

COUNTY COUNCIL OF TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

Council Meeting

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

Council Chambers, Easton, Maryland

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Pete Leshner

Keasha N. Haythe

Lynn L. Mielke

Dave Stepp

Reported by

Diane Houlihan

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<p>1 TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS</p> <p>2</p> <p>3 MR. LESHER: Welcome, everyone. I will</p> <p>4 call this meeting to order. Thank you, all,</p> <p>5 for being here.</p> <p>6 Would you all please join me, rise as we</p> <p>7 go through an opening prayer followed by the</p> <p>8 Pledge of Allegiance.</p> <p>9 (Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance.)</p> <p>10 MR. LESHER: Thank you, again, for joining</p> <p>11 us this evening.</p> <p>12 Council has an agenda in front of it. Are</p> <p>13 there any additions or corrections to the</p> <p>14 agenda, any additions or deletions to the</p> <p>15 agenda? If not, the chair will move that the</p> <p>16 agenda be accepted with unanimous consent.</p> <p>17 And we have minutes of the October 28th</p> <p>18 and November 4th meetings. Are there any</p> <p>19 additions or corrections to the minutes?</p> <p>20 MS. MIELKE: Nope.</p> <p>21 MR. LESHER: Hearing none, the chair will</p>	<p>1 MR. LeCATES: I'll turn it over to Holley.</p> <p>2 Holley is the division chief that oversees the</p> <p>3 911 Center. And she's the one that put Hannah</p> <p>4 up for this award, the well-deserving award.</p> <p>5 Hannah is one of the shining stars. Only</p> <p>6 been us with us going on two years but has</p> <p>7 really grasped the job and excels at it and is</p> <p>8 one of the calming voices on the other end of</p> <p>9 the 911 line when people call out for help.</p> <p>10 So I'll turn it over to Holley. She can</p> <p>11 read her, what she...</p> <p>12 MS. MIELKE: Commendation.</p> <p>13 MR. LeCATES: The commendation that she</p> <p>14 presented or applied for and turn it over to</p> <p>15 Hannah. And I'll just sit in the background,</p> <p>16 where I belong.</p> <p>17 MS. GUSCHKE: Good evening. So every</p> <p>18 year, the State of Maryland gives an award to</p> <p>19 every county for the 911 Communications</p> <p>20 Specialist of the Year.</p> <p>21 This year we allowed our employees to</p>
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<p>1 move that the minutes be approved with</p> <p>2 unanimous consent.</p> <p>3 We have record of the disbursements of</p> <p>4 November 11th, November 18th, and November 25th</p> <p>5 before us. Are there any questions for staff</p> <p>6 on the disbursements?</p> <p>7 MS. HAYTHE: No questions.</p> <p>8 MR. LESHER: Hearing none, the chair moves</p> <p>9 that the disbursements be approved with</p> <p>10 unanimous consent.</p> <p>11 Next up, we have a Council commendation</p> <p>12 for our, for Hannah Ward, our Maryland 911</p> <p>13 Board Communication Specialist of the Year.</p> <p>14 Holley Guschke, are you here to present</p> <p>15 Hannah to us?</p> <p>16 MS. GUSCHKE: I am.</p> <p>17 MR. LESHER: Please come up to the table.</p> <p>18 MR. LeCATES: Go ahead. Sit down.</p> <p>19 Thank you, Mr. Leshner. Thank you,</p> <p>20 Council.</p> <p>21 MR. LESHER: Welcome, Mr. LeCates.</p>	<p>1 vote, and they overwhelmingly voted for Hannah.</p> <p>2 Hannah Ward has been employed with Talbot</p> <p>3 County DES since July 2023, and she's currently</p> <p>4 a communications specialist two.</p> <p>5 It is with great pride and enthusiasm that</p> <p>6 we nominate Hannah Ward for the 911</p> <p>7 Communications Specialist of the Year.</p> <p>8 Hannah consistently exemplifies the</p> <p>9 qualities of an outstanding dispatcher through</p> <p>10 her unwaiving (sic.) dedication,</p> <p>11 professionalism, and positive presence in the</p> <p>12 workplace. She approaches each shift with a</p> <p>13 calm, teachable spirit and consistent positive</p> <p>14 attitude, even in the most pressure situations.</p> <p>15 She is a true team player, who not only</p> <p>16 supports her own shift, but regularly steps up</p> <p>17 to assist others in covering open shifts,</p> <p>18 handles radio traffic, and lends a hand</p> <p>19 wherever she can. Her flexibility and</p> <p>20 reliability are unmatched, and she consistently</p> <p>21 goes above and beyond without hesitation.</p>

