rentals are 17 burdening county systems.
19 When he inherits it, he has to start from 20 scratch. And as this is written, he would not 21 be allowed to maintain the license that we've	18 Our existing framework, the STR Review 19 Board, inspections, and local enforcement tools 20 is already working exactly as intended.
	21 Creating new bureaucracy without evidence

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<p>1 of a problem is not a responsible governance.</p> <p>2 This bill is nearly identical to the one</p> <p>3 that was rejected last time by basically</p> <p>4 everybody.</p> <p>5 When this legislation was introduced</p> <p>6 months ago, it went through a full review. The</p> <p>7 Planning Commission rejected it. County staff</p> <p>8 and volunteers spent hours offering thoughtful,</p> <p>9 constructive changes. Yet instead of</p> <p>10 incorporating even one of those</p> <p>11 recommendations, this bill has been brought</p> <p>12 back almost word for word. That disregards the</p> <p>13 expertise of the Planning Commission, the time</p> <p>14 invested by staff, and the collaborative</p> <p>15 process Talbot County relies on for sound</p> <p>16 policy.</p> <p>17 This bill adds confusion, not clarity, and</p> <p>18 carries real financial consequences. Bill 62</p> <p>19 (sic.) layers on vague and conflicting</p> <p>20 standards, new fees and investigations,</p> <p>21 impractical measurement requirements, and</p>	<p>1 with political positioning. There have been no</p> <p>2 new complaints, no new issues, and no new data,</p> <p>3 just the same recycled narrative conveniently</p> <p>4 timed for another election cycle. Talbot</p> <p>5 County deserves policy based on facts and not</p> <p>6 personal agenda.</p> <p>7 In closing, I want to acknowledge the</p> <p>8 timing. It's Thanksgiving week, a time where</p> <p>9 most of us are focused on coming together,</p> <p>10 finding gratitude, and maybe debating whether</p> <p>11 cranberry sauce really belongs on the table.</p> <p>12 Instead, we're here considering a bill</p> <p>13 that feels a bit like the unwanted holiday</p> <p>14 turkey that no one asked for. It's</p> <p>15 overstuffed, it's been reheated more than once,</p> <p>16 and no amount of dressing is going to fix</p> <p>17 what's wrong with it. Even the family dog</p> <p>18 would probably turn its nose up to Bill 1622.</p> <p>19 Talbot County deserves better than</p> <p>20 political leftovers, especially ones the</p> <p>21 Planning Commission already tried to send back</p>
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<p>1 inconsistent compliance expectations, all</p> <p>2 without solving a single documented problem.</p> <p>3 More importantly, this bill jeopardizes a</p> <p>4 meaningful revenue stream for the county. STRs</p> <p>5 generate hundreds of thousands of dollars each</p> <p>6 year in lodging taxes alone, not to mention</p> <p>7 local spending that supports businesses and</p> <p>8 county services.</p> <p>9 If this legislation reduces STR activity,</p> <p>10 and it is my belief that it will, the revenue</p> <p>11 loss will fall directly on the local taxpayers,</p> <p>12 as it usually does. The STR revenue decreases,</p> <p>13 residents ultimately make up the difference</p> <p>14 through higher taxes or reduced services. Why</p> <p>15 would we risk a stable revenue source when</p> <p>16 there is no evidence the current system is</p> <p>17 failing?</p> <p>18 The motivation for this bill is political</p> <p>19 and not practical. The legislation resurfaces</p> <p>20 repeatedly, driven not by new incidents or</p> <p>21 community concerns, but by personal frustration</p>	<p>1 to the kitchen.</p> <p>2 I respectfully urge you to vote no on Bill</p> <p>3 1622 so that we can all get back to the things</p> <p>4 that actually matter this week; our families,</p> <p>5 our neighbors, and our community, which we are</p> <p>6 truly thankful for.</p> <p>7 Thank you for the time.</p> <p>8 MR. LESHER: Thank you.</p> <p>9 Is there anyone else who wishes to speak</p> <p>10 to Bill 1622?</p> <p>11 MS. HAASE: My name is Bob Haase. I live in</p> <p>12 Bentley Hay in the Town of St. Michaels.</p> <p>13 And I just wanted to make a couple of</p> <p>14 comments about I've heard stories about all the</p> <p>15 money that the short-term rental taxes</p> <p>16 generate.</p> <p>17 It's my understanding that most of the</p> <p>18 money for short-term rentals goes to the</p> <p>19 county, that the towns, the incorporated towns</p> <p>20 only are available to short-term rentals within</p> <p>21 a mile of the town limits.</p>

