

The Wicomico County Council met in Legislative Session on Tuesday, March 17, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. in Council Chambers, Government Office Building, Salisbury, Maryland.

In attendance: Jeff Merritt, Vice President; Josh Hastings, James Winn, Joe Holloway, and David Ennis. John T. Cannon and Shanie Shields were absent.

Present: Laura Hurley, Council Administrator; Lynn Ingold, Executive Office Associate, and Robert A. Benson, Council Attorney.

On motion by Mr. Ennis and seconded by Mr. Holloway, the consent agenda consisting of the following items was unanimously approved:

- Legislative Minutes from March 3, 2026
- Open Work Session Minutes from February 17, 2026 – Proposed Text Amendment to Chapter 200 of the Wicomico County Code titled “Subdivision of Land” to remove the set-aside requirement for minor subdivisions in the agricultural/rural zoning district
- Open Work Session Minutes from February 17, 2026 – Capital Improvement Program – Emergency Services
- Open Work Session Minutes from February 17, 2026 – Priority Letter for the Maryland Department of Transportation’s FY2027-2032 Consolidated Transportation Program
- Open Work Session Minutes from February 17, 2026 – Capital Improvement Program – General Services
- Open Work Session Minutes from February 17, 2026 – Presentation of Police Accountability Board’s 2025 Annual Report
- Closed Session Minutes from January 16, 2026 – To discuss the appointment of individuals to the Human Rights Advisory Commission
- Closed Session Minutes from January 6, 2026 – Director of Human Resources Candidate
- Closed Session Minutes from February 3, 2026 – To Consult with Staff, Consultants, or other Individuals about Pending or Potential Litigation

A proclamation was presented to recognize the month of March as National Professional Social Work Month.

A proclamation was presented to recognize the month of March as National Women’s History Month.

A proclamation was presented to recognize the month of March as Endometriosis Awareness Month.

A certificate of appreciation was presented to Butch Waller for his 60 years of service to Wicomico High School.

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**Robert A. Benson, Esq., Council Attorney**

**Public Hearing: Legislative Bill No. 2026-02** – An ACT to amend Chapter 125 of the Wicomico County Code titled “Critical Area Resource Protection” by repealing all articles and sections therein and adopting 22 new articles consisting of 99 new sections.

Mr. Benson said this is here for public hearing. He explained, this is a mandate from the State of Maryland, and the changes are those that are mandated by the State.

Mr. Merritt opened the Public Hearing.

Mr. Jim Adkins came to the podium and said there is a recommendation for an administrative variance process, which is supposed to streamline and reduce the costs of the process. He said this would give the Planning Director the ability to grant a variance. He said areas of concern about this process are does this give the Director power over an appeal without a public hearing? He said although Article 125, Section 7 titled Enforcement, Subsection J titled Appeals addresses this, the question is how is the public ever made aware of the variance, and will they be informed in a timely manner? He said although we can't change the State laws, we should not hide the appeal process. He said maybe it's not connected, but I find it very interesting that the State wants to mandate the amount of acreage to be used for solar farms, they want to allow poultry construction before there is a plan for the waste discharge from these buildings, and now they want to be in charge of their critical areas that they haven't protected before. He said the County continues, and rightfully so, to complain that the State is taking all their power from the County. He said well folks, now you know how the citizens of the County feel. He said recent history shows after the DAF tank and the biorefinery that it is important that the public is kept informed when it comes to growth and development in the County. He said there is not much land in Wicomico County which doesn't impact critical areas—let's make sure we preserve what we have.

There were no further public comments. Mr. Merritt closed the Public Hearing.

On motion by Mr. Ennis and seconded by Mr. Hastings, Legislative Bill No. 2026-02 was opened up for discussion.

Ms. Tracey Taylor, Director of Planning and Zoning; Mr. Colin Harrison, Environmental Planner, and Mr. Andrew Illuminati, Esq. came before Council.

Ms. Taylor said I want to address the administrative variance section of the ordinance. She said I want to be completely transparent in that the administrative variance provision we're proposing in this new update is an optional section of the critical area ordinance. She clarified, we do not have to adopt that. She said we had many discussions internally and with the Critical Area Commission staff, and actually, the Critical Area Commission staff were the ones who initially promoted it to us. She said from the very beginning, I wasn't a fan, but I was won over eventually because we were allowed to craft and tailor the administrative variance process to what we felt comfortable with.