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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. 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. 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. 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. 6 MR. LESHER: Do we have a motion to award 7 the commendation? 8 MS. MIELKE: So moved. 9 MR. STEPP: So moved. 10 MS. HAYTHE: Second. 11 MR. STEPP: How about the second? Third. 12 MR. LESHER: Would the secretary please 13 call the roll. 14 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshner. 15 MR. LESHER: Aye. 16 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp. 17 MR. STEPP: Aye. 18 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke. 19 MS. MIELKE: Aye. 20 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe. 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. 6 MR. LESHER: Well, congratulations. 7 MS. WARD: Thank you. 8 MR. LESHER: Having heard all that, shall 9 we ask the secretary to read the Commendation 10 into the record. 11 SECRETARY: Council's Commendation to 12 Hannah Ward, the Maryland 911 Board 911 13 Communication Specialist of the Year. 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. 20 And for her multitasking skills, attention to 21 detail, and positive attitude toward her job</p>	<p>1 MR. LESHER: Any Council remarks? 2 MR. STEPP: I'll start it off if you don't 3 mind. 4 So Holley, thank you for your kind words. 5 Brian, thank you for your kind words. 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. 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. 19 I love doing this every year. 20 Congratulations. Just keep it up. Thank 21 you.</p>

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

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

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<p>1 other partner organizations are doing, as 2 Mr. Stepp said. 3 MS. LOWE: We couldn't do it without all 4 of us working on this problem. 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 MS. KILMON: You can go first. 10 MR. STEPP: Konner first. 11 CONNER: Thank you. 12 MS. KILMON: Perfect. 13 MS. LOWE: Thank you very much. Thank 14 you, all. 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</p>	<p>1 provides professional, team-oriented care to 2 patients faced with a life-limiting illness in 3 an atmosphere of comfort and dignity. 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. 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. 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. 21 Given under our hands in the great seal of</p>
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<p>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</p>	<p>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. Leshner. 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</p>

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

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<p>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. 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</p>	<p>1 MR. LESHHER: Are we happy with just the 2 title on this one? 3 MS. HAYTHE: Yes. 4 MR. LESHHER: 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. 10 MR. LESHHER: 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</p>
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<p>1 doing. It's wonderful. 2 MS. WARE: Okay. 3 MS. MENZIES: Thank you. 4 MS. WARE: Thank you very much. 5 MR. LESHHER: 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. LESHHER: 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?</p>	<p>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</p>

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<p>1 another administrative resolution. This</p> <p>2 resolution is requesting that the County</p> <p>3 Council preapprove the use of reserves in the</p> <p>4 county's general fund.</p> <p>5 Talbot County's reserve policy requires</p> <p>6 that the county manager certify availability of</p> <p>7 the funds and requests that the County Council</p> <p>8 approve the use of the funding.</p> <p>9 This resolution will require no further</p> <p>10 approval by the County Council for the use of</p> <p>11 reserves for payment of the debt service on</p> <p>12 these bonds if needed. We do not anticipate</p> <p>13 needing that, but MDE wants extra, extra, extra</p> <p>14 assurances.</p> <p>15 MR. LESHHER: Are there questions for</p> <p>16 Ms. Sparks on the administrative resolution?</p> <p>17 MS. HAYTHE: No.</p> <p>18 MS. MIELKE: No.</p> <p>19 MR. LESHHER: So this is specifically for</p> <p>20 all the sewer hookups in the Resolution 250</p> <p>21 area down --</p>	<p>1 MR. LESHHER: Aye.</p> <p>2 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.</p> <p>3 MR. STEPP: Aye.</p> <p>4 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.</p> <p>5 MS. MIELKE: Aye.</p> <p>6 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.</p> <p>7 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.</p> <p>8 MS. SPARKS: Thank you very much.</p> <p>9 MR. LESHHER: Thank you. And good luck as</p> <p>10 we proceed to closing on these bonds. And</p> <p>11 hopefully we can get these connections made.</p> <p>12 MS. SPARKS: Yeah. Fingers and toes</p> <p>13 crossed.</p> <p>14 MR. LESHHER: All right. We have just a</p> <p>15 couple of minutes before we are allowed to open</p> <p>16 up our public hearings scheduled for 5:30.</p> <p>17 To make good use of time, can we proceed</p> <p>18 with the first item under county manager</p> <p>19 report, Mr. County Manager.</p> <p>20 MR. STAMP: Sure. Thank you, Council.</p> <p>21 Under county manager report this evening,</p>
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<p>1 MS. SPARKS: 235.</p> <p>2 MR. LESHHER: 235 area.</p> <p>3 MS. SPARKS: Yes. That's correct. Yes.</p> <p>4 And as soon as we get this resolution</p> <p>5 passed by Council, we'll be able to get that</p> <p>6 bond closing schedule.</p> <p>7 MR. LESHHER: Okay. We need to introduce.</p> <p>8 MR. THOMAS: Once it's introduced, it can</p> <p>9 be adopted by a vote.</p> <p>10 MR. LESHHER: Yes. But do an introduction</p> <p>11 by show of hands first?</p> <p>12 MR. THOMAS: Yes.</p> <p>13 MR. LESHHER: All right. Who is</p> <p>14 introducing this resolution? It is introduced</p> <p>15 by Council.</p> <p>16 And since this is eligible for an</p> <p>17 immediate vote, are there any discussion on</p> <p>18 this before we proceed with the vote?</p> <p>19 Hearing none, would you please call the</p> <p>20 roll.</p> <p>21 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshher.</p>	<p>1 boards and committee appointments. I have</p> <p>2 three for you this evening.</p> <p>3 The first one is regarding the Economic</p> <p>4 Development Commission. We're requesting the</p> <p>5 appointment of Dr. Michael Meier as a Town of</p> <p>6 St. Michaels representative to that board or</p> <p>7 commission.</p> <p>8 MS. HAYTHE: Motion to approve.</p> <p>9 MS. MIELKE: Second.</p> <p>10 MR. LESHHER: Motion and second. Would the</p> <p>11 secretary the roll.</p> <p>12 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshher.</p> <p>13 MR. LESHHER: Aye.</p> <p>14 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.</p> <p>15 MR. STEPP: Aye.</p> <p>16 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.</p> <p>17 MS. MIELKE: Aye.</p> <p>18 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.</p> <p>19 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.</p> <p>20 MR. LESHHER: That one is approved.</p> <p>21 Mr. Stamp.</p>