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<p>1 I live in Bentley Hay. We're within a 2 mile of the town limits of St. Michaels. 3 St. Michaels doesn't allow short-term 4 rentals in their residential areas. So there's 5 very few short-term rentals in St. Michael's. 6 Easton is the same way. There's very 7 strict regulations on short-term rentals in 8 Easton. I don't know any short-term rentals 9 that are within a mile limit of Easton to begin 10 with. Most of them, 90 percent of the 11 short-term rentals are located down 12 St. Michael's Road. 13 So the money that the incorporated towns 14 gets, my understanding, that they're allowed to 15 use that money for infrastructure, trash 16 collection, you know, roadwork, that type 17 stuff. But all the money that's collected by 18 the county goes right to tourism. That doesn't 19 benefit any of the citizens other than bringing 20 more tourists in. So their advertising is all 21 through the country to bring more people in</p>	<p>1 only a small group that's doing all this. 2 Well, there's much more than a small group. I 3 mean just everybody doesn't come out. I mean I 4 can tell you Bentley Hay, there's probably at 5 least half of the people in Bentley Hay, 100 6 people that are concerned about short-term 7 rentals. Rio Vista is the same way. You can't 8 have short-term rentals in Back Creek Landing, 9 you can't have them in Martingham because it's 10 covered by the restrictions. 11 I think the county needs to put tighter 12 regulations on these denser neighborhoods. 13 Thank you. 14 MR. LESHER: Thank you very much. 15 Anybody else wishing to speak on Bill 16 1622? Yes, please. 17 MS. MIELKE: My friend. 18 MS. OTTE: My name is Monica Otte. And 19 I'm here representing the Rio Vista Community 20 Association. So I think I get five minutes. 21 Right?</p>
<p>1 here. 2 I don't believe that this bill will 3 eliminate any short-term rentals. I believe we 4 were told there's 180 short-term rentals in 5 Talbot County. And that is pretty much holding 6 tight. Everybody is grandfathered. This bill 7 grandfathered everybody in. As long as they 8 keep their license up, they have no problems. 9 The gentleman that just spoke in front of 10 me, back in 2019, there was a gentlemen, I 11 think his name was Ken Mann, who worked for 12 that same company. When we were fighting for 13 the dense neighborhoods to have tighter 14 restrictions on it, he said, and it's in the 15 records, that communities like Bentley Hay, Rio 16 Vista, villages should not have short-term 17 rentals, period, because he said that's where 18 all the complaints come from. When the houses 19 are clustered in that tight, that's where it 20 happens. That's all I think. 21 And it was mentioned, too, that there's</p>	<p>Page 91</p> <p>1 MS. KILMON: Yup. 2 MS. OTTE: Okay. And our Rio Vista 3 Community Association HOA Board President Jack 4 Davis is also with me in the audience. 5 We are a community of 223 homes. We are 6 adjacent to Bentley Hay, also a large 7 community. And we're in the town residential 8 zone. 9 We would like to see one change to this 10 bill, to add the town residential zone to the 11 density limitations that apply -- and include 12 them with the same density limitations that 13 apply to the village zones. 14 And the reason for this is simple. The 15 town residential zone is characterized by small 16 lots, 25-foot front and back setbacks, ten-foot 17 side setbacks, very similar to the village 18 zones. So homeowners, residents of the TR zone 19 are just as affected by short-term rentals as 20 are residents of the village zones. So it just 21 seems in simple fairness that TR zones should</p>

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<p>1 also be added.</p> <p>2 I'd also like to just talk about the bill</p> <p>3 generally. So I've read this bill several</p> <p>4 times, and it does not take away existing STR</p> <p>5 permits. It does not stop the issuance of new</p> <p>6 STR permits. And it's not going to wipe out</p> <p>7 every tourism job in the county.</p> <p>8 What I think it does is it provides a</p> <p>9 better balance between the rights of residents</p> <p>10 by providing more transparency to neighbors and</p> <p>11 helping to maintain residential neighborhoods.</p> <p>12 And in fact, when the Planning Commission</p> <p>13 looked at this bill, as other speakers have</p> <p>14 mentioned, there was -- the provisions that</p> <p>15 were objected to the most strongly by the</p> <p>16 vacation rental industry are the provisions</p> <p>17 that have already been taken out of this bill.