Ms. Taylor said I also had concerns, as has been expressed by some members of the public, about the Board of Appeals and usurping any authority of the Board of Appeals. She said I had concerns that any subsequent Director may not necessarily look at an administrative variance the way I would necessarily look at it. She said we did see merit in the process, and as we said earlier, from a streamlining perspective, from a cost perspective, we are always looking for ways to streamline development approval processes in this County, but doing so in a responsible way.

Ms. Taylor said Colin has a handout and we have extra copies, but anyone can contact me and I'll be happy to email it out. She said we have crafted the administrative variance process in such a way that it only includes very, very specific development proposals, so this is not a case of what you would typically see go before the Board of Appeals, such as a pool in the 100-foot buffer or a new dwelling unit in the 100-foot buffer—none of that is covered under an administrative process, those are typically ones that

are most controversial. She said this is only catered towards those types of development that for the most part are rubberstamped when they go before the Board of Appeals, and I will give you an example.

Ms. Taylor said if you have an existing dwelling that is on a grandfathered lot of record—in other words, it existed before the critical area law, there was a house on the property that existed before the critical area law, you are the homeowner and you sit 70-feet back from the main high tide, so you're within the 100-foot buffer—and you want to add on an addition, that addition typically would have to go to the Board of Appeals for a variance even though that addition is going to get approved because it is a natural progression of your ability to develop your property. She said we have tried to take out the pretty perfunctory type variance that go to the Board of Appeals, like a driveway in the buffer, or an accessory building in the buffer.

Ms. Taylor said if you look at the handout we just provided, all of this is contained within the proposed ordinance as well. She said even the accessory structures are limited in the amount of square footage you can propose for an administrative variance. She said additions are limited, and driveways are limited to 12 feet in distance. She said cases where we're talking about a vacant parcel being developed with impacts to the 100-foot buffer, none of that is going to be approved administratively, and it's expressly prohibited in the regulation. She clarified, this is only for very minor adjustments for grandfathering type situations or very minor disturbances. She said we were trying to find a way for it to be less costly and more streamlined for the applicant because typically, when someone comes in for a small accessory structure, a driveway, an addition to a home, or a patio, you're talking probably four to six months to get through the entire process because on all of those cases, we have to do findings, send it to the Critical Area Commission, and the Commission can then turn around and appeal our decisions. She said we just had that happen when Colin had a driveway in the buffer and we felt that the person had designed it in a way to minimize disturbance, and the Critical Area Commission appealed the Board's decision and we were held up months on that until eventually we worked out a compromise.

Ms. Taylor said I don't want anyone to feel that this provision was taken lightly in any way by myself or staff. She said we discussed it a lot internally. She said I do understand the concerns that have been expressed by the public, but I feel confident that the way we have tailored it in the ordinance that is outlined in the handout restricts it to very, very specific minor adjustments in the buffer.

Mr. Holloway asked, is this handout something we need to insert into this plan, to which Ms. Taylor responded, the handout Colin provided is an extraction summary of what is already in the ordinance. She clarified, it is just a document for reference purposes of everything that is already spelled out in the new ordinance for administrative variances. She said I just wanted to have it in one handout so you wouldn't have to look through the ordinance. She said in the ordinance itself, I think it's on page 57 or 58, but this is just an abbreviated version of that section that outlines the administrative process.

Mr. Holloway made a motion to postpone Legislative Bill No. 2026-02 until the public has a chance to review it and get a better understanding of it, which was seconded by Mr. Winn.

Mr. Ennis clarified, this handout was part of the legislation and the change that has already been submitted. He said this is perhaps to highlight it, but the fact of the matter is it's already in the proposal.

Ms. Taylor agreed and said what we just handed out is a summary of the restrictions that are already in the proposed ordinance. She said the language is no different, I just did it in a summary form to make it

easier for you to see the specific types of projects that fall under the administrative variance process. She clarified, it's not new information.

Mr. Holloway said it's more self-explanatory than what was handed out previously and I think it would give the public a better idea of what's going on if this was published in our next brief book.

Mr. Ennis said having sat on the Planning and Zoning Appeals Board for quite a few years since 1987 off and on, there were very few cases we actually had on critical areas to begin with. He said I understand how you have isolated the specific minor adjustments down, and I think, just my opinion, it's of very little consequence to the public. He said I don't know whose attention would be drawn to it unless they had something that's pending right now. He said I'm okay either way, I'm just okay with it as it has been submitted.

