

The CLUE

Calendar of Events

Forms of Government Public Information Meeting, 7 pm,
Jan. 31, new county administration building
200 Chesapeake Blvd, Elkton

Please be there! We need
you for the straw vote!

CPC* Infrastructure Subcommittee 10 am, Feb 05, 2008

CPC Land Use Subcommittee 3 pm, Feb 05, 2008

CPC Public Services Subcommittee 2 pm, Feb 06, 2008

Board of County Commissioners, County Administration Building, 200
Chesapeake Blvd. 7 pm, Tuesday, February 5

Primary Elections Statewide, Tuesday, February 12

CPC Housing and Recreation Subcommittee 4 pm, February 12

CPC Water Resources Subcommittee, 6:30 pm, February 13

Board of County Commissioners, County Administration Building, 200
Chesapeake Blvd. 7 pm Tuesday February 19

CPC Agriculture Subcommittee 4 pm, 19 February

CPC Economic Development Subcommittee, February 19

Planning Commission (subdivisions) 12 pm, February 20

Planning Commission (evening meeting) 7 pm, February 20

CLUA Monthly Meeting 7 pm, February 21, North East Library

Note change of date

* **CPC** = *Comprehensive Plan Committee*

CLUA Endorses Local Candidates in Maryland Primary Election

The Cecil Land Use Alliance, Inc., (CLUA) has endorsed two candidates for their respective party's nomination for County Commissioner. These endorsements are for the primary election to be held on Tuesday, February 12. We encourage all voters registered with a party affiliation to vote in the primary. The candidate choices in the 1st and 5th Districts are open to all Cecil County voters of the appropriate party.

CLUA endorses **John Bunnell** in the Democratic primary for the 1st District Commissioner seat. John Bunnell's leadership experience as mayor of Cecilton,

his knowledge of land-use issues, and the consistency of his views with CLUA's vision make him the more qualified candidate in his primary contest.

CLUA endorses **Tom McWilliams** in the Republican primary for the 5th District Commissioner seat. Over many years, Tom McWilliams has been a consistent and untiring supporter of rural preservation, controlled growth, economic development, intelligent land-use policy, and open government. He has a substantial resume of leadership positions and active involvement in Cecil County committees.

The candidates each completed a detailed questionnaire, and were all individually interviewed by a CLUA panel. The questionnaires, and the candidate's responses are posted at the CLUA website.
<http://cecillanduse.org/politics.html>

CLUA is asking its members to send a letter to the newspapers in support of one or both of the two people CLUA has endorsed for County Commissioner for the Feb. 12 primary: John Bunnell (Democrat, 1st District), and Tom McWilliams (Republican, 5th District). Tom is in a particularly difficult contest with an opponent who has already raised over \$18,000. I'm sure Tom would appreciate whatever you can do to help his effort, and anyone who would like literature or a yard sign can contact him at tgm0001@widener.edu or 410-392-4953. Tom has been a good friend of CLUA and he deserves our help. There's not much time left. *Also remember that Whig policy will be to accept political endorsement letters only until February 5.*

We now have a lot of information on our web site on the county election choices, including transcripts of interviews with the candidates, links to their campaign finance reports, and CLUA's statement of endorsement: See <http://cecillanduse.org/politics.html>.

New CLUA Board

At the "annual meeting" on January 15 (yes, CLUA has been in existence a full year), CLUA members elected two new people to the Board of Directors. My sincere thanks go to Jim Mullin and Ted Patterson, who left the Board. Both Jim and Ted were instrumental in getting CLUA started a year ago, and have worked hard for the organization since then. They are both very busy men – Jim is running for County Commissioner and Ted is in college – but they promise to stay active in CLUA.

Ron Hartman and Charles Herzog were elected to fill the seats left by Jim and Ted. Rupert Rossetti, Ed Cairns, and Paul Hughes were re-elected to the Board. All of these seats have 2-year terms. Others who remain on the board through the end of this year are Diana Broomell, Vernon Duckett, George Kaplan, Ken Wiggins, and Wendy Moon.

