



TOWN OF BLADENSBURG

MONTHLY MAYOR'S REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 2019

Photos in Row 1 – County Executive Angela Alsobrooks during Municipal Leaders Meeting | GATCC Graduation Ceremony | Senator Malcolm Augustine during the District 47 Leaders Meeting



Photos below are from the Town of Bladensburg's Annual Black History Program.



Photo of the Supreme Court following the hearing regarding the World War I Memorial (Peace Cross).



Summary of Community Activities & Meetings

February 2: District 47 Leaders Breakfast hosted by Senator Malcom Augustine | The meeting was hosted to bring together civic and elected leaders for the 47th Legislative District. Team 47 shared the legislative priorities for the democratic delegation which are:

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Democrats say they plan to pass legislation to create a commission to increase transparency for the cost and choices of prescription drugs, as well as a measure to cap the out-of-pocket drug costs for state retirees.

PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS

Legislation backed by Democrats would create a statutory right in Maryland for people with pre-existing medical conditions to have access to health insurance.

SMOKING AGE

A measure already endorsed by the 57-member Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland would raise the age for buying tobacco and e-cigarettes from 18 to 21.

GUN CONTROL

Legislation would ban 3D-printed gun blueprints and "ghost guns."

MINIMUM WAGE

Maryland Democrats are supporting an increase in the state's minimum wage from \$10.10 to \$15 an hour.

CHILD CARE

They propose adding \$20 million a year to increase the State's existing child care tax credit, which hasn't been modernized in nearly 20 years. Supporters of the legislation say child care costs are skyrocketing at an average of nearly \$14,000 a year and the fifth highest in the country.

FIGHTING POLLUTION

They want to make Maryland the first state to ban polystyrene, the synthetic polymer often used in Styrofoam packaging. The measure would require businesses to use alternate materials such as compostable or recyclable containers.

Congressman Anthony Brown (4th District Maryland) also attended and shared his frustration with the partial government shutdown that occurred. He explained it is not appropriate to shut the government down over a policy dispute. While the rhetoric centers around illegal immigration and drug coming in from Mexico, he stated more drugs come into the United States through our ports of entry. There are approximately 3,000 positions open for border security officers so we shouldn't be talking about a wall. Instead we should be focused on filling those positions. We should also focus on solutions that are technology focused. He also said he believes the president will try to get the wall by declaring a national emergency, which will most likely get held up in litigation.

With respect to the upcoming census of 2020, he said congress is trying to block the citizenship question. He also mentioned they are continuing support for WMATA and are experimenting with the idea of a flat metro fare similar to the NY city subway system.

The District 47 Team also mentioned there are scholarships available, so be on the lookout for information about those opportunities.

February 6: Town of Bladensburg Black History Month Movie Night | We kicked off the festivities for Black History Month with the showing of the documentary, " Standing on My Sisters Shoulders", celebrating the role of women in the Civil Rights Movement. This was a great event and I thank everyone who came out to join us!

February 11: Prince George's County Council District Council Hearing on SE-4792 | The application for Ernest Maier is requesting approval of a Special Exception to operate a Concrete Batching Plant. Variance from Section 27-343.02(a)(1) to allow a concrete batching plant and its components to be within 100-foot setback from adjacent property located in the Industrial zone. And a second variance from Section 27-474(b) to reduce the 25-foot setback from Kenilworth Avenue by five feet. Town Administrator Sandlin, the Town's lawyer, Suellen Ferguson, and I were present to support the application on behalf of the Town.

February 13: Bladenwood Condominium Owners' Meeting | Homeowners held their regular owners meeting to discuss business matters regarding their homes. I attended to hear concerns of the residents as well as provide updates on what is happening in the Town as well as information on upcoming events. In response to concerns with speeding during the morning rush hour along Newton Street, the police department has already started addressing this concern.

February 16: Maryland's 4th & 5th Congressional Districts 38th Annual Black History Month Breakfast Celebration | This celebration focused on the theme of Black Migration. The keynote speaker was Congressman Hakeem Jeffries (NY District 8) and he delivered incredibly inspiring speech entitled "A Knockout is Different than a Knock Down". He traced the journey of African Americans from slavery through the Great Migration. It encouraged African Americans to keep striving for success and progress to elevate the community.

February 19: Rescheduled Monthly Worksession and Council Meeting | Last month's Council Meetings were rescheduled from Monday, February 11 to Tuesday, February 19 due to inclement weather on the 11th.