Mr. Holloway said as Tracey said, she might not be the Planning Director, and I'm looking at 125-5— Planning Director Designee shall review the permit, license, or other organization for development or redevelopment activity in the critical area for compliance with this critical area chapter prior to issuance of that permit or license. He said that pretty much says you all can do basically anything you want to whether it's minor or major, to which Ms. Taylor responded, each of the different types of provisions within the administrative variance, whether it is a relocation, dwelling, or accessory structure, whether it's an addition to an existing primary structure, or whether it is a driveway location or patio location, each of those is spelled out specifically within the administrative variance process, and under each type of development it spells out specifically what our limitations are. She clarified, in other words, if it's an accessory structure, it can't be greater than 30 percent of the primary, or 500 square feet, whichever is greater. She said if it's greater than 30 percent or greater than 500 square feet, then it cannot be approved administratively, and that bumps it into the full Board of Appeals. She said each one of those specific scenarios we described in the administrative variance process has parameters within it that the applicant has to meet. She said if the applicant can't meet those parameters, then it gets kicked into the Board of Appeals full variance process, so it's very, very restrictive. She said each use is identified and each parameter is explained. She said there is really no room for flexibility within those specific uses.

Mr. Merritt clarified, the information in this handout is already in there, to which Ms. Taylor responded, it's identical to the code, it's just broken out just to be more concise.

Mr. Merritt asked Mr. Illuminati if there are any legal issues we need to be aware of, to which Mr. Illuminati responded, no. He said the only issue would be, if this was continued, I believe this was introduced February 17, so we're still within the 60 days.

Mr. Holloway said my problem is I go back and think about the dog kennel issue that we kind of jumped on right away without a whole lot of oversight. He said I understand what you're saying, but anytime we take any transparency out of our government operation where people don't have a chance to express their views, it concerns me. He said I understand you are trying to streamline this and I know we've seen some of these come in front of us before, but what option does a person have if you streamline this and you approve something administratively and then a neighbor finds out about it later and is not happy with it after it's taken place? He then asked, what option does this neighbor have after this person goes in and puts up a building or puts a driveway in, to which Ms. Taylor responded, that's a very good question and I see your point. She said obviously, they have an appeal process, but then the question becomes, how do they know when the appeal process starts if they're not a part of the original decision

when the clock starts ticking. She said what I would offer is that we could easily add into the administrative process as an amendment that adjoining property owners will be notified by mail of the application for an administrative variance as a part of their recommendation process. She said we can add that in simply, and then adjacent property owners are notified. She said I would offer that as an amendment if you decided to proceed with the ordinance as written.

Mr. Holloway clarified, they would have a certain amount of time to contact the Administration, to which Ms. Taylor responded, they would be notified of the administrative variance process and would have a certain amount of time to contact the Planning and Zoning Department. Mr. Holloway clarified, then it would still be up to the Planning and Zoning Director or your designated person to make the decision whether they want to pay attention to what this person is saying or not, to which Ms. Taylor responded, yes, and I can't speak for future Directors, but I know in my case, if I received input from an adjacent property owner that there was concern, then we would bump it to the Board of Appeals.

Mr. Illuminati added, additionally, it could be amended so that all adjoining property owners are notified of the decision of the administrative variance, and that then triggers the 30-day appeal process so it's both sides—it's before staff considers the variance, and then after staff has considered the variance, the public is notified. Ms. Taylor added, and then they have the opportunity to appeal within the 30 days, so that would be fair.

Mr. Illuminati said the other side of this is that this is still about basic property usage, and if that gets extrapolated too far, then everybody who comes in just to put a shed on their property might say well, I should know if my neighbor is putting a shed on and when you granted the building permit, so it's a very delicate line. He said it's something to be managed, but I think, in this instance, it would be well-served.

Mr. Ennis said I think that's a good compromise and I would be willing to make a motion to amend. He said there is a public service aspect. He said when Tracey just mentioned four to six months, having served, I was going to guess it would be two to three months, and that's quite a long time for, as you put it, a perfunctory change or a minor adjustment to the regulation.

Ms. Taylor said to clarify, not everybody walks in the door and initially files an application. She said normally, they come in and apply for a permit and they may or may not be aware of a buffer or critical area regulation, so there is that initial review time. She said then there is the alert time to let them know, and then there is the time where we have deadlines for the Board, so they might not get on the very month they apply, so that builds in probably another 45 to 60 days. She said then you have the hearing, and then the Commission has to wait the 30 days because there is the appeal period afterwards that anybody can appeal, so yes, it could be four to six months.

