



County Council Questions – Why we asked these questions

1. What improvements are needed for your district?

This is an open-ended question giving candidates the opportunity to explain their understanding of what is important to their constituents.

2. What legislation do you plan to introduce for your district? For the County? If you are an incumbent, what legislation have you introduced?

This gets more specific, asking what candidates have done or will do to solve constituents' concerns. It indirectly asks if the Council, being the Legislative Branch, will (or have) actually written legislation or whether they are passive, just reacting to what the Executive Branch sends over on land use issues.

3. How would you include or engage more people to provide input to the Council's decisions?

The Council has been reducing/removing opportunities for public input during Council meetings. Unlike development interests, most members of the public can't visit Council members during business hours but can attend the Council's evening meetings. We are hoping recent restrictions on the public's speaking during Council meetings will be removed, and that the public's interest and participation in meetings will increase as a result.

4. Would you be willing to explain your voting decisions on the dais for each bill you vote upon?

It has become very rare that bills explain their purpose (called "Whereas" sections). Without this, it's difficult to determine the real reasons for the bill and makes it even more important for Council members to explain why they support or oppose the bill. At present, it appears that most Council discussions happen behind the scenes rather than on the dais (in public).

5. Would you support better ways to provide the public with user-friendly notification of decisions by DAC and the Zoning Board of Appeals? If so, how?

When a decision is made by the Development Advisory Board (DAC) or Zoning Board of Appeals, a countdown starts on your very limited time to appeal that decision in court. The only way to discover if the decision has been made is to contact Planning & Zoning frequently and ask. We believe notifications of these decisions should be posted clearly and immediately on the web, not revealed only when asked about.

6. Would you vote in favor of term limits for County Council members? Explain.

FoH takes no position on this issue, but it sometimes seems elected officials support current residents less and developers more the longer they are in office. Campaign contributions can be an influence.

7. How do you propose to solve the County's traffic problems in your district?

Traffic problems are probably THE big issue for most residents. We want to know if candidates plan to build roads using only taxpayers' money, propose requiring developers to



help pay to improve county roads, support alternative transportation, will plan ahead for future development, or have other ideas.

8. What parts of the zoning code do you feel need to be changed? The Zoning Code impacts every resident's quality of life. FOH believes the zoning code should be revised to return the public's right to know why their interpretation of the code is considered invalid by the Department of Planning and Zoning. We believe the public deserves to have input on bill amendments that can significantly change the bills. We believe the zoning code must consider the impacts new development will have on those of us already here. We want to know what the candidates understand about the code and if they're willing to change it to give more than lip service to redevelopment and to protect the quality-of-life for current residents and businesses. We believe the Legislative Branch (the County Council) should be seeking public input and writing bills, not waiting for the Administration (County Executive) to tell them what to think.

9. Do you feel it's time for noise and lighting legislation in Harford County? We do, especially for intrusive lighting, which can affect residents, farmers and drivers. We believe in objective, measurable limits on light pollution that intrudes, unwanted, onto other people's properties. We believe our quality-of-life shouldn't be governed by one government official's personal opinion with no chance to appeal.

10. Do you approve of General Industrial (GI) zoning adjacent to residential communities or within a Village District? If your answer is 'No', how do you reconcile your disapproval with HarfordNEXT and recent Comprehensive Zoning Review decisions?

New GI zoning encourages uses that frequently have major traffic, lighting and noise impacts on current residential neighbors and communities. We believe HarfordNEXT ignored the interests of long-time residents in the Perryman peninsula by painting it all as Industrial. This encouraged Comprehensive Zoning to convert a large R4 (dense residential) property to GI. We believe the zoning code does not protect the community from adverse impacts by GI uses.

11. Do you agree with the reduction in the number of County inspections on construction sites when only 34 percent of contractors are in compliance with the Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance?

We disagree with the reduction. Inspections should insure the vast majority of contractors comply with the law. This does not seem to be the case. We believe a quality control approach is needed, so violators are inspected more frequently while those who follow the rules are trusted. Harford should maximize protection of downstream properties from erosion or water damage while minimizing the bill for taxpayers. Until a quality control program is implemented, we oppose the fact that the County ended the requirement for inspections every 2 weeks.