February 21: County Executive Angela Alsobrooks holds Municipal Leaders Breakfast | The mayors in Prince George's County were invited to meet with County Executive Alsobrooks to hear her vision for the County. She stated education is a high priority and she desires to bring more funding back to Prince George's County. She also said there is a tremendous backlog of school repairs and issues to resolve related to the school system but she's committed to working collaboratively to solve them. She's working on a bill to add \$30,000,000 to our budget over 20 years to address these committed to working with the municipalities in a better way than we've had in the past. Ms. Alsobrooks also indicated she will push the MNPCC to invest more in our youth sports and better coordinate the use of our facilities. She also talked about her summer youth jobs and her desire to employ 6,000 youth this summer. Beautification is also a high priority for her administration, so she'll be working to increase the fines for dumping, put points on licenses and add cameras in areas where the most dumping occurs. Ms. Alsobrooks is also looking into a composting option for the County to further our sustainability efforts. We were also introduced to the new municipal liaison, Ms. Ola Hill, who will serve as our primary contact with the County Executive's office. Ms. Alsobrooks introduced members of her team: Euniesha Davis (Office of Community Relations), Shawn Stokes (Human Resources Management), Walter Simmons (Employ Prince George's), Diana Leon-Brown (Strategic Partnerships), and Renee Battle-Brooks (Human Relations Commission).

February 21: Prince George's County Municipal Association | The PGCMA monthly meeting was hosted by Riverdale Park. Special presentations were given by the Prince George's Arts & Humanities Council Executive Director, Melanie Griffith who shared information about the council. They have been designed to coordinate financial support and advocacy for the arts. They also provide support and services to artists and organizations that serve Prince George's County and region. They can assist communities with landscape enhancements and functional art such as bright seating in a community or seating as part of a park utilizing solar or LED lighting, use of billboards for art, and uniquely styled bus shelters with solar panels.

We also heard from Daniel Jones, Partnership Specialist, U.S. Census Bureau regarding the upcoming census. He acknowledged concerns that many are having with the question regarding citizenship and stated that regardless of the outcome, the role of the bureau is to focus on conducting the census and getting the most accurate information. They will also be leaning on the municipalities for support, to help ensure every resident is counted. I made a note the Town needs to begin working with the bureau to develop a strategy for promoting the census and encouraging more people to submit their info.

February 23:

Annual Orientation for End Time Harvest Ministries new Bladensburg High School 9th grade Port Towns Youth Council Enrollees Annual Orientation | I attended this annual event with the District 47 Legislative Team and Prince George's County Council Member Ivey.

Prince George's County District 5 Town Hall with Council Member Ivey | I attended this meeting and found it very informative. I'll be following up with the Planning Department as we continue moving forward with the Master Plan that was started in 2017.

District 5 Town Hall with Prince George's County Council Member Jolene Ivey | This was an informative event and it was especially worthwhile connecting with members of the Department of Public Works and Transportation, Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement as well as Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission. In addition, I was able to obtain information on the Telehealth Initiative for County Senior Residents. This program is to help independent seniors with managing their medications. I will be working to setup an information meeting on this program in the spring.

GATCC Annual Graduation and Prom Honors Ceremony | This annual event honors seniors who obtain their GED, are domestic violence survivors, veterans, business owners and volunteers. This year's program was a beautiful event. I was especially honored because my daughter, Imani James, gave the invocation for the ceremony! Congratulations to Ms. Barbara Givens on a successful event.

Town of Bladensburg Black History Program | I simply cannot say enough about the success of this year's program. Staff worked VERY hard to organize and implement this event and it was a huge success! We were so fortunate to have Ms. Rosie Allen-Herring, CEO of United Way, serve as our keynote speaker. The Bowie State University Gospel Choir also did a wonderful job of providing inspiration through song.

February 27: Supreme Court Hears Oral Arguments for Hearing No. 17-1717. The American Legion, et al. v. American Humanist Association, et al.; and Hearing No. 18-18. Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission v. American Humanist Association, et al. | I was very fortunate to be able to join Town Administrator Sandlin, Chief Stone and Captain Collington in attending the oral arguments in the matter of the World War I Memorial, also known as the Peace Cross. Each side was given 35 minutes to argue their position, which is more time than is normally allowed. The Justices were critical of both sides in examining the matter given the weight of the decision and the implications for other war memorials. A decision on the matter will be provided in June 2019.

Please join us for the following upcoming events and meetings:

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.

Monday, April 8, 2019:

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

Saturday, July 6, 2019 | 2nd Annual Bladensburg Fireworks

Make plans to join us for this year's event from 6-9 pm at the Bladensburg Waterfront Park! More details will be shared this spring.