Mr. Merritt clarified, there are a couple of things you don't need variances for, to which Ms. Taylor responded, yes. Mr. Merritt said if it's a same-size building or something like the same location, to which Ms. Taylor responded, within the same footprint.

Mr. Holloway said I agree that notifying the neighbors is a great thing, but there was a situation that I was a part of quite a few months ago where all but one of the neighbors were notified, who actually owned the property right next to the people. He clarified, they didn't get any notification whatsoever that the Board of Special Appeals hearing was even going to take place, so there is no guarantee that they will even be notified, and that is a problem.

Mr. Ennis said I'm willing to offer a motion to amend Legislative Bill 2026-02 to include public notification. He said I will defer to Mr. Illuminati or whomever to capture the verbiage properly as to how that is to be done, but I offer the motion to amend for public notification to be integrated into this proposal. Mr. Hastings said we already have a motion on the table to postpone. Mr. Holloway withdrew his motion to postpone, and Mr. Winn withdrew his second.

Mr. Ennis made a motion to amend Legislative Bill No. 2026-02 to include verbiage to capture public notification by Planning and Zoning. Mr. Hastings seconded the motion.

Mr. Holloway said it's not going to work because all it has to have is someone not get a letter, and I have the perfect example of that because I was the one that didn't get the letter. Mr. Ennis said that could happen to any case.

Mr. Merritt asked Ms. Taylor to explain the notification process—is it done by mail? How is the public contacted in that situation, to which Ms. Taylor responded, I'm going to let Colin speak to his process that he already does as a matter of rule for Board cases. She added, also, I understand Mr. Holloway's concern, but if there is a mishap, which is what I'll term it as, where we fail to notify someone unintentionally, that could happen if it goes to the full Board of Appeals or if it's done administratively regardless. She said it doesn't really matter if it's going to the Board or administratively—if we've made a mistake, we've made a mistake. She then asked Mr. Harrison to highlight how he notifies and the process he goes through. Mr. Merritt added, it could also happen if the post office delivers the letter to the wrong mailbox, to which Ms. Taylor agreed.

Mr. Harrison explained, we're looking at the tax map and going off of all adjacent and adjoining property owners whether that's split by a road. He said that is where we're mailing these out to.

Mr. Merritt asked, there is no phone call or door knocking, to which Ms. Taylor responded, no. She explained, we post the property of course, and a lot of times the phone calls generated to our office are with the response to the posting of the property more than anything. Mr. Merritt clarified, they see the sign, to which Ms. Taylor responded, yes.

Mr. Benson asked, don't you need the specific language to input in order to do the motion to amend, to which Mr. Ennis responded, I was looking to have Mr. Illuminati do that. Mr. Benson said I understand that, but in fairness to Mr. Illuminati, I don't know that he has that. He then asked, if you could maybe move the vote on this until later in the meeting, could he come up with the language, or would it be better to come back at the next meeting and do it, to which Mr. Illuminati responded, I think we can put that together. He then suggested, if this was tabled to right before Public Comments, we should be able to put something together with the specific section and subsection verbiage.

There being no further discussion, on motion by Mr. Winn and seconded by Mr. Ennis, Legislative Bill No. 2026-02 was unanimously tabled to later in the meeting.

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**Laura Hurley, Council Administrator**

**Public Hearing: Resolution No. 50-2026** – to authorize the County Executive to execute a multiyear corporate hangar lease with Azure Flight Support SBY, LLC at the Salisbury-Ocean City Wicomico Regional Airport.

Mrs. Hurley said a Public Hearing notice was published on the County's website and in the local newspaper.

Mrs. Hurley explained, this request is to lease hangar #28 at the Salisbury Airport consisting of 23,780 square feet. She said the term will be for ten years commencing on March 1 and ending on February 28, 2038 with the option to renew for two additional five-year terms. She said the rent during the initial ten-year term will be \$3,200 per month and the renewal terms will be adjusted by the CPI for all urban consumers.

Mrs. Hurley said there is an updated contract that is attached to the lease that is on the Council table, and we have Mr. Tony Rudy, Director of Aviation, here to go over those changes.

Mr. Merritt opened the Public Hearing. There were no public comments. Mr. Merritt closed the Public Hearing.

Mr. Ennis made a motion to postpone the action on this proposal to April 7. He explained, the reason being that we don't have a full Council here today. He said additionally, President Cannon sits on the Airport Commission and I would rather wait until he is available for his input and insight.