</p> <p>18 So I think the Council is looking to try</p> <p>19 to still promote tourism but balance this with</p> <p>20 helping residents and maintaining</p> <p>21 neighborhoods.</p>	<p>1 account.</p> <p>2 So I do support the efforts of the county</p> <p>3 to support tourism. And everyone understands</p> <p>4 that tourism is important to the county. But</p> <p>5 support tourism, but still remember that you've</p> <p>6 got people living here full time. You want to</p> <p>7 maintain the residential neighborhoods. The</p> <p>8 residential neighborhoods are one of the</p> <p>9 reasons and the whole ambiance of the county</p> <p>10 are one of the reasons tourists come here.</p> <p>11 So I appreciate your efforts, and thank</p> <p>12 you for your time.</p> <p>13 MR. LESHER: Thank you.</p> <p>14 Anybody else wish to speak on Bill 1622?</p> <p>15 MR. WARNER: May I?</p> <p>16 MR. LESHER: Please come forward.</p> <p>17 MR. WARNER: How's it going? Thank you</p> <p>18 for having me. Andy Warner. I'll keep it</p> <p>19 brief.</p> <p>20 Myself and my family own three short-term</p> <p>21 rentals in Talbot County. I believe a woman</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Page 95</p> <p>1 The other comment I would make is that</p> <p>2 Talbot County, of course, is a tourist</p> <p>3 destination. And there are other tourist</p> <p>4 destinations on the Eastern Shore that are also</p> <p>5 looking at trying to support tourism but still</p> <p>6 protect their residents and their residential</p> <p>7 neighborhoods.</p> <p>8 Mr. Haase mentioned that St. Michaels and</p> <p>9 Easton have much stricter STRs rules. And just</p> <p>10 this year, Queen Anne's County, also a tourist</p> <p>11 destination, they didn't have an STR law. They</p> <p>12 now enacted a new law with some very strict</p> <p>13 provisions in it. For example, no outdoor</p> <p>14 music after 8 o'clock at night, very strict</p> <p>15 limits on how many people can be in an STR.</p> <p>16 And Oxford, the Town of Oxford, has had an</p> <p>17 STR ordinance for some time. But within the</p> <p>18 last couple of months, they just updated it.</p> <p>19 Why? Because they wanted to strengthen it and</p> <p>20 help achieve more compliance. And they're</p> <p>21 taking the needs of their residents into</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Page 97</p> <p>1 earlier said she made a decision to fix up a</p> <p>2 dilapidated property with the expectation that</p> <p>3 she'd be able to generate some income off of</p> <p>4 it.</p> <p>5 We've done the same. And it would</p> <p>6 definitely hinder some of the return on that</p> <p>7 property.</p> <p>8 And I oppose this bill for all the reasons</p> <p>9 stated before me.</p> <p>10 In addition, I propose that we revise the</p> <p>11 current legislation to reduce the minimum</p> <p>12 nights from three down to two. Thank you.</p> <p>13 MR. LESHER: Anyone else wish to speak on</p> <p>14 Bill 1622? Yes, please.</p> <p>15 MS. FLOOD: Hi. My name is Ann Marie</p> <p>16 Flood. I live on Tilghman Island Road.</p> <p>17 I think we have to keep in mind that the</p> <p>18 bottom line on all this for all the people that</p> <p>19 have spoken in favor of short-term rentals thus</p> <p>20 far is their pockets. It is a business.</p> <p>21 The couple that spoke a few minutes ago</p>

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1 used the term family business.	1 MR. LESHER: Excuse me, Mr. Stamp.
2 I live in a residential zoned area. My	2 Let's please allow us to keep this -- take
3 home is very important to me. And I'm not sure	3 the conversations outside.
4 why I have to have to share it with businesses.	4 Thank you so much.
5 They're not doing this for fun. They're not	5 Mr. Stamp.
6 doing this for the good of Talbot County.	6 MR. STAMP: Thank you, Council.
7 They're doing it for their bottom line.	7 We have a request from the Eastern Shore
8 SPEAKER: (Indiscernible.)	8 Land Conservancy for a letter of support for
9 MS. FLOOD: It's not?	9 their grant application to the Maryland
10 MR. LESHER: Just let's keep the comments	10 Department of Natural Resources for the San
11 down and address your comments to the Council,	11 Domingo Creek Park environmental enhancement
12 please.	12 project.
13 MS. FLOOD: Thank you.	13 No county funds will be required for this
14 It's my home, and I have trouble enjoying	14 letter of support.
15 it because of noise and disruption from	15 MS. HAYTHE: Motion to approve the letter
16 neighboring properties that are doing this for	16 of support.
