

# **Responses of Cecil County Candidates On Land Use Issues 2016 Election**

Dear CLUA members and friends,

Near the end of March we sent out questions to all candidates for county executive and county council. We focused on issues that relate to the Cecil Land Use Association goals of seeking ways to responsibly manage growth in Cecil County, preserve our Eastern Shore rural way of life, protect the environment, and strengthen agriculture and tourism as vital parts of our economy.

We have received responses from County Executive candidates Joe Carabetta, Greg MacDonald, Dan Schneckenburger, and Wayne Tome and County Council candidates Bob Meffley (District 1) and Paul Trapani (District 5). No responses received from Alan McCarthy, Tom Cole, or Jackie Gregory. All responses are presented as received from the candidates.

We've also posted the responses on our website to give you some idea of how seriously we need to spring for a new website that can provide more capability for shared updating and other nice to have features like the ease of becoming a member or a donor. Please consider becoming a member for only \$10 or sending a donation to:

Cecil Land Use Association  
P.O. Box 126  
Rising Sun, MD 21911

With your help it will be easier next time!

## **Candidate Questionnaire Cecil County 2016 Primary Election**

- 1) What tools are available to the county government that you would support to encourage development in the growth corridor?
- 2) Do you support the current development plans for the Bainbridge property? How should tax credits fit into those plans?
- 3) Should the county support farm preservation in its own budget? If so, about how much per year should be allocated to it?

- 4) The county's 2012 Watershed Implementation Plan included a lot of "assessments" and "evaluations" but not many measurable actions.
  - a) How should the county move ahead to achieve the required 2017 milestones for the Bay cleanup?
  - b) How should the county fund the storm water retrofit projects that are required by the Watershed Implementation Plan? Would you support a storm water impact fee?
  
- 5) In an administrative action two years ago, the county executive drastically reduced the area of the county's Priority Preservation Areas from what was designated in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. \*
  - a) Do you support this reduction?
  - b) What effect do you believe it will have on residential growth in the county's rural areas?

* 53,580 acres	2010 Comprehensive Plan proposed preservation of unprotected land (p. 7-10)	
<u>12,631 acres</u>	2014 proposed preservation of unprotected land	23.6% of Comp Plan
40,949 acres	reduction in acres to be preserved	76.4% of Comp Plan

### ***County Executive candidate responses:***

**Joe Carabetta (Republican):**

- 1) What tools are available to the county government that you would support to encourage development in the growth corridor?
  - \*Use of areas in the growth corridor with existing infrastructure**
  - \* Provide the leadership to coordinate between all governmental entities that provide infrastructure services in the TDR receiving area**
  - \*The ability to reduce unnecessary regulation as much as possible because no matter how much infrastructure we have in place if the business environment is not conducive it will not matter**
  - \*The ability to reduce taxation including but not limited to my plan to phase out the county business personal property tax**
  
- 2) Do you support the current development plans for the Bainbridge property? How should tax credits fit into those plans?

**No matter which development plan you go forward with the foremost important project is to clean up the property so that we can have full release to develop the property and start actual construction activities. I support lower taxes for all businesses and individuals. Once the environmental cleanup and mitigation is nearing completion, an assessment should be made to judge the current economic conditions and determine the best course of action to develop the property in the most economically and environmentally friendly manner for long-term sustainability.**

- 3) Should the county support farm preservation in its own budget? If so, about how much per year should be allocated to it?

**Yes, I support farm preservation because the demands on services for Ag property is \$0.36 where residential is \$1.15. The county does have \$1,178,680 in the FY17 budget; I would support continued ag preservation and other programs such as rural legacy, TDR, PDR, and MALPF. Depending on economic conditions and other factors the amount could vary year to year but I would propose formulating or putting together a list of properties that are interested in ag preservation to provide a gage for the required amount of funding year to year.**

- 4) The county's 2012 Watershed Implementation Plan included a lot of "assessments" and "evaluations" but not many measurable actions.
- a) How should the county move ahead to achieve the required 2017 milestones for the Bay cleanup?

**This year's county budget for FY17 includes Octoraro Creek and Christina River shed assessments, MS4 permit compliance and a variety of Watershed implementation compliance projects and a storm water management pond project. These projects should incorporate the use of native plants and making non-functioning storm water management ponds viable ponds again. In addition, volunteers and Watershed Stewards are working on stream restoration including the use of native plants, roadside tree plantings and stream forest buffers. This action requires a team effort between county, town, state and numerous volunteer organizations to achieve the goals. I also support partnerships between local land trusts and environmental investors to install best management practices on waterways that directly affect the Chesapeake Bay. This is a good program because it does not include**

**taxpayer dollars.**

How should the county fund the storm water retrofit projects that are required by the Watershed Implementation Plan? Would you support a storm water impact fee?