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

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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? 7 MR. STEPP: None here. 8 MS. MIELKE: No. 9 MR. SHOWALTER: Thank you. 10 MR. LESHER: Thank you. Anybody else who 11 wishes to speak on Bill 1621? 12 Seeing none, I will close the public 13 hearing on this bill but leave the record open 14 for written comments until noon on Friday, 15 December 5th. 16 This will be eligible for a vote on 17 December 9th. 18 Next up we have Bill Number 1622. Would 19 the secretary read the title into the record, 20 please. 21 SECRETARY: Bill Number 1622, a bill to</p>	<p>1 the Planning Commission. 2 The differences from what was initially 3 presented, that the proposed increase in 4 minimum night stay for certain zoning districts 5 from three days to seven days was removed, the 6 proposal requirement for a landline telephone 7 was removed, and the proposal requirement for 8 keeping a log of rentals was removed. 9 MR. LESHER: Okay. Any questions from 10 Council? 11 MS. MIELKE: For? 12 MR. LESHER: For Bill 1622. 13 MS. MIELKE: I just wanted to clarify that 14 when the bill was first presented to the 15 Planning Commission and it came back with 16 suggestions, most of those changes or many of 17 the changes were made as a result? 18 MR. THOMAS: Those were three changes 19 that, those were three requirements in the 20 original version that you all voted to send to 21 the Planning Commission that had been removed</p>
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<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. 12 MR. LESHER: Okay. I seem to have skipped 13 over this step. But Mr. Thomas, do you have 14 anything that you'd like to give for background 15 on this one? 16 MR. THOMAS: I can briefly, as I stated at 17 the introduction. 18 So this bill simply reflects the proposal 19 that was initially brought forward by Vice 20 President Leshner and Council Member Mielke with 21 three changes, all of which were recommended by</p>	<p>1 based on the Planning Commission's 2 recommendations. But it otherwise contains the 3 language that was originally in what you 4 forwarded. 5 MS. MIELKE: Just wanted that to be clear 6 for the record. 7 MR. THOMAS: Sure. 8 MS. MIELKE: Thank you. 9 MR. LESHER: Okay. If there are no 10 further questions, we can open the hearing on 11 Bill 1622. 12 If you are coming forward to speak, I'll 13 ask you to speak into the microphones at this 14 table here. If you are speaking as an 15 individual, you will have three minutes. If 16 speaking for an organization and you are the 17 only one speaking for that organization, you 18 may have five. 19 MS. MIELKE: Sign-up sheet. 20 MR. LESHER: Do we have a sign-up sheet 21 for this one?</p>