17 income.	17 MR. STEPP: Second.
18 Is that fair? Is that fair to me? Who is	18 MR. LESHER: We have a motion and second.
19 looking out for me?	19 Would the secretary call the roll, please.
20 I'm asking for help. Thank you.	20 SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher.
21 MR. LESHER: Thank you.	21 MR. LESHER: Aye.
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1 Anyone else wish to speak on Bill 1622?	1 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.
2 The public record will remain open for	2 MR. STEPP: Aye.
3 written comment until noon on December 5th.	3 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.
4 This bill will be eligible for a vote at	4 MS. MIELKE: Aye.
5 our next meeting on December 9th. Thank you,	5 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.
6 all. And thank you, too, for the many of you	6 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.
7 who have submitted written comments already.	7 MR. STAMP: Council, staff is asking
8 We certainly have received those, and I	8 consideration for your approval. Request to
9 certainly read all of those.	9 apply and accept a grant from the Maryland
10 So with that, we'll close the public	10 Energy Administration, Local Government Energy
11 hearing on Bill 1622. And if you're going to	11 Modernization, funding for improvement of
12 leave, I'll ask you to do it quietly because	12 County facilities. We are requesting Council
13 we're continuing on with business here with the	13 approval to apply for and accept grant funds
14 county manager report.	14 from the Maryland Energy Administration.
15 Mr. Stamp.	15 As I just stated, this is going to largely
16 MR. STAMP: Thank you, Council. The next	16 benefit an existing capital improvement project
17 item that I have on the county manager report	17 that we have budgeted to fund for the
18 is a request from the Eastern Shore Land	18 Department of Corrections and the Talbot County
19 Conservancy. Requesting a letter of support	19 Courthouse.
20 for their grant application to the Maryland	20 The county will apply for 1.825101.
21 Department of Natural Resources.	21 That's \$1,825,101, which requires a ten percent

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1 cost share totally \$182,510.10. The Finance	1 MR. LESHER: We have a motion and second.
2 Office has confirmed there are sufficient funds	2 Would the secretary please call the roll.
3 available for that match in the FY26 budget.	3 SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher.
4 MR. LESHER: Mr. Stamp, kudos to staff for	4 MR. LESHER: Aye.
5 identifying this opportunity. We know how we	5 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.
6 have these infrastructure needs and we need to	6 MR. STEPP: Aye.
7 find a way of making these upgrades. So thank	7 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.
8 you.	8 MS. MIELKE: Aye.
9 Is there a motion?	9 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.
10 MR. STEPP: With that, I'll make a motion.	10 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.
11 MS. HAYTHE: Second.	11 MR. STAMP: And Council, I ask Ray Clarke,
12 MR. LESHER: Would the secretary call the	12 your county engineer, to come forward.
13 roll, please.	13 He has a request to enter a contract for
14 SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher.	14 sale of purchase of approximately 1,333 feet of
15 MR. LESHER: Aye.	15 real property located at 9002 Goldsborough Neck
16 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.	16 Road, Easton, Maryland.
17 MR. STEPP: Aye.	17 Ray.
18 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.	18 MR. CLARKE: Thank you. Council, again,
19 MS. MIELKE: Aye.	19 we worked with the property owner,
20 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.	20 Mr. Firstman.
21 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.	21 Just kind of give you some history about
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1 MR. STAMP: Thank, you Council.	1 this. We ended up completing an appraisal on
2 And I'm here. I'm going to speak up on	2 Mr. Freedman's property, which is across the
3 behalf of our Parks and Recreation Department.	3 street kind of catty-cornered to Mr. Firstman.
4 They're requesting Council approval to proceed	4 Mr. Firstman and Mr. Freedman know each
5 with engineering services for the replacement	5 other. And so when I was contacted by
6 of the dehumidifier systems at the Talbot	6 Mr. Freeland, yeah, Freeland, he advised me
7 County Community Center ice rink and curling	7 that Mark was basically interested in working
8 rink.	8 with us. We had dropped off a letter basically
9 We're seeking to piggyback on a contract	9 outlining an offer to him.
10 with Wicomico County with Electrical Automation	10 At that point, my offer letter included
11 Service, Incorporated.	11 the 70, I guess it was 72 cents per square foot
12 The cost for the engineering work will be	12 for Mr. Firstman as the offer.
13 \$45,100. There are sufficient funds in the	13 At the same time, as in talking with
14 FY26 for this project.	14 Mr. Firstman, in lieu of basically doing an
15 And again, this would be to engineer the	15 appraisal, offered him \$2,000 in addition to
16 dehumidifier system solution, which would then	16 the 1,306.80, bringing it a total offer of
17 go out to bid and come to Council for that.	17 \$3,306.80.