At the first meeting of the new Board held on January 30, the following officers were elected for 2008: President, George Kaplan; Vice-President, Ken Wiggins; Secretary, Rupert Rossetti; and Treasurer, Wendy Moon.

The Board also appointed committee chairs: Finance, Paul Hughes; Publicity, Ken Wiggins; Policy, Diana Broomell; Research, Ed Cairns & Vernon Duckett (co-chairs). The Political Committee chair is open for now.

I greatly appreciate all those who share their time, abilities, and expertise to help our organization. Thank you! All of our committees can use some more help...it is in the committees that the real work of CLUA gets done. Contact the committee chairs directly or me (410-658-0484 or gkaplan@zoominternet.net) if you would like to join a committee or just want more information.

George Kaplan, CLUA president

Citizen's Annexation Workshop

On January 5, Community and Environmental Defense Services held a citizen's annexation workshop in Easton.

I thought you might like to see the PowerPoint Presentation which was the focus of the workshop. If you click the following link you can download the PowerPoint presentation. Warning: It's a big file! 3.2 MB...

<http://www.ceds.org/AnnexWorkshop/AnnexationPowerPoint.pdf>

The following is a link to the Maryland Department of Planning publications page. On this page you'll find guidance documents on the additional planning required by HB1141, including the Municipal Growth Element and the Water Resources Element. There's also a recent publication on Adequate Public Facility Ordinances...

http://www.mdp.state.md.us/order_publications.htm

The CEDS Annexation website can be reached by clicking the following link...

<http://www.ceds.org/annexation.html>

Our 300-page book, *How To Win Land Development Issues*, can be downloaded at...

<http://www.ceds.org/publications.html>

If you wish I'd be delighted to meet with you to discuss your annexation concerns in detail or those regarding any other growth-related issue.

Richard D. Klein

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE SERVICES
410-654-3021, Web Page: www.ceds.org/

Stream Waders Training - Saturday March 1st, 2008 at West Nottingham Academy – Rupert Rossetti

Maryland Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Stream Waders Volunteer Stream Sampling Program is gearing up for another exciting year! This is the program that is held every spring and focuses on collecting “benthic macro-invertebrates”, the little bugs that live on or in the streambed and can tell us a lot about the water quality. DNR needs volunteer help to "fill the gaps" in areas being sampled by their own Maryland Biological Stream Survey crews.

In 2008, DNR has targeted all the watersheds from Furnace Bay (Principio Creek) to the Bohemia River. Follow this link http://www.dnr.state.md.us/streams/mbss/w_new.html for a map of sampling watersheds and other important information regarding training. The green watersheds are priority areas for DNR and the orange ones are requested for sampling by the Maryland Department of the Environment. In addition, I've been given the ok to do some follow-up sampling in the Octoraro Watershed.

A training session will be held at West Nottingham Academy, Colora, MD on Saturday March 1st, 2008 from 8:30 – 3:30 p.m. So please come learn how you can help Stream Waders contribute to Maryland's statewide water quality monitoring. Everyone is invited to help monitor, restore, and protect our waterways.

To register, email streamwaders@dnr.state.md.us or call the Stream Waders hotline at 1-877-620-8DNR (x8623) on or before 22nd Feb. Please provide your name, contact information, and expected training location.

A Frequently Asked Questions page can be found at http://www.dnr.state.md.us/streams/mbss/w_faq.html or you can send me an email at RupertRossetti@aol.com

Help Protect the Chesapeake Bay Shoreline

This year's legislative session is now in full swing, and one of the hottest environmental bills would strengthen protections of the Chesapeake Bay shoreline. Development pressure has never been greater, and we need to set

strict limits on the amount of construction that can take place right at the edge of the bay.

Send an e-mail to your senator and delegates urging them to support reforms to the Critical Area Act that would limit development along the shoreline.

To take action, click on this link:

<http://environmentmaryland.org/action/clean-water/email-legislator?id4=ES>

Then give your friends the opportunity to comment by forwarding this email to them.

Developers are paving over some of the most sensitive lands that protect the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. These developments turn vital wetland and forest buffers into resorts and vacation homes, transforming natural filters that cleaned the bay into hot spots for polluted runoff.

