



# THE FREEDOM

# INFORMER

A Publication of FACC / Freedom Area Citizens' Council

[www.freedomareacitizens.org](http://www.freedomareacitizens.org)

November 2002

## FACC launches annual membership drive for families/HOAs

The FACC is launching its annual membership drive. We hope to increase our membership significantly and, specifically, to increase the number of Homeowners Associations (HOAs) that belong to FACC.

FACC memberships run from January to December of each year. The fee for membership is \$10/family/year. All citizens over 18 years of age who live in the Freedom Community Planning Area (CPA) are eligible to become FACC members. Members who renew or join in the last four months of each calendar year become members through the following year—that is, for up to 16 months. Families (members) are encouraged to use the form (page 2) to renew their membership.

Members who belong to HOAs are encouraged to contact the officers of their HOAs to join FACC using an HOA membership. The membership fee for HOAs has been reduced to \$50 per year.

Each HOA will receive five (5) membership cards good for discounts at designated area merchants. HOA memberships in the FACC also entitle the HOA to receive complimentary copies of the *Freedom Informer* (newsletter), free listings of HOA events (yard sales, annual meetings) in the *Freedom Banner* (quarterly newspaper), and linkage of your HOA web site to the FACC web site at [FreedomAreaCitizens.org](http://FreedomAreaCitizens.org).

Representatives of the FACC will be pleased to attend an HOA annual or monthly meeting to brief members of the HOA on the advantages of joining the FACC. To arrange briefings, please indicate a point of contact on the membership form on page 2 or call Ross Dangel, Chairman FACC, at (410) 549-4547.

FACC hosts monthly meetings at the Carrolltown Christian Church in Carrolltown Center on the third Tuesday of each month (except December). The November meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 19 beginning at 7 p.m.

## FACC invited to join Town/County Staff Meetings

The Freedom Area Citizens' Council has been invited to participate in the quarterly meetings of a new group of staff representatives from each of the municipalities and the Carroll County Department of Planning.

The group arose because of disagreements between the Board of Commissioners and the eight municipalities in Carroll County. The County alleged that mismanagement of residential growth was caused by the towns and that the towns were responsible for most of the residential growth in recent years.. This allegation was easily refuted by the planning staffs of the municipalities when the towns proved that of the 3,844 permits issued since the Concurrency Management Ordinance was passed, 1829 or 32 percent were issued by the towns. It was also discovered that the database of planned and completed residential construction required by the county's Concurrency Management Ordinance had not been maintained by the county as required.

As a result the towns formed the Carroll Count Council of Governments (CCCOG) and proposed periodic meetings with county planners to address issues related to growth. The group currently consists of representatives from each of the eight towns in Carroll County, from the Fire Chiefs Association, and the County Planning Department.

At its first meeting on August 28, 2002, the group reached consensus that the FACC should be invited to attend the quarterly meetings. Also invited were the Finksburg Planning Area Council, State Highway Administration, Board of Education, County Department of Public Works and the County Bureau of Information Technology Services. In addition, the scope of the town/county staff sessions was extended by the county to cover other issues.

The next meeting of the group is scheduled for Wednesday, November 13<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 p.m. in Room 300A of the county office building. Mr. Ken Plante will represent the FACC.

Commentary:

## Commissioner surprise

The primary for Carroll County Commissioners had a big surprise on the Republican side. The five candidates (including two incumbents) associated with favoring residential growth and developing Piney Run as a water resource were rejected in favor of incumbent Julia Walsh Gouge, Dean Minnich and Perry Jones. The public had finally had enough of bad management by the "Dream Team" and weren't in the mood to choose any Frazier/Dell clones or cronies.

In the general election however the big surprise was that there were no surprises. On the Democratic side, all three candidates were slow growth advocates. Betty Hirsch Smith had that slogan on her signs. Further, the Democratic hopefuls were serious candidates who ran serious campaigns. [Neil] Ridgely had been a town manager and [Jeannie] Nichols was a leader on the Sykesville Town Council. Smith was an experienced operator who in a previous incarnation had been a member of the Republican Central Committee. She expected to draw votes from both parties. For a change, the Democrats expected to do well in the general election, perhaps even pick off a seat.

It didn't happen. The three Republicans got twice the vote of the three Democrats. And the vote was evenly

split in both parties. It was in fact a party line vote. The Republicans took 68% if the votes for commissioner. The Democrats took slightly over 26%. The remaining 4% was split between the Independent and the Green Party candidate. This 4% may have been some "anti-Gouge" backlash among disgruntled pro-growth Republicans. Backlash or not, Julia Gouge was the biggest single vote getter with 25% of the vote.

The three Democratic commissioner candidates did not do better than Democrats in general. The Democratic candidates for Register of Wills, Sheriff, Clerk of the Court, and State Attorney scored in the 20% - 30% range. Considering the quality of the candidates, the growth issue and vigorous campaign this was a crushing defeat for the three Democratic candidates for Commissioner. The usual Democratic line-up of Larry, Moe and Curley could not have done much worse.

Once again the Republican primary was the real election in Carroll County. The effort by anti-growth citizens in the primary paid off. The three Republican Commissioners-elect are all voicing the growth control line. If two of them stick to it in practice then the residents will have some protection. It will be sorely needed. The Ehrlich administration will not be nearly as pro-active as he departing Glendenning administration in protecting such sites as Piney Run.