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

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

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

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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. LESHAR: 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. LESHAR: 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>
Page 59	Page 61
<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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<p>1 think it's under ten in the number of years.</p> <p>2 And I believe there's a hotline set up to</p> <p>3 address that.</p> <p>4 And I guess I don't understand what</p> <p>5 motivates this legislation. It's going to have</p> <p>6 a negative impact on the economy and it kind of</p> <p>7 imposes a one-size solution across all of</p> <p>8 Talbot County. And I think situations are</p> <p>9 unique. And if there are individual complaints</p> <p>10 or problems, there's a commission, a process</p> <p>11 for dealing with that.</p> <p>12 So I just want to echo what somebody else</p> <p>13 said, that there's plenty of regulation</p> <p>14 already. It doesn't need to be more burdensome</p> <p>15 or cumbersome. Thank you.</p> <p>16 MR. LESHER: Thank you. Next is James</p> <p>17 Flood.</p> <p>18 MR. FLOOD: Oh, my. Good afternoon, and</p> <p>19 thank you very much for giving me the</p> <p>20 opportunity to speak before this group. My</p> <p>21 name is James Flood.</p>	<p>1 down that driveway. And these people disgorge,</p> <p>2 and then they are on vacation. They aren't</p> <p>3 used to having a pool, they aren't used to</p> <p>4 having a dock, and they are there to have a</p> <p>5 good time. And they do have a good time.</p> <p>6 I'm the one who pays for it because it's</p> <p>7 loud and there's, you know, just things going</p> <p>8 on. I've had drones over my pool. I've had</p> <p>9 people with paintball guns on my property, all</p> <p>10 sorts of toys. I've had people on my dock.</p> <p>11 If I go talk to them, they'll sometime</p> <p>12 quit. But they really don't -- they're not</p> <p>13 going to see me again. They don't care.</p> <p>14 I can go to the owner, which I have done,</p> <p>15 which the STR tells you that's what you should</p> <p>16 do. And he's not a bad guy. But sometimes</p> <p>17 they do something, sometimes they don't.</p> <p>18 I don't go to the county, though, because</p> <p>19 I do have to maintain some relationship with</p> <p>20 this owner next door. We share a bond with the</p> <p>21 property.</p>
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<p>1 I was born here 71 years ago. My</p> <p>2 grandfather, Dr. Storch from New Jersey, came</p> <p>3 down here in the 1920s, fell in love with the</p> <p>4 area. It was peaceful. It was quiet. It was</p> <p>5 tranquil. So much so that he bought the home</p> <p>6 on 7969 Tilghman Island Road. That's on Harris</p> <p>7 Creek. That home has remained in our family</p> <p>8 for almost 100 years. I've been coming down</p> <p>9 here all my life.</p> <p>10 Twenty years ago, I decided I'd like to</p> <p>11 have my own place here. And so I looked in the</p> <p>12 areas where the zoning was residential because</p> <p>13 I wanted a quiet place. And I found a place</p> <p>14 also on Water Hole Cove. And it was great.</p> <p>15 And then a short-term rental came in next</p> <p>16 door, a hotel, a small hotel really. They have</p> <p>17 customers coming in and out all the time. They</p> <p>18 allow 12 people in a house under 2,000 square</p> <p>19 feet. That's pretty crowded.</p> <p>20 So they show up every Saturday afternoon</p> <p>21 now in season. We wait for the caravan to come</p>	<p>1 I pay \$12,695 a year in property taxes.</p> <p>2 All I want is quiet enjoyment of my property.</p> <p>3 I'm not asking for anything else. Just quiet</p> <p>4 enjoyment.</p> <p>5 Why -- I'm in an area zoned residential.</p> <p>6 Why am I having to fight for that? I hope you</p> <p>7 vote for this bill.</p> <p>8 And really, we need to move further ahead</p> <p>9 with other support for the homeowners who are</p> <p>10 paying the taxes.</p> <p>11 You know, people are throwing out numbers.</p> <p>12 Look at the number of how many dollars</p> <p>13 homeowners are paying in property taxes versus</p> <p>14 the money coming in from the short-term</p> <p>15 rentals. But that to me is just a matter of</p> <p>16 fairness.</p> <p>17 I thought I did everything I was supposed</p> <p>18 to and still I'm --</p> <p>19 MR. LESHER: Mr. Flood, you are wrapping</p> <p>20 up there? Thank you.</p> <p>21 MR. FLOOD: Thank you.</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 66</p> <p>1 MR. LESHHER: 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 style="text-align: right;">Page 68</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. LESHHER: Thank you.</p> <p>18 MS. MIELKE: Thank you.</p> <p>19 MR. LESHHER: Next one simply reads</p> <p>20 Tidewater Vacations. Tidewater Vacations.</p> <p>21 MS. HOYLE: Hi, good evening. I'm a</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 67</p> <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 style="text-align: right;">Page 69</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</p> <p>2 county has recorded fewer than ten complaints</p> <p>3 across the entire license program. That's an</p> <p>4 average of fewer than two per year, an</p> <p>5 exceptional track record of compliance, not a</p> <p>6 crisis demanding drastic new regulations.</p> <p>7 Second, this bill crushes the local</p> <p>8 families and small businesses under an</p> <p>9 avalanche of new red tape, without improving</p> <p>10 housing, without improving neighborhoods, and</p> <p>11 without improving anything at all.</p> <p>12 The proposed new rules would drive up</p> <p>13 costs and push responsible owners into either</p> <p>14 unregulated platforms or out of the market and</p> <p>15 the community completely.</p> <p>16 Licensed short-term rentals make up less</p> <p>17 than two percent of Talbot County's total</p> <p>18 housing stock. Even if half of them vanished</p> <p>19 tomorrow, fewer than 80 homes would enter the</p> <p>20 long-term market, a mere drop in the bucket</p> <p>21 compared to the county's real housing crisis.</p>	<p>1 directly benefits our community.</p> <p>2 If real issues emerge in the future, the</p> <p>3 responsible owners and operators in this room</p> <p>4 tonight stand ready to work with you on a</p> <p>5 targeted data-driven solutions.</p> <p>6 This bill is a misguided solution in</p> <p>7 search of a problem. It's a hammer looking for</p> <p>8 a nail, and the only thing it will hit is the</p> <p>9 heart of our community.</p> <p>10 You have the power and the evidence to</p> <p>11 protect our neighborhoods and the tourism</p> <p>12 economy that makes Talbot County thrive.</p> <p>13 Please vote no on this bill.</p> <p>14 Thank you for your time and your dedicated</p> <p>15 service.</p> <p>16 MR. LESHER: Thank you.</p> <p>17 Next is Minda Goldberg.</p> <p>18 MR. GOLDBERG: She's here's, but I'll</p> <p>19 (indiscernible).</p> <p>20 MR. LESHER: You're next. You're Stephen</p> <p>21 Goldberg. Okay.</p>
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<p>1 Meanwhile, the tourism revenue from these</p> <p>2 properties keeps housekeepers, landscapers,</p> <p>3 restaurants, and retail shops thriving,</p> <p>4 enjoying local residents year-round.</p> <p>5 Employing.</p> <p>6 And third, Talbot County already has one</p> <p>7 of the strongest and most effective short-term</p> <p>8 rental programs in the state. Every property</p> <p>9 is licensed, inspected, actively monitored, and</p> <p>10 remits ten percent of every booking in tax</p> <p>11 revenue. We maintain 24-hour hotlines, enforce</p> <p>12 strict quiet hours, and carry substantial</p> <p>13 liability insurance.</p> <p>14 If any property becomes a genuine problem,</p> <p>15 revoke its license. We fully stand behind</p> <p>16 that. But please don't punish the 99 percent</p> <p>17 of owners and managers who consistently follow</p> <p>18 the rules.</p> <p>19 Council Members, the data couldn't be</p> <p>20 clearer. Near zero complaints, near perfect</p> <p>21 compliance, millions in tax revenue that</p>	<p>1 MR. GOLDBERG: Good evening, Members of</p> <p>2 the Council. My name is Steve Goldberg. Thank</p> <p>3 you for this opportunity. Let me see if I can</p> <p>4 open my notes real quick.</p> <p>5 First, and I echo what was just said.</p> <p>6 This was said in a lot of the prior hearings.</p> <p>7 But this bill feels like a solution in search</p> <p>8 of a problem.</p> <p>9 This is a well-regulated business in</p> <p>10 Talbot County and has been for some time.</p> <p>11 We've been doing it for 15 years without</p> <p>12 incident.</p> <p>13 And I'm particularly -- I'm opposed to the</p> <p>14 whole bill, but I'm particularly concerned</p> <p>15 about the restrictions on non-residents.</p> <p>16 We don't live here full time. We live in</p> <p>17 Baltimore, but we're here a lot. We spend a</p> <p>18 lot of money here. We spend more money, my</p> <p>19 wife was telling me, locally than we do back in</p> <p>20 Baltimore, the restaurants and all those other</p> <p>21 things. I don't like the sense that somehow</p>