18 MR. LESHER: Is there a motion?	18 So we were trying to do this as quickly as
19 MS. HAYTHE: Motion to approve the	19 we could so that we did not get in a position
20 request.	20 where we had David A. Bramble was working on
21 MR. STEPP: Second.	21 Goldsborough Neck Road, having to demobilize,

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1 and then ultimate remobilize, they would 2 continue to work. 3 And we also worked with Mr. Firstman in 4 also getting a temporary construction easement 5 so that we could do the work before we had all 6 this settled. So ultimately I was in 7 communications with Mr. Firstman throughout 8 process. 9 Again, that's why we were offering him 10 \$3,306.80 for the property along Villa Road. 11 MR. STAMP: And again, Council, this is 12 for the Goldsborough Neck Road project that we 13 have seen (indiscernible) open that road. 14 But it also helps enhance the intersection 15 of Villa Road into Goldsborough Neck Road and 16 allows us to implement safety enhancements to 17 that intersection by increasing visibility with 18 a growing amount of traffic coming out of Villa 19 Road onto Goldsborough Neck Road, which is an 20 area where the sheriff is going to have to do 21 some speed monitoring now because it's been	1 distance area, area of distance. 2 One of the things we had to do was work 3 with Mr. Firstman, and he worked with us as 4 well. There's a buffer requirement for the 5 SDA. We modified the request with him because 6 of the SDA. And so ultimately, just provided 7 an easement over that SDA versus basically a 8 fee in simple acquisition. 9 MR. LESHER: All right. Any questions for 10 Mr. Clarke? 11 MS. HAYTHE: Just one, Ray. When was the 12 appraisal done for the Freedman property? 13 MR. CLARKE: Freedman property was done 14 probably about 18 months ago. So it was 15 with -- usually, my understanding, the 16 appraisals last about three years. So it was 17 done about three years ago. 18 MS. HAYTHE: And so do we normally have an 19 appraisal process for all -- 20 MR. CLARKE: -- we do. Our typical 21 process is going to basically be, once we know
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1 widened and resurfaced and people are taking 2 advantage of that a little bit. 3 MR. STEPP: And raised. Thank you. 4 MR. CLARKE: Yes, yes, yes. 5 MR. STEPP: You can definitely see how 6 much it's been raised. So thank you for that. 7 MR. CLARKE: And again, just so the 8 Council is aware, too. I mean the timing for 9 us, we were working as quickly as we could to 10 get Goldsborough Neck Road wrapped up before 11 the end of this year because we had \$750,000 12 worth of grant funding. 13 We were also trying to get the Villa Road 14 improvements done. And again, as Clay noted, 15 we were also focused to the site distance on 16 Villa Road. 17 So we actually ended up removing trees off 18 of Mr. Firstman's property. We worked with him 19 very diligently and not removing trees that 20 they wanted to keep. Everything that they 21 wanted to keep was actually outside our	1 what our needs are on that property, we'll then 2 do an appraisal. 3 But since I had an appraisal on 4 Mr. Freedman's property, I utilized that to 5 calculate what the fee simple interest would be 6 for that property at the 72 cents. And it 7 ended coming up I think it was 1,306.80. 8 At that point, you know, if we went and 9 hired and have an appraisal firm come in, it 10 probably would have cost us about 2,000 to 11 \$2,400 to have that appraisal done. 12 So instead of working with the property 13 owner, rather than paying. We agreed on it 14 basically, not having the appraisal done. He 15 would get paid the \$2,000 on top of the \$1,300 16 that was part of the 72 cents per square foot. 17 MS. HAYTHE: Okay. And who approved the 18 waiver of the appraisal? 19 MR. CLARKE: I guess that was -- 20 MS. HAYTHE: -- made that decision? 21 MR. CLARKE: Ultimately submitted that to

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1 the county as well, just noting this -- and I 2 also drafted the letter noting that, that 3 basically we were providing him the offer 4 without -- in lieu of providing the appraisal, 5 basically we would give him the \$2,000.	1 I'll ask Micah Risher to come forward, 2 your airport manager. He has a request for 3 Council's consideration to award a bid. 4 MR. RISHER: Thanks, Clay. 5 Council, good evening. Happy Thanksgiving 6 early. Micah Risher, your airport manager. 7 We'll close on an easy one here. This is 8 something we do every three years. We put our 9 farmland out to rebid. We did that 10 successfully this year in Bid Number 25-13. And 11 the highest bidder was Mr. Edward Roe, who 12 actually currently has the lease. 13 So Mr. Roe is the high bid for the next 14 three years for 8,600 per crop season. 15 So I recommended that we award the lease 16 to Mr. Roe. 17 MR. LESHER: Any questions on this one? 18 If not, are we ready for a motion? 19 MS. MIELKE: So moved. 20 MS. HAYTHE: Second. 21 MR. LESHER: And that's a motion for