Mr. Holloway said, if we're making a motion to postpone this, why aren't we making a motion to postpone everything today just because the Council President isn't here, to which Mr. Merritt responded, because he sits on the Airport Commission too.

There was no second to Mr. Ennis' motion to postpone.

Mr. Tony Rudy, Director of Aviation, came before Council.

Mr. Winn asked Mr. Rudy to explain everything he would like to amend, to which Mr. Rudy responded, the contract was included with your briefing package, and basically, we're asking Council to approve the County Executive signing the lease agreement. He said once the lease agreement is signed, because this went through a proposal process through County Purchasing, County Purchasing will issue the contract after the lease agreement is signed. He said it was a boilerplate document and there were a couple items in there that we have removed, so that's why it was amended. He explained, basically, one item stated that the County would pay for services, such as a normal bidding document would have that payment option, so we withdrew that language.

Mrs. Hurley said just for clarification, if you agree to the changes Mr. Rudy was referencing on that boilerplate contract, you would need a motion to amend. She said I believe it was item numbers 2 and 7 that were being removed from that contract, so if you guys agree to that, then you would need that motion to amend.

Mr. Winn asked, is it the whole section for 2 and 7, to which Mrs. Hurley responded, it's on the contract that's attached to the lease where you will see a bunch of numbers. Mr. Winn said I see 7.1, 7.2, 7.3. He then asked, is it "The County will pay the successful vendor in the manner and at such times as set forth in the bid documents?" He said this paper I have stops at 6, to which Mrs. Hurley responded, it's the one in the brief book. Mr. Winn said then it's also number 2, which would be "Successful vendor will furnish all of the materials, supplies, tools, equipment, labor, and other services necessary for the work described herein." He clarified, you want 2 and 7 removed, to which Mr. Rudy responded, that is correct.

Mr. Merritt clarified, this contract has actually already started, hasn't it, on March 1, to which Mr. Rudy responded, that is correct.

On motion by Mr. Hastings and seconded by Mr. Ennis, Resolution No. 50-2026 was unanimously amended to remove sections 2 and 7 from the contract.

There being no further discussion, on motion by Mr. Winn and seconded by Mr. Hastings, Resolution No. 50-2026 was unanimously approved as amended.

**Resolution No. 51-2026 (SM)** – Authorizing Clarke Mosquito Control Products, Inc. as the sole source vendor for the Clarke Cougar Sprayer to be utilized by the Wicomico County Public Works Department.

Mrs. Hurley explained, this Resolution does require a supermajority vote in favor in order for it to pass.

Mr. Winn asked, would the supermajority be everyone in this room, or a supermajority of the people in this room, to which Mrs. Hurley responded, it's a majority of the Councilmembers present. Mr. Merritt clarified, so all five of us, to which Mrs. Hurley responded, yes.

Ms. Amy Kernodle, Purchasing Agent; Mr. Conrad Jones, Entomologist, and Mr. Adam Corry, Acting Director of Public Works, came before Council.

Mr. Hastings said obviously, the public gets upset usually on specific things, one of those being any time there is a sole source vendor—the public usually gets upset and lets us know. He said another one of those things is if there is a situation where there could be something that is seemingly detrimental to the public like chemicals. He said I had a conversation this morning about more folks who are upset about potential chemicals being sprayed and understanding that process. He said Conrad, I thank you very much for your hard work over the years on finding that middle ground to make sure you're doing it right and fitting with the State-approved process and chemicals, etc. He said of course, I actually acknowledge the endometriosis situation we just had earlier that has often been pointed back to chemicals. He clarified, I know we are here today specifically, I want to acknowledge this and emphasis this, for the sprayer itself, not the chemicals themselves, and furthermore, I know you all try to go by a prescribed process and specific chemicals are only approved, but we are here specifically for the sprayer itself, not anything else. He said I just wanted to make sure that was acknowledged, and if you want to say anything more on that, feel free to, but I wanted to underscore that part.

Mr. Jones said the good thing about the sprayer is that it is a ULV sprayer—ultralow volume. He said we actually only spray a quarter teaspoon, basically, of active ingredient pesticide per acre, so it's a very, very low amount of pesticide that actually goes into the environment. He said the rest of that is mineral oil. He said it doesn't take very much to kill a mosquito, and they are very susceptible to the chemical permethrin itself, so we can use a very low amount of pesticide to actually control mosquitos.

