



County Executive Questions – Why we asked these questions

1. What are your top priorities for legislation for the County?

Since the County Executive typically writes the county's legislation, this is an open-ended question giving candidates the opportunity to explain their understanding of what is important to their constituents.

2. When we have questions about specific issues, how do we get your answers?

This is another open-ended question seeking ways in which members of the public can better communicate their concerns to the Executive and the departments under his control.

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

While DAC minutes are quickly available to the public, communication ends although further reviews by other agencies and offices are required. Final approval can only be learned by calling P&Z weekly and asking if the DAC plan has been approved. From that approval date you have a very limited number of days to appeal that final plan to the courts. This is also true for zoning appeal cases. These decisions are time sensitive, so we believe plan approvals and zoning decisions should be posted on the web the day they occur.

4. Would you favor 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.

5. How do you propose to solve the County's traffic problems?

Traffic problems are probably THE big issue for most residents. We want to know candidates' ideas, whether their approach focuses on roads, changes in plans for development, alternative transportation approaches, revising who pays to improve county roads, or other ideas.

6. The Master Plan, HarfordNEXT, calls for a study on expanding the development envelope in an area beginning at I-95/MD 543 moving northwest along MD 543/Shucks Road to Harford Community College and beyond to US 1 at Hickory. What is your view on expanding the development envelope and specifically the aforementioned MD 543 proposal?

Since there are well over a thousand acres of undeveloped land inside the Development Envelope already open for development, we disagree with any expansion of the Envelope. We believe Harford must focus on planning to develop those thousand-plus acres in a way that avoids repeating the problems already created by the lack of proper planning. Expanding the Envelope destroys farmland and hurts revitalization.



7. Would you agree to return the citizens' right to an interpretation of the Zoning Code by amending the code? If not, why?

The public's right to an "interpretation" was eliminated, over FoH objections, when the Zoning Code was rewritten in 2008. It was replaced by the word "determination". These two words have quite different legal and practical meanings. "Interpretation" basically means citizens and government read the same words but understand them to mean something quite different, and it allows citizens to question the government. "Determination" essentially means "read the Zoning Code to us" – something we can do ourselves. We deserve a written explanation when we believe the government is wrong, and we can challenge that interpretation in court. Determinations don't protect the public.

8. Do you feel it is 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 or which blinds drivers.

9. Do you approve of General Industrial (GI) zoning adjacent to residential communities or within a Village District? If not, how do you reconcile your disapproval with HarfordNEXT and recent Comprehensive Zoning Review decisions?

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

10. Do you approve of reducing 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.