



TOWN OF BLADENSBURG

MONTHLY MAYOR'S REPORT FOR JANUARY 2019



Photo 1 above – Congressman Anthony Brown at the Town Hall on the Government Shutdown (1/12/19)

Photo 2 above – Mayor Takisha James, First Gentleman Walter James, Jr., Cindy Cole and other volunteers for the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday/National Day of Service event at the Bladensburg Waterfront Park (1/21/19)



Photo 1 above – Mayor James rescuing a young tree from weeds! Photo 2 above – Mayor James visiting the Maryland Senate during session during the Maryland Mayors Conference.



Photo 1 & 2 above – Congressman Anthony Brown and Delegates Alonzo Washington, Diana Fennell and Jay Walker during the Prince George's House Delegation Meeting. This was also part of the Maryland Mayors Conference.

Summary of Community Activities & Meetings

January 2: Emerson Resident Council Meeting | Emerson House residents began the year by installing new officers for the resident council during their first meeting of 2019. I was invited to administer the oath of office to the newly elected officers. Congratulations to all who stepped up to serve and were elected! I look forward to working with you all during 2019!

January 9: Brothers & Sisters Mentoring Program | Council Member Lundy and I participated in the Brothers & Sisters Mentoring program along with our awesome staff members who serve as mentors for this program. Officers Tanksley and Hawkins have taken the lead and have gotten the program off to a great start with engagement from students and parents.

January 12: Town Hall on Government Shutdown hosted by Congressman Anthony Brown | This event provided an opportunity for residents to hear the latest updates on the government shutdown and to share how the shutdown has impacted them. Congressman Brown also allowed representatives from local utilities and a local credit union to address residents and share the programs being offered to assist residents who are dealing with the loss of income during the shutdown. Congressman Brown began the town hall by explaining how we came to the point of having the shutdown. He said September 28, 2018, was the first time in 10 years, Republicans and Democrats united to pass a set of appropriations bills to fund the government through September 30, 2019. The Congressman also noted it was the first time this was done before the start of the new calendar year. The bills accounted for 75% of government funding and covered agencies such as the Departments of Defense, Health, Education and a few others. The Republican leadership at the time (Speaker Paul Ryan (House) and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell) decided upon these levels even though they could've opted for 100% funding levels. This meant the Departments of Interior, Agriculture, and Treasury were not funded and resulted in the partial government shutdown that occurred on December 22 resulting in the longest government shutdown in U.S. history (for 35 days).

The President made his position very clear. He stated on numerous occasions he would open the government once Democrats gave him the border wall. Sadly, he decided to use hardworking Americans who serve this country by working in the Federal government as political pawns, which they are not. The better path would've been to work with Congress to say let's talk about border money and work together to solve border and immigration issues. Congressman Brown stated, it's clear the immigration system isn't perfect and needs to be fixed. He also said Republicans and Democrats were working to put forth a plan for addressing border security with a compromise bill, which contained 25 billion dollars for border security, with provisions to address the Dreamers, DACA, and other immigration issues but not necessarily a wall. The President previously stated he'd be willing to sign this bill in December 2018, however when Congress followed through on the bill, and sent it to the President for signature, he refused to sign it. On the first day of the 116th Congress the same bill was submitted to the President (the same bill previously sent over by the Senate in December 2018). While this is being worked out, the Congressman mentioned his work to provide back pay to government employees affected by the shutdown. The Government Employee Fair Treatment Act, introduced by Sen. Bill Cardin (D-Md.), was passed by the Senate on Jan. 10. The House also passed the bill, guaranteeing back pay to more than 800,000 federal employees, on Jan 11. The bill was signed into law by the president on Jan. 16.

January 17: Prince George's County Municipal Association (PGCMA) Monthly Meeting | The January meeting was hosted by Brentwood. Due to the bad weather, the meeting was abbreviated, but featured presentations from Prince George's State's Attorney, Aisha N. Braveboy and Community Advocates for Family & Youth (CAFY), Executive Director Arleen Joell.

January 21: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday/A National Day of Service | The frigid temperatures hovered around 0°C with the wind chill factor, but that wasn't enough to keep a few dedicated volunteers from this year's community service effort. Roughly 12 volunteers who braved the cold weather, pulling weeds and debris away from young trees planted at the Bladensburg Waterfront Park along the walking/bike trail and river. While it was challenging to shovel the frozen ground, we did our best!

January 28: Newton Green Resident Council Meeting | Over the last several months, I've been working with the residents of Newton Green to reestablish their council. I'm pleased to say they successfully held elections in December 2018 and I administered the oath of office to the new council members. I am so proud

of our seasoned citizens who stepped up to serve and make Newton Green a better place to live and enjoy themselves!