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

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

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<p>1 now open the floor for those who did not sign 2 up in advance over here.</p> <p>3 MS. GOLDBERG: I didn't sign up, but I'm 4 going to do a little cleanup. My husband, 5 Stephen Goldberg, spoke.</p> <p>6 MR. LESHER: Would you introduce yourself 7 for the record, please?</p> <p>8 MS. GOLDBERG: My name is Minda Goldberg. 9 I live on Ingleton Circle.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>14 That said, I want to focus on the 15 restrictions that apply for our neighborhood, 16 which is 1,000 feet.</p> <p>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</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>6 My husband is from the Eastern Shore. We 7 have roots here. And this would destroy that 8 root. Thank you.</p> <p>9 MR. LESHER: Thank you. Anyone else? On 10 Bill 1622, anyone else wish to speak at this 11 point in the back?</p> <p>12 MR. TROUTMAN: Representing Eastern Shore 13 Vacation Rentals.</p> <p>14 MS. MIELKE: Your name? Name?</p> <p>15 MR. LESHER: You'll introduce yourself for 16 the record, please.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>21 We currently oversee one of the largest</p>
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<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>18 Our existing framework, the STR Review 19 Board, inspections, and local enforcement tools 20 is already working exactly as intended.</p> <p>21 Creating new bureaucracy without evidence</p>