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1 MS. HAYTHE: I agree that it may seem 2 excessive. But if we have a standard operating 3 procedure in place, I think we should follow 4 the procedure at every -- each time. 5 MR. LESHER: Any other questions? If not, 6 are we ready for a motion? 7 MR. STEPP: I'll make a motion. 8 MS. MIELKE: Second. 9 MR. LESHER: Motion and second. Would the 10 secretary call the roll, please. 11 SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher. 12 MR. LESHER: Aye. 13 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp. 14 MR. STEPP: Aye. 15 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke. 16 MS. MIELKE: Aye. 17 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe. 18 MS. HAYTHE: Nay. 19 MR. CLARKE: Thank you. 20 MR. STAMP: Okay. Thank you, Council. 21 Thank you, Ray.	1 approval. If the secretary would call the 2 roll, please. 3 SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher. 4 MR. LESHER: Aye. 5 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp. 6 MR. STEPP: Aye. 7 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke. 8 MS. MIELKE: Aye. 9 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe. 10 MS. HAYTHE: Aye. 11 MR. RISHER: Thank you, Council. 12 MR. STAMP: Thank you, Micah. 13 And finally, Council, I just announce that 14 county offices will be closed Thursday, 15 November 27th, and Friday, November 28th. 16 And I'd like to take the opportunity to 17 wish you and your families a wonderful 18 Thanksgiving. 19 And as always, I thank the Council for 20 your support each day. 21 MR. LESHER: Thank you very much,

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1 Mr. Stamp.	1 all.
2 We are now down to public comment, general	2 (Meeting concluded at: 6:44 p.m.)
3 comments that may not pertain to pending	3
4 legislation.	4
5 Is there anybody here who wishes to	5
6 offer -- we used the public comment sheet it	6
7 seems for all focused on Bill 1622. But if	7
8 there's any other public comment here, you're	8
9 welcome to come forward at this time.	9
10 Seeing none, we can move on to Council	10
11 comments.	11
12 MS. HAYTHE: Just want to wish everybody a	12
13 happy Thanksgiving.	13
14 MS. MIELKE: Happy Thanksgiving.	14
15 MR. STEPP: Might as well stick in the	15
16 same vain. Happy Thanksgiving, everyone.	16
17 Safety to you and your families if you're	17
18 traveling. And just blessings to all.	18
19 MR. LESHER: And I will stick with the	19
20 theme and wish all a happy Thanksgiving.	20
21 MS. HAYTHE: It's unanimous.	21
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1 MR. LESHER: The County Council's next	1 STATE OF MARYLAND
2 meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 9th,	2 I, Diane Houlihan, a Notary Public in and
3 beginning at 5 o'clock p.m. The Council will	3 for the State of Maryland, County of Talbot, do
4 be convening in open session at 3:30 p.m. and	4 hereby certify that the within named, Talbot County
5 then adjourning into closed session, as listed	5 Council Audio, personally appeared before me at the
6 on the statement for closing that meeting.	6 time and place herein set according to law, was
7 Therefore, is there a motion to adjourn	7 interrogated by counsel.
8 this meeting and reconvene as noted?	8
9 MS. HAYTHE: So moved.	9 I further certify that the examination was
10 MR. STEPP: And a second.	10 recorded stenographically by me and then transcribed
11 MR. LESHER: And would the secretary call	11 from my stenographic notes to the within printed
12 the roll.	12 matter by means of computer-assisted transcription
13 SECRETARY: Mr. Lesher.	13 in a true and accurate manner.
14 MR. LESHER: Aye.	14
15 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.	15 I further certify that the stipulations
16 MR. STEPP: Aye.	16 contained herein were entered into by counsel in my
17 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.	17 presence.
18 MS. MIELKE: Aye.	18
19 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.	19
20 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.	20 I further certify that I am not of counsel
21 MR. LESHER: We are adjourned. Thank you,	21 to any of the parties, not an employee of counsel,

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