**The county will need to maximize the use of state and federal grants in conjunction with volunteer efforts and partnerships with nonprofit organizations. I do not support a storm water impact fee. County taxpayers currently have far too much tax and fee burden.**

- 5) In an administrative action two years ago, the county executive drastically reduced the area of the county's Priority Preservation Areas from what was designated in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. \*
- a) Do you support this reduction? **It is my understanding that SB236 has not been withdrawn or cancelled and its requirements still remain. The letter from the state that allows the health department to sign off on major subdivisions still expects the county to be working on an acceptable Tier map.**
  - b) What effect do you believe it will have on residential growth in the county's rural areas? **I think the factor limiting development in the rural areas right now is not SB236 but the requirement to have BAT septic systems and sprinklers which are so costly that only a few can afford to build.**

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**Greg MacDonald (Republican):**

**I'm on the record as being against ag preservation. This is a taxpayer subsidy no different than a subsidy to a bank or oil company. I also object to the transfer of control from private hands to the government. We do need to be good stewards and ensure our stormwater run off is not contaminating our tributaries. I would feel better about the restrictions our county undergoes if the state was more active in dealing with these same issues in PA and NY.**

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**Dan Schneckenburger (Republican):**

- 1) What tools are available to the county government that you would support to encourage development in the growth corridor?

**Several tools such as existing infrastructure, zoning, improved mass transit, and enterprise zones (tax incentivized land areas) are used to encourage development in our growth corridor. I support all of these, and they are already being used.**

- 2) Do you support the current development plans for the Bainbridge property? How should tax credits fit into those plans?

**The current development plans involve a commercial/industrial zoned area (900 acres), with approximately 100 acres being set aside along the Tome School Campus. Tax credits (enterprise zone) are available to tenants to the BDC and the master developer. I believe Bainbridge will be one of the most important development projects in the county over the next ten years.**

- 3) Should the county support farm preservation in its own budget? If so, about how much per year should be allocated to it?

**I am comfortable with the current budget for land preservation (I believe it is right around \$1,000,000). I believe that there is very little pressure for residential development on existing agricultural land.**

- 4) The county's 2012 Watershed Implementation Plan included a lot of "assessments" and "evaluations" but not many measurable actions.
  - a) How should the county move ahead to achieve the required 2017 milestones for the Bay cleanup?

**The milestones remain a moving target, and should be recalculated as the EPA and M.D.E. revise its TMDL strategy to account for the significant amount of nutrient pollution from behind the Conowingo Dam, and the Susquehanna River.**

- b) How should the county fund the storm water retrofit projects that are required by the Watershed Implementation Plan? Would you

support a storm water impact fee?

**I still do not believe in all the requirements of the Watershed Implementation Plan, and I will continue to look for areas to negotiate with the state, and to also look for state and federal grants to pay for retrofit project that we jointly agree to do. We have very capable employees with D.P.W. working in this area. I will never support a local or state mandated rain tax.**

- 5) In an administrative action two years ago, the county executive drastically reduced the area of the county's Priority Preservation Areas from what was designated in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. \*
- a) Do you support this reduction?
  - b) What effect do you believe it will have on residential growth in the county's rural areas?

\* 53,580 acres 2010 Comprehensive Plan proposed preservation of unprotected land (p. 7-10)  
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of Comp Plan

**I support the County Executive's actions of the past three years of protecting the rights of land owners in this county from a bad bill, SB236. I would disagree with your contention that the Comprehensive Plan Committee included as much as 53,580 acres in the Priority Preservation Areas, and county staff hold this view as well. At this point, single family residential growth is anemic at best in Cecil County, and we have a several year inventory of permitted home sites. I would encourage that any residential development be within the municipalities, and also be done in the growth corridor. I believe Rising Sun is poised for any significant expansion of the municipalities.**

**I was attracted to Cecil County in 1989 by its rural nature, and hope to keep it that way for many years to come. If elected as County Executive, I will focus on commercial job growth in the growth corridor and Bainbridge. You will also find me as someone who believes that growth in this county will come from**

**the commercial sector, and that residential development will be slow for the next several years.**

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**Wayne Tome (Democrat):**

- 1) What tools are available to the county government that you would support to encourage development in the growth corridor?

**Transfer of development rights, PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) TIF (tax increment financing)**

- 2) Do you support the current development plans for the Bainbridge property? How should tax credits fit into those plans?

**I am disappointed that the original vision could not be fulfilled. I do support the plan for business and industry as it was reworked. The upside is more jobs and tax base than before.**

- 3) Should the county support farm preservation in its own budget? If so, about how much per year should be allocated to it?

**Yes as much as can be afforded while keeping tax and fee rates reasonable and maintaining our AAA bond rating.**

- 4) The county's 2012 Watershed Implementation Plan included a lot of "assessments" and "evaluations" but not many measurable actions.
  - a) How should the county move ahead to achieve the required 2017 milestones for the Bay cleanup? **Continue to enforce storm water infrastructure maintenance, pick up trash and debris management, and encourage pet and animal waste best management practices.**
  - b) How should the county fund the storm water retrofit projects that are required by the Watershed Implementation Plan? **The properties that are impacting and causing the violations need to be responsible for mitigation costs.**  
Would you support a storm water impact fee? **If there are any fees**

**required I would only support fees to imposed on those areas deemed to be causing violations or damage to areas around or creating downstream issues.**

- 5) In an administrative action two years ago, the county executive drastically reduced the area of the county's Priority Preservation Areas from what was designated in the 2010 Comprehensive Plan. \*
- a) Do you support this reduction?