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 86</p> <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 style="text-align: right;">Page 88</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>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 87</p> <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 style="text-align: right;">Page 89</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. LESHAR: 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>
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<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 grandfathers 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>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>
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<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>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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<p>1 used the term family business.</p> <p>2 I live in a residential zoned area. My</p> <p>3 home is very important to me. And I'm not sure</p> <p>4 why I have to have to share it with businesses.</p> <p>5 They're not doing this for fun. They're not</p> <p>6 doing this for the good of Talbot County.</p> <p>7 They're doing it for their bottom line.</p> <p>8 SPEAKER: (Indiscernible.)</p> <p>9 MS. FLOOD: It's not?</p> <p>10 MR. LESHES: Just let's keep the comments</p> <p>11 down and address your comments to the Council,</p> <p>12 please.</p> <p>13 MS. FLOOD: Thank you.</p> <p>14 It's my home, and I have trouble enjoying</p> <p>15 it because of noise and disruption from</p> <p>16 neighboring properties that are doing this for</p> <p>17 income.</p> <p>18 Is that fair? Is that fair to me? Who is</p> <p>19 looking out for me?</p> <p>20 I'm asking for help. Thank you.</p> <p>21 MR. LESHES: Thank you.</p>	<p>1 MR. LESHES: Excuse me, Mr. Stamp.</p> <p>2 Let's please allow us to keep this -- take</p> <p>3 the conversations outside.</p> <p>4 Thank you so much.</p> <p>5 Mr. Stamp.</p> <p>6 MR. STAMP: Thank you, Council.</p> <p>7 We have a request from the Eastern Shore</p> <p>8 Land Conservancy for a letter of support for</p> <p>9 their grant application to the Maryland</p> <p>10 Department of Natural Resources for the San</p> <p>11 Domingo Creek Park environmental enhancement</p> <p>12 project.</p> <p>13 No county funds will be required for this</p> <p>14 letter of support.</p> <p>15 MS. HAYTHE: Motion to approve the letter</p> <p>16 of support.</p> <p>17 MR. STEPP: Second.</p> <p>18 MR. LESHES: We have a motion and second.</p> <p>19 Would the secretary call the roll, please.</p> <p>20 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshes.</p> <p>21 MR. LESHES: Aye.</p>
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<p>1 Anyone else wish to speak on Bill 1622?</p> <p>2 The public record will remain open for</p> <p>3 written comment until noon on December 5th.</p> <p>4 This bill will be eligible for a vote at</p> <p>5 our next meeting on December 9th. Thank you,</p> <p>6 all. And thank you, too, for the many of you</p> <p>7 who have submitted written comments already.</p> <p>8 We certainly have received those, and I</p> <p>9 certainly read all of those.</p> <p>10 So with that, we'll close the public</p> <p>11 hearing on Bill 1622. And if you're going to</p> <p>12 leave, I'll ask you to do it quietly because</p> <p>13 we're continuing on with business here with the</p> <p>14 county manager report.</p> <p>15 Mr. Stamp.</p> <p>16 MR. STAMP: Thank you, Council. The next</p> <p>17 item that I have on the county manager report</p> <p>18 is a request from the Eastern Shore Land</p> <p>19 Conservancy. Requesting a letter of support</p> <p>20 for their grant application to the Maryland</p> <p>21 Department of Natural Resources.</p>	<p>1 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.</p> <p>2 MR. STEPP: Aye.</p> <p>3 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.</p> <p>4 MS. MIELKE: Aye.</p> <p>5 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.</p> <p>6 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.</p> <p>7 MR. STAMP: Council, staff is asking</p> <p>8 consideration for your approval. Request to</p> <p>9 apply and accept a grant from the Maryland</p> <p>10 Energy Administration, Local Government Energy</p> <p>11 Modernization, funding for improvement of</p> <p>12 County facilities. We are requesting Council</p> <p>13 approval to apply for and accept grant funds</p> <p>14 from the Maryland Energy Administration.</p> <p>15 As I just stated, this is going to largely</p> <p>16 benefit an existing capital improvement project</p> <p>17 that we have budgeted to fund for the</p> <p>18 Department of Corrections and the Talbot County</p> <p>19 Courthouse.</p> <p>20 The county will apply for 1.825101.</p> <p>21 That's \$1,825,101, which requires a ten percent</p>