One of the best things we can do to reduce pollution going into rivers and the Chesapeake Bay is to maintain natural vegetation along the shoreline. Plants and marshland can soak up pollutants before they hit waterways. Development destroys these natural filters.

Maryland has a law limiting development along the shoreline -- the Critical Area Act -- but the law has many loopholes and is not well enforced. Urge your legislators to support strong reforms to the law, giving the state more authority to update regulations, perform inspections, and impose tough penalties on violators.

Brad Heavner

Environment Maryland State Director

BradH@environmentmaryland.org

<http://www.environmentmaryland.org>

Slot Machines are out of character with Cecil County Land Use

I am convinced that Slot Machines are inappropriate for Cecil County as a Land Use. This is a personal view and does not reflect a CLUA position. My objections have to do with the corruptive effects of big gambling money, the rural character of our County, and the disenfranchisement of the citizens of Cecil County on this matter. But there are plenty of other factors as well. The referendum is a popular vote item on the ballot in November, and so some may ask, "What's the big deal?"

Won't a slots parlor be a zoning decision that will provide the County an opportunity to decline, even if the referendum passes?

The slots parlor has not been auctioned to the highest bidder in a market-driven process. The law, if approved, has essentially granted a monopoly to only one landowner. In Pennsylvania, similar speculators made huge instantaneous profits by selling their licensed monopoly. There is only one practical location and one viable possibility in the county (within two miles of Interstate 95 as required), so only one firm stands to gain anything by this. The property is adjacent to I-95 near the Perryville exit. The town of Perryville has annexed this property so the County zoning process will not apply. Everyone in the County will be hostage to any decision the town of Perryville makes on this property. The gambling interests have already exercised enormous economic leverage in this zoning *fait accompli*.

Slots will bring “free money” to the state. It is an effective revenue generating device.

Research by economics professionals has demonstrated that the costs of legalized gambling on slot machines are \$1.90 for every dollar of revenue generated. (University of Illinois / Georgia study). What kind of government preys upon the weak to finance itself? Slots attract primarily the poor, and the elderly – those least able to afford gambling losses. It is almost the most regressive “tax” imaginable. It is “voluntary”, but it plays on ignorance and the unrealistic (in mathematical terms) dreams of the downtrodden.

Slots gambling is necessary to save Maryland horse racing.

Why do we need a constitutional amendment to bail out a fading industry? Racetrack revenue is down because most people simply aren't interested in gambling at a horse track anymore. Why are we not also legalizing narcotics to save the watermen, or prostitution to save the coal miners? How did saving race tracks take precedence over healthcare, senior citizens, or education? Aren't our priorities a little bit upside down?

Cecil County will gain as a result of Slots betting.

It may benefit from additional visitors and some low paying, low skilled jobs. However, none of the “profit” will accrue to Cecil County. The proceeds will be split between the monopoly slots parlor operators, the State government in Annapolis and the Race Track owners. There is no cash benefit to the citizens, and no allocation for Cecil County. The money raised here, will surely be spent elsewhere. Only the blight of gambling will remain here.

At least it will not cost Cecil County anything.

Cecil County will lose more of its rural character as it erects a glittering neon palace for gambling alongside a heavily wooded section of I-95 not far from the “Tree-mendous Maryland” sign, despoiling a grand view of the upper

Chesapeake Bay. The citizens of the County will pay for a certain amount of infrastructure, road improvements, water and sewer, law enforcement and fire protection for the new slots parlor. They will pay even more for the hidden costs of crime, drug abuse, bankruptcies, suicides, divorce, child support, bad checks, and other addictions among our citizens.

Still, we can tax the property, and gain in increased income tax revenues.

There are many alternatives that would offer the same result. Industry, banking, insurance, technology, and other businesses would require better skills and offer higher pay. As we have seen, developer money has a distorting impact on our government because it is a constant influence. Imagine how far worse it will be when the huge gambling interests help to determine our future, and begin to make their presence felt in every local election. Organized crime has a long history with organized gambling. There are no special precautions being taken to lessen the corruptive influence of gambling money on our democratic elective process. As in most other states, the gambling industry would quickly become the state's most powerful special interest. We'll find ourselves at the mercy of big gambling money for every government decision that might involve them. We will voluntarily enslave ourselves to them if we enact this measure.