**No I think we need to embrace the previous demarcations. The only areas that should/could be flexible are the areas around the Towns as long as they receive a critical eye to ensure maintaining or Southern and Northern Rural Character.**

- b) What effect do you believe it will have on residential growth in the county's rural areas?

**As I mentioned before this has the potential to promote sprawl. I would encourage growth near the Town and areas that have domestic water and wastewater infrastructure.**

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***Candidates for County Council responses:***

**Bob Meffley District 1 (Republican)**

1. I would work with the Office of Economic Development to bring new businesses to Cecil county and I would use the infrastructure that already exists in our towns for development. We have existing water, sewer, natural gas and high speed internet, we need to bridge these networks along the 40 corridor.

2 Yes I support current development. At the last Economic Development meeting I learned that there are two businesses that are ready to come on board at Bainbridge. Development is delayed at Bainbridge because of litigation between The Navy and Cecil County. Progress will not happen until this situation is resolved.

Cecil county has offered businesses an incentive, tax credits, to build at Bainbridge. I believe this solution is long over due.

3 When it comes to land use and farming, we need to recognize that farming is a large contributor to both employment and commerce in Cecil County. Farms need infrastructure such as land, seed, warehouses, equipment dealers, mechanics, welder to and electricians to operate. If we protect farms, we protect all the businesses that serve farms. Also, remember when a farm is placed in land preservation, the decision is made by the owners to do this. Residential development should occur in areas with public utilities and other existing services. This is good planning. It helps the towns pay and operate their facilities and supports the need for infrastructure in Cecil County.

4. I am visiting all County agencies to gather information. I have joined The Friends of the Bohemia and have participated in the annual Clean Rivers Project. I have seen first hand that we still have a long way to go. Cecil County must participate on all levels with federal, state and county funding to meet the milestones for the bay cleanup.

It is my understanding that the Storm Water Retrofit Projects could be funded by grants as long as they align with the 2017 WIP milestones. It don't feel a storm water impact fee is necessary at this time.

5 I am not familiar enough with the Comprehensive Plan from 2010 to offer an opinion at this time. I will gladly attend one of your meetings to learn more. I firmly believe that farmland must be preserved as farmland. Without farms we don't eat.

We have areas designated for housing at this time that have plenty of capacity. Let's concentrate development in areas that have infrastructure in place.

I have visited every mayor in Cecil County and have talked to them at length about their undeveloped land with infrastructure in place already. I feel that the County Council and the mayors and administrators of our local towns

should meet once a month to coordinate efforts for smart growth. Cecil County has a lot to offer and we must plan wisely for our future.

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### **Paul Trapani District 5 (Republican)**

1. The tools available are to first work with the towns with regard to interconnectivity of viable infrastructure along the Route 40 corridor and to utilize the county's market based TDR Program for a receiving area along Route 40. There are a lot of good things that can happen if the county works with the towns on this entire issue.

2. Given the environmental challenges presented on the Bainbridge site and the lack of any movement from the Navy to address the issues with the site, I don't see the current development plan moving forward in any positive manner. With regard to tax credit being a part of the Bainbridge plan there would have to be an employment opportunity in concert with the state to ensure once any tax credit was to expire the employer doesn't pick up and leave to take advantage of a similar situation in another jurisdiction,

3. The county already has the frame work in place for a viable Purchase of Development Program (PDR), with regard to budgeting for the program the present language in the code speaks to up \$1,000,000 yearly. I would be willing to look at and consider an amount on a yearly basis that makes the program viable and something that would create a leveraging source for additional companion funds.

4. A. The county should consider environmentally proven systems that include using natural innovative ideas such as using native plant species and storm water designs that take into consideration the location and topography of a site. Utilizing groups such as the Master Gardener's would be a good place to start in terms of addressing failing storm water retention ponds in existing communities and working with the County's Department of public works.

B. I would not support a stormwater impact fee, but would update the county's zoning ordinance as to what type landscaping and vegetative buffers would be required to control runoff and sediment.

5. In following the issue of Cecil County's Tier Map and how the county executive keeps leading Maryland Department of Planning on as to submitting a revised map that meets the intent of the law, I don't consider this reduction as final and therefore don't accept it. A law was passed and

the county executive should live to her word. Given the changes in the residential home building market since the collapse of 2009, the market for large lot subdivisions has now dried up. The disposable income for this type of life style is not present in the job market. The new residential market is one where people want to live close to town, work and availability family activities. Developers have realized this as well and are now appealing to this in marketing.