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

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<p>1 and then ultimate remobilize, they would 2 continue to work.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>9 Again, that's why we were offering him 10 \$3,306.80 for the property along Villa Road.</p> <p>11 MR. STAMP: And again, Council, this is 12 for the Goldsborough Neck Road project that we 13 have seen (indiscernible) open that road.</p> <p>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</p>	<p>1 distance area, area of distance.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>9 MR. LESHAR: All right. Any questions for 10 Mr. Clarke?</p> <p>11 MS. HAYTHE: Just one, Ray. When was the 12 appraisal done for the Freedman property?</p> <p>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.</p> <p>18 MS. HAYTHE: And so do we normally have an 19 appraisal process for all --</p> <p>20 MR. CLARKE: -- we do. Our typical 21 process is going to basically be, once we know</p>
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<p>1 widened and resurfaced and people are taking 2 advantage of that a little bit.</p> <p>3 MR. STEPP: And raised. Thank you.</p> <p>4 MR. CLARKE: Yes, yes, yes.</p> <p>5 MR. STEPP: You can definitely see how 6 much it's been raised. So thank you for that.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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</p>	<p>1 what our needs are on that property, we'll then 2 do an appraisal.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>17 MS. HAYTHE: Okay. And who approved the 18 waiver of the appraisal?</p> <p>19 MR. CLARKE: I guess that was --</p> <p>20 MS. HAYTHE: -- made that decision?</p> <p>21 MR. CLARKE: Ultimately submitted that to</p>

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<p>1 the county as well, just noting this -- and I</p> <p>2 also drafted the letter noting that, that</p> <p>3 basically we were providing him the offer</p> <p>4 without -- in lieu of providing the appraisal,</p> <p>5 basically we would give him the \$2,000.</p> <p>6 MS. HAYTHE: Okay. You submitted that to</p> <p>7 Council?</p> <p>8 MR. CLARKE: Yes.</p> <p>9 MS. HAYTHE: Okay. Do you have a date?</p> <p>10 MR. CLARKE: I know that the letter that</p> <p>11 we gave to him was August 22nd. So it was</p> <p>12 probably in the July time frame, but I'll</p> <p>13 verify the date.</p> <p>14 MS. HAYTHE: Okay.</p> <p>15 MR. CLARKE: -- memory.</p> <p>16 MS. HAYTHE: Thank you.</p> <p>17 MR. LESHER: Any other questions on this</p> <p>18 one?</p> <p>19 It does seem, it does seem excessive to</p> <p>20 incur an appraisal fee on a \$3,000, \$3,300</p> <p>21 purchase.</p>	<p>1 I'll ask Micah Risher to come forward,</p> <p>2 your airport manager. He has a request for</p> <p>3 Council's consideration to award a bid.</p> <p>4 MR. RISHER: Thanks, Clay.</p> <p>5 Council, good evening. Happy Thanksgiving</p> <p>6 early. Micah Risher, your airport manager.</p> <p>7 We'll close on an easy one here. This is</p> <p>8 something we do every three years. We put our</p> <p>9 farmland out to rebid. We did that</p> <p>10 successfully this year in Bid Number 25-13. And</p> <p>11 the highest bidder was Mr. Edward Roe, who</p> <p>12 actually currently has the lease.</p> <p>13 So Mr. Roe is the high bid for the next</p> <p>14 three years for 8,600 per crop season.</p> <p>15 So I recommended that we award the lease</p> <p>16 to Mr. Roe.</p> <p>17 MR. LESHER: Any questions on this one?</p> <p>18 If not, are we ready for a motion?</p> <p>19 MS. MIELKE: So moved.</p> <p>20 MS. HAYTHE: Second.</p> <p>21 MR. LESHER: And that's a motion for</p>
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<p>1 MS. HAYTHE: I agree that it may seem</p> <p>2 excessive. But if we have a standard operating</p> <p>3 procedure in place, I think we should follow</p> <p>4 the procedure at every -- each time.</p> <p>5 MR. LESHER: Any other questions? If not,</p> <p>6 are we ready for a motion?</p> <p>7 MR. STEPP: I'll make a motion.</p> <p>8 MS. MIELKE: Second.</p> <p>9 MR. LESHER: Motion and second. Would the</p> <p>10 secretary call the roll, please.</p> <p>11 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshar.</p> <p>12 MR. LESHER: Aye.</p> <p>13 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.</p> <p>14 MR. STEPP: Aye.</p> <p>15 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.</p> <p>16 MS. MIELKE: Aye.</p> <p>17 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.</p> <p>18 MS. HAYTHE: Nay.</p> <p>19 MR. CLARKE: Thank you.</p> <p>20 MR. STAMP: Okay. Thank you, Council.</p> <p>21 Thank you, Ray.</p>	<p>1 approval. If the secretary would call the</p> <p>2 roll, please.</p> <p>3 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshar.</p> <p>4 MR. LESHER: Aye.</p> <p>5 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.</p> <p>6 MR. STEPP: Aye.</p> <p>7 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.</p> <p>8 MS. MIELKE: Aye.</p> <p>9 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.</p> <p>10 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.</p> <p>11 MR. RISHER: Thank you, Council.</p> <p>12 MR. STAMP: Thank you, Micah.</p> <p>13 And finally, Council, I just announce that</p> <p>14 county offices will be closed Thursday,</p> <p>15 November 27th, and Friday, November 28th.</p> <p>16 And I'd like to take the opportunity to</p> <p>17 wish you and your families a wonderful</p> <p>18 Thanksgiving.</p> <p>19 And as always, I thank the Council for</p> <p>20 your support each day.</p> <p>21 MR. LESHER: Thank you very much,</p>