John Culleton,  
Eldersburg

### USE THIS FORM TO JOIN OR TO RENEW MEMBERSHIP FOR 2003!

*FACC is a non-profit and non-partisan community organization.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member of a Homeowners' Association? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, which HOA? \_\_\_\_\_

HOA Point of Contact: (Name) \_\_\_\_\_ (Tel. No.) \_\_\_\_\_

*I would be interested in offering assistance with:*

Legal Affairs  Membership  Schools  Publications

Government  Media Relations  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Check  
No.:

\_\_\_\_\_

New membership

Renewal

**Annual Membership Fee: \$10.00 per year per household**

Please make checks payable to FACC. Mail to: FACC, P.O. Box 142, Sykesville, MD 21784

*Commentary:*

## Time to drain the swamp

I had planned on doing a post-mortem on Tuesday's local election, but deadlines prevented my waiting. So instead, I chose to write about what I consider should be at the top of the new board of commissioners' agenda.

And since all the candidates for that job were "singing from the same song book" during the campaign (with none hitting any noticeable high or sour notes), it matters little which three ended up winning what was, essentially, a popularity contest even if the respective central committees of the two parties would have us believing otherwise.

As the saying goes, "a new broom sweeps clean," which often occurs whenever there is a change in leadership in government or in the private sector. But the swamp the new board will be moving into will require more than a broom to clean up the mess. Sump pumps would be more like it. And they might want to consider setting traps for catching all the swamp rats that'll be scurrying for cover after they've taken over, as well as for snaring those with special interests from attempting to ingratiate themselves with the new board.

To my knowledge, Dean Minnich was the only candidate who has expressed a willingness to do the necessary "housecleaning." And, hopefully, the other two will support him. If they don't, then the voters obviously made a mistake by putting 'em in office.

In a position paper he wrote setting forth his agenda (if elected), he stated he would have members of the Planning and Zoning Commission, Zoning Ordinance Review Committee, and Ethics Commission submit their resignations. And after the commissioners had decided whose resignations they'd accept, to then solicit recommendations for filling the vacant positions from the towns and citizens groups throughout the county.

And unlike the previous board, he would be against requiring department heads to also submit their resignations. That unwarranted action on the part of Commissioners Dell and Frazier gave employees a clear signal as to their dictatorial management style, using it as they did as a means for disposing of, or demoting, those on their "hit list."

To her credit, Commissioner Gouge protested mightily, but to no avail; the same as she did when other heads were later lopped-off for bogus, or for the flimsiest of reasons. Some would say that justice was finally served when Dell and Frazier suffered a similar fate in the primary election. But not me, for Dell, who did what he thought was right during his 12 years in office, was

deserving of a better ending to his political career than he got.

But it's for sure that the new board will be welcomed with open arms by the vast majority of county employees, with more than a few thinking, if not yelling out loud, "Free at last." Free from being micromanaged, free from being forced to march in lockstep with every decision made by two of the commissioners, free from the fear of reprisal for exercising any independent judgments or initiatives in performing their jobs, and free from being treated like children by having a new "character trait" shoved down their throats each month like a dose of castor oil.

They're certainly entitled, after the election, to hoop and holler and set off a few firecrackers outside of the county office building to celebrate their newfound freedom. But they better refrain from popping a cork or two lest Commissioner Robin Frazier, a life-long teetotaler, blows the whistle on 'em for drinking on county property.

*David Grand  
Wetminster*

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## Say "No" to Ethics Commission subpoena powers

In a public hearing before the County Commissioners on November 7, the Carroll County Ethics Commission argued for subpoena powers. Commission Chairman James Talley argued that the Commission was a "paper tiger" without authority to compel witnesses to testify. As a result of the hearing, County Commissioners may ask the county's legislative delegation to draft a law granting subpoena powers to the Commission.

Some residents at the hearing argued against the move, stating that authority to subpoena witnesses "is too much authority for the Commission," and that if charges warrant, the case should be referred to the County Attorney.

The current Commission has been the subject of some controversy because of inconsistent application of its investigation of issues. For this reason, we urge citizens to oppose the requested additional authority for the Ethics Commission.

*Editor*

### **NOTICE!**

**THERE WILL NOT BE A FACCG GENERAL  
MEMBERSHIP MEETING IN DECEMBER.  
THE FIRST MEETING IN 2003 WILL BE ON  
TUESDAY JANUARY 21 AT 7 P.M.**

FACC  
P.O. Box 142  
Eldersburg, MD 21784

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## Primoff property on Planning and Zoning agenda

The proposed preliminary plan for Freedom Hills, a 31-unit subdivision at the intersection of MD 97 and Obrecht Road in Woodbine will be on the agenda for the Carroll County Planning and Zoning Commission on November 19th. The time for this item had not been decided at the time of this writing. The meeting will be held in Room 003/004 of the county office building.

The Primoff property was previously considered under the revised ordinance drafted by the Zoning Ordinance Review Committee. The proposed ordinance, which would have permitted shifting building rights from the Conservation Zone to adjacent Agricultural Zone land, was rejected after public outcry from citizens and objection by the State government.

## Trial date set on alleged misspending of water fees

The Carroll County Clerk of the Circuit Court recently announced the trial date for Perkins v. Carroll County, a suit brought by Mr. Perkins and several other citizens. The scheduled date is December 20, 2002 at 10:00 a.m. in the Court House Annex, 55 North Court Street in Westminster.

The suit alleges that the Carroll County Government has illegally and unconstitutionally collected maintenance fees from current users of the Freedom Water and Sewer system to build the proposed water treatment plant at Piney Run Lake. A previous attempt by the County to dismiss the case was heard by Circuit Court Judge Luke K. Burns on May 24, 2002. The request to dismiss was later rejected by Judge Burns.

## Jim Slater to speak at November FACC meeting

Jim Slater, Environmental Compliance Specialist, Carroll County Department of Public Works will speak at the November 19th FACC General Membership meeting in the Carrolltown Center.

Mr. Slater will speak on the county's recently drafted Water and Sewer Master Plan and on the status of the on-going drought in the local area and on other subjects related to water resources.