January 31-February 1: Maryland Mayors Conference | This year's conference provided valuable information and networking opportunities with Mayors from across the state of Maryland. One of the featured speakers was Dr. Mary Beth Tung, (Director, Maryland Energy Administration. She updated us on Maryland's Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS), which requires electricity suppliers (all utilities and competitive retail suppliers) in the state to procure a minimum portion of their electric retail sales by eligible renewable energy sources. Dr. Tung said currently most of the energy purchased to meet the RPS majority of the energy the state secures comes from other states, so there is a push for more renewable energy to be developed in Maryland and used by the state. As part of this effort, there's research being done to determine the true cost of increasing the RPS. Currently the standard is to reach 25% by 2020.

Dr. Tung also talked about the Maryland Smart Energy Communities program and shared ideas for how cities and counties can be part of this program and how they can significantly reduce energy consumption through increased energy efficiency. Currently two grants have been awarded to Prince George's County for Data Centers. Typically, these types of facilities waste 90% of their energy but they can't go without it even for a second.

Michel Bink, President & CEO, of Startup MD, addressed the conference attendees with his program which aims to assist new entrepreneurs and celebrate established ones. We learned Maryland has lost 120 tech companies in the last six years. As leaders he challenged us not only to focus on attracting and incentivizing large companies like Amazon, but to take steps to attract and maintain entrepreneurs so they can grow to the point of employing more Marylanders. He encouraged us to leverage the proximity to local colleges and universities to help drive innovation.

An important session of the conference was designed to address MML's Legislative Priority for 2018-2019, small cellular towers. We heard from Victor K. Tervala (Chief Solicitor, Baltimore City Law Department) and Lynn Board (City Attorney for the City of Gaithersburg) both of whom have experience with 5G/Small Cell siting issues. MML continues to work with municipalities to preserve local authority to manage small cellular tower infrastructure. A more in-depth update is provided under Legislative Updates.

Day two of the conference provided time for each of the delegations to get together and brainstorm on specific items to advocate for local municipalities. We brainstormed and developed a short list of shared concerns but agreed to have a separate follow up meeting to fine tune the list and incorporate feedback from municipalities who were not present. After finetuning, we also agreed to move forward together in order to achieve the most impact from our County, State, and Federal leaders. Following the meeting, we were able to attend the Prince George's County Democratic House Delegation Meeting. Congressman Anthony Brown was the guest speaker and updated the delegation on the Federal issues including the federal government shutdown. Congressman Brown also stated his position on the MAGLEV by saying this project offers the county no economic benefits. He also shared his desire to see metro expand to go across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge to provide easier access to Andrews Air Force Base from Virginia.

Congressman Brown also let us know the conversation about the FBI building is not over. The Maryland Congressional delegation is still working on this. While there is bi-partisan support for the move to Prince George's County, the conversation will probably have to be restarted.

To end the conference I joined a few mayors from Prince George's County in sitting in on the Senate Session as they conducted business.

Legislative Updates:

The Maryland Municipal League's legislative priority for 2019 is the preservation of local authority over the siting and aesthetics of small cellular tower infrastructure. During the 2018 General Assembly session SB1188/HB1767 was introduced on behalf of the wireless communications industry. The telecommunications indicated an intent of streamlining and creating uniformity in the local permitting for installation of small cell facilities, however we later learned the real story with this bill to preempt local governments from regulating important safety and aesthetic components such as zoning and right-of-way access. Recently, the Federal Communication Commission adopted order FCC-18-133 which aims to preempt the authority of local governments by placing a cap on application fees, right-of-way access and pole attachment charges.

Additionally the order shortens the “shotclock” which refers to the time allowed for a municipality to approve an application. During the Maryland Mayors Conference MML staff strongly encouraged all municipalities in Maryland to move swiftly to enact the necessary ordinances

Fight for Fifteen wages on: House Bill 166 | Delegate Diana Fennell (D-47) sponsored legislation in the House to gradually increase Maryland’s minimum wage to \$15 by 2023. To get to \$15/hour the minimum wage would increase each year by \$1 until 2023.

Please join us for the following upcoming events and meetings:

Black History Month Event - Saturday, February 23:

- Town of Bladensburg Annual Black History Month Program | 4:00 – 6:00 PM | Bladensburg Community Center, 4500 57th Avenue, Bladensburg, MD 20710. Be sure to rsvp by calling (301) 927-7048 right away!

District Five Town Hall Meeting Saturday, February 23, 2019:

Join this event to learn what’s happening in the District and to share your thoughts with Prince George’s County Council Member Jolene Ivey. The meeting will be held at Kentland Community Center, 2411 Pinebrook Avenue, Hyattsville, MD

Monday, March 11, 2019:

Council Work Session begins @ 5:30 PM & the Televised Council Meeting begins at 7:00 PM at Town Hall.

Monday, March 18, 2019:

District 47 Annual Annapolis Reception 6:00 – 8:00 PM | Join Senator Malcolm Augustine, Delegates Diana Fennell, Julian Ivey and Wanika Fisher in Annapolis for this annual event. The reception will be held in the Miller Senate Office Building, President’s Conference Center West I & II, 11 Bladen Street, Annapolis, MD 21403. For questions or to RSVP call (410) 841-3745.