

Councilman Dick Ladd

Anne Arundel County Council

Fifth District

July 2014 Article

Now that the candidates for the 2014 election have been selected, I note my disappointment at not having the opportunity to continue as your Councilman. I do, however, cherish the opportunity to have been the Councilman for District 5 for four years. The future is very important as that is where we will spend the rest of our time and energy to improve and better our communities.

With the passage of the Fiscal Year 2015 budget, construction funding for Severna Park High School and Benfield Elementary School has been provided. The construction contracts have been signed. Preliminary site work has started. The new turf fields at Kinder Park are coming along nicely and will be ready for the fall sports season.

At the other end of Evergreen Road, reconstruction work on the Teel Academic Center at the Severn School is also starting. Construction schedules have been set to reduce the impact on local traffic as much as possible. Parking space issues have been addressed as best as possible within existing space constraints.

The traffic and safety study of Evergreen Road is progressing well. I expect some new traffic control measures will be ready for use in the early fall to improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety.

The Council worked with the County Executive to increase the amount of grants given to charitable organizations back to the level supported before the economic slowdown. Another \$1 million was added to increase the number of new police officers from 20 to 30 starting in Fiscal Year 2015.

The Council also approved the use of certain Board of Education fund balances for several Board requested programmatic increases that could not fit within the required “maintenance of effort” funding in the proposed County budget.

Legislatively, the Council did not approve Councilman Benoit’s proposal (Bill No. 14-14) to establish a Charter authorized Reserve Fund for Permanent Public Improvements. I did not vote for the bill because of concerns over the source and amount of continuing funding and the potential improvements to be funded. This so-called Section 718(h) mechanism could come back in future considerations of “rain tax” alternatives.

The Council considered the need for commercial, rubble landfills and concluded that there was enough regional capacity to meet County needs not supportable with current capacity. This change to zoning code and land use plans affects the Crofton and Glen Burnie areas.

A proposal to allow the County Animal Control Office to establish and have a small charitable fund to support the adoption of abandoned animals was not approved by the Council. As other County activities are supported by “Friends of” non-profits, the feeling was that the proposed fund was not an appropriate government role. The fund was proposed to reduce the cost to potential adopters of “rescue” animals. The Council will consider alternative solutions.

As the Council is not scheduled for legislative meetings during August, my next column will be in September.

Enjoy your summer!