At least we'll attract new visitors and tourists to our County

Patrons do not leave slots parlors to visit nearby visitor amenities. Slots parlors maximize profit using subsidized rooms, meals and alcohol to hold patrons on site until they have lost as much money as possible. Cheesy slots parlors like this would sully Cecil County's rural, family-friendly "brand" image, crucial to our vital tourism industry. To quote the Mayor of Ledyard Connecticut, "There has been no economic development spin-off from the [Foxwoods] casino ... Gamblers have one thing in mind: get to the casino, win or lose their money, get in their cars, and go home."

Everybody does it. We might as well profit from it here.

It's funny how an excuse used by every ten-year old is readily taken as legitimate. Indeed, many other states in our surrounding area have legalized various forms of gambling. Is Atlantic City our model? Crime increased threefold there when they legalized gambling. Shall we be like them? Will players in Dover or Philadelphia travel here to play our slots? More likely, we will be serving a local community who find it more convenient here than to travel up the highway. This will be a mostly local operation, feeding upon our own citizens. There is a finite amount of gambling money that is being fractionalized as each locale legalizes gambling. The result will be diminishing revenues, and increased social costs.

Nevertheless, the solution is a democratic one – to put it to the people.

The nature of the legislation that will put this referendum on the ballot required a Constitutional Amendment to the State Constitution. That is a pretty extreme solution to a legislative problem – almost unprecedented. It is fair evidence of the might of the gambling interest’s bankroll that it was done in this fashion. But it is a lawful procedure. The referendum asks voters from all over the state whether slots should be placed in Cecil County. Should people in Baltimore, or Montgomery County decide whether Cecil County should have slots? Cecil County has no practical say in this manner as its population is only a tiny percentage of the state as a whole. We were “targeted” by the gambling interests as a place that is least offensive to the maximum number of voters. For everyone else in our state, Cecil County is “not in my backyard”.

Some additional sources of information:

National Coalition Against Legalized Gambling:
www.ncalg.org

National Council on Problem Gambling
www.ncpgambling.org

No Casino Maryland
www.nocasinomaryland.org

Stop Slots Maryland
www.stopslotsmaryland.com

Frontline – Easy Money Report
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/gamble/>

National Gambling Impact Study Commission
<http://www.govinfo.library.unit.edu/ngisc/index.html>

Focus on the Family Citizen Link – Gambling Research
<http://www.family.org/cforum/gambling/>

National Opinion Research Center report on Gambling
<http://www2.norc.org/new/gamb-fin.htm>

You can access the Slots Referendum Bill (HB 4/SB 4) at <http://mlis.state.md.us/2007s1/bills/sb/sb0004t.pdf> and it's companion bill, SB 3 at <http://mlis.state.md.us/2007s1/bills/sb/sb0003e.pdf> . The Fiscal & Policy note for SB 3 can be reviewed at http://mlis.state.md.us/2007s1/fnotes/bil_0003/sb0003.pdf Just put the information in the search bar of the internet browser to go the website.

Ken Wiggins, CLUA Vice President

Let us hear from you!

The CLUE belongs to you. We'd like to know what you have to say. What are your concerns and interests regarding Cecil Land Use? Tell us about your pet peeves, your ideas for improvement, people you'd like to praise, process suggestions, new problems identified, new opportunities arisen, or new challenges to face. Speak up, and share with us. Write to the editor at milheritage@aol.com.

The Cecil Land Use Alliance newsletter is published periodically under the auspices of the Board of Directors. It is provided to all members, directors and available to the public at large. Suggestions and articles are welcome. They should be submitted to the Editor by e-mail to Milheritage@aol.com, or by mail to P.O. Box 215, Colora MD 21917. We encourage our readers to visit our website at <http://cecillanduse.org>

President, George Kaplan
Vice President and Editor, Kennard R. Wiggins Jr.
Secretary, Rupert Rossetti
Treasurer, Wendy Moon