

Memorandum

TO: David Deutsch
City Manager

FROM: Leonard Lucchi
City Lobbyist

DATE: 4/2/2009

RE: Legislative Update

With 11 days to go until the closing of the 2009 Session of the Maryland General Assembly, many of the major issues remain unresolved. Here is a summary of issues affecting the City:

1. **State Budget** – Both Houses have now acted on the state budget, but there are major differences between their respective products. Those differences must now be resolved by a conference committee. Among the issues are the degree and applicability of Highway User Revenue cutbacks to the City and the degree of reduced funding for Program Open Space. Unaffected so far is police aid.
2. **Bond Bills** – No action has taken place on the capital budget as the budget committees are concentrating on completing the operating budget first. Fifteen million dollars has been set aside for local projects, down from last year's twenty-five million.
3. **School Construction** – Legislation to require the state to share in planning and design costs of school construction projects has passed both the Prince George's Senate and House Delegation, but remains stalled in the standing committees. This legislation, if passed, could help get the South Bowie High School projects started.
4. **Speed Cameras** – This saga has been a roller coaster ride that would make the rides at Six Flags seem tame. The Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee passed a bill limiting cameras to work zones. The full Senate then added school zones. Then the Senate killed the bill.

Then it resurrected the bill and sent it to the House. Meanwhile, the House passed a Prince George's County-only speed camera bill, but that is not expected to move now that a statewide bill has passed the Senate.

5. **Prince George's Hospital System** – Both Houses have now passed legislation extending the time for the Hospital Authority to sell the hospital system. All that remains is for each House to pass the other House's bill. The bill requires that no one asset of the system can be sold until all assets of the system are sold.
6. **Open Space** – Legislation clarifying that indoor Program Open Space projects are eligible for state funding has passed each House, but the bills are quite different. The Senate version requires the project to be of LEED Silver status and provides for 90% state funding if impervious surfaces do not exceed 10 percent of the property. The House version contains no such conditions and is an emergency bill. A conference committee will have to resolve the differences between the bills.
7. **Environmental Standing** - A compromise reached among environmental groups, builders and state and local governments is moving through the General Assembly that provides community organizations limited standing for limited environmental decisions at state and local levels.