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<p>1 Mr. Stamp.</p> <p>2 We are now down to public comment, general</p> <p>3 comments that may not pertain to pending</p> <p>4 legislation.</p> <p>5 Is there anybody here who wishes to</p> <p>6 offer -- we used the public comment sheet it</p> <p>7 seems for all focused on Bill 1622. But if</p> <p>8 there's any other public comment here, you're</p> <p>9 welcome to come forward at this time.</p> <p>10 Seeing none, we can move on to Council</p> <p>11 comments.</p> <p>12 MS. HAYTHE: Just want to wish everybody a</p> <p>13 happy Thanksgiving.</p> <p>14 MS. MIELKE: Happy Thanksgiving.</p> <p>15 MR. STEPP: Might as well stick in the</p> <p>16 same vain. Happy Thanksgiving, everyone.</p> <p>17 Safety to you and your families if you're</p> <p>18 traveling. And just blessings to all.</p> <p>19 MR. LESHHER: And I will stick with the</p> <p>20 theme and wish all a happy Thanksgiving.</p> <p>21 MS. HAYTHE: It's unanimous.</p>	<p>1 all.</p> <p>2 (Meeting concluded at: 6:44 p.m.)</p> <p>3</p> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <p>6</p> <p>7</p> <p>8</p> <p>9</p> <p>10</p> <p>11</p> <p>12</p> <p>13</p> <p>14</p> <p>15</p> <p>16</p> <p>17</p> <p>18</p> <p>19</p> <p>20</p> <p>21</p>
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<p>1 MR. LESHHER: The County Council's next</p> <p>2 meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 9th,</p> <p>3 beginning at 5 o'clock p.m. The Council will</p> <p>4 be convening in open session at 3:30 p.m. and</p> <p>5 then adjourning into closed session, as listed</p> <p>6 on the statement for closing that meeting.</p> <p>7 Therefore, is there a motion to adjourn</p> <p>8 this meeting and reconvene as noted?</p> <p>9 MS. HAYTHE: So moved.</p> <p>10 MR. STEPP: And a second.</p> <p>11 MR. LESHHER: And would the secretary call</p> <p>12 the roll.</p> <p>13 SECRETARY: Mr. Leshher.</p> <p>14 MR. LESHHER: Aye.</p> <p>15 SECRETARY: Mr. Stepp.</p> <p>16 MR. STEPP: Aye.</p> <p>17 SECRETARY: Ms. Mielke.</p> <p>18 MS. MIELKE: Aye.</p> <p>19 SECRETARY: Ms. Haythe.</p> <p>20 MS. HAYTHE: Aye.</p> <p>21 MR. LESHHER: We are adjourned. Thank you,</p>	<p>1 STATE OF MARYLAND</p> <p>2 I, Diane Houlihan, a Notary Public in and</p> <p>3 for the State of Maryland, County of Talbot, do</p> <p>4 hereby certify that the within named, Talbot County</p> <p>5 Council Audio, personally appeared before me at the</p> <p>6 time and place herein set according to law, was</p> <p>7 interrogated by counsel.</p> <p>8</p> <p>9 I further certify that the examination was</p> <p>10 recorded stenographically by me and then transcribed</p> <p>11 from my stenographic notes to the within printed</p> <p>12 matter by means of computer-assisted transcription</p> <p>13 in a true and accurate manner.</p> <p>14</p> <p>15 I further certify that the stipulations</p> <p>16 contained herein were entered into by counsel in my</p> <p>17 presence.</p> <p>18</p> <p>19 I further certify that I am not of counsel</p> <p>20 to any of the parties, not an employee of counsel,</p> <p>21 nor related to any of the parties, nor in any way</p> <p>interested in the outcome of this action.</p> <p>AS WITNESS my hand Notorial Seal this 2nd</p> <p>day of December 2025.</p> <p></p> <p>Diane Houlihan</p> <p>Notary Public</p> <p>My commission expires September 16, 2029</p>

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