Mr. Corry said I have no further comment on that other than we have one of the best in the business here and we're very fortunate to have that in Wicomico County. He said we're looking at the needs of taking care of a vector—that's what mosquitos are. He said we all know the history of what they've done to the world and we want to make sure we're having the appropriate controls, and I think this sole source specifically, and to Mr. Hastings' point, is about the machine that helps us with the process so we can go with the ultralow volume that makes a big difference when it comes to our impacts not on just the bugs that we want to kill, but ensures that we're not making those impacts to the public as well.

Mr. Merritt asked, when does the season start, to which Mr. Jones responded, we'll have drivers come on May 1 and then we monitor the population throughout the season. He said we put out light traps around the County. He said the drivers also, when they go out to survey a community, will do landing rate counts, and if they get a count of two mosquitos landing on them within three minutes, then they'll spray the neighborhood. He said if not, then they will move onto the next community to check.

Mr. Merritt asked, how late do they go in the season, to which Mr. Jones responded, usually it ends around the first week of October when nighttime temperatures start dropping into the 50s. He said after that point, the mosquitos pretty much become inactive. Mr. Merritt said it's a busy season. Mr. Jones said if we get enough rain in the spring, usually the first mosquito is aedes canadensis, which is a woodland pool mosquito. He said with the flooded woodlands we get around the County, it can be quite intense come spring.

Mr. Hastings said I always have people reach out to me who hike through Pemberton Park and say look at all the bat houses that were put up 20-some years ago and that natural defense piece. He said I don't know how many times I've had someone try to talk to me about this, but the more we can continue in that biodefense side of things, the natural way to do it.

Mr. Jones responded, unfortunately, bats really don't eat a whole lot of mosquitos. Mr. Hastings said we don't have any bats anymore, do we. Mr. Jones said there was a study done at some point where someone was checking the echolocation of bats and they put them in a large room with a bunch of mosquitos. He said at the end of the experiment, they found out how many mosquitos were gone and from that they extrapolated that bats will consume 1,000 mosquitos a night, but that was because it was the only thing they had to eat. He said out in the environment, most of them feed on beetles and moths and that sort of stuff, so something a little larger than just mosquitos. He clarified, it is part of their diet, but it's a very small part of their diet.

Mr. Corry said something that is also very important for the public to understand just generally is that a lot of people say their backyard is full of mosquitos and they don't know where they're coming from and there are no wetlands nearby. He said mosquitos can travel a long distance, but oftentimes, kids toys, such as a truck that has water in the back, or gutters if they're not cleaned out and properly flowing, mosquitos will breed in very, very little amounts of water. Mr. Jones added, pools and birdbaths are a big thing. Mr. Corry said turn those things upside down and get the water out of there and dump it out.

There being no further discussion, on motion by Mr. Ennis and seconded by Mr. Winn, Resolution No. 51-2026 (SM) was unanimously approved.

**Submission of Appointment to the Commission for Women:** Mr. Steven Lakin, Deputy Director of Administration, came before Council and said the County Executive recommends the appointment of Bernadette C. Cannady to the Commission for Women, and I am formally submitting her credentials for your consideration. He explained, the Commission is dedicated to enriching the lives of women and families by focusing on issues of importance and concern including education, economic opportunities, healthcare, social issues, and legislation.

**Resolution No. 52-2026** – Confirming the appointment of Bernadette C. Cannady as a member of the Commission for Women.

There being no discussion, on motion by Mr. Winn and seconded by Mr. Ennis, Resolution No. 52-2026 was unanimously approved.

**Submission of Appointment to School Building Commission:** Mr. Lakin said the County Executive recommends the appointment of Jared A. Shelton as a member of the School Building Commission, and I'm formally submitting his credentials for your consideration. He said the Commission assists the County School Board in planning, building, construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance projects as required.

**Resolution No. 53-2026** – Confirming the appointment of Jared A. Shelton as a member of the School Building Commission.

There being no discussion, on motion by Mr. Ennis and seconded by Mr. Winn, Resolution No. 53-2026 was unanimously approved.

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**Legislative Bill No. 2026-02** – An ACT to amend Chapter 125 of the Wicomico County Code titled "Critical Area Resource Protection" by repealing all articles and sections therein and adopting 22 new articles consisting of 99 new sections.

On motion by Mr. Winn and seconded by Mr. Holloway, Legislative Bill No. 2026-02 was unanimously taken from the table.

Ms. Tracey Taylor, Director of Planning and Zoning; Mr. Colin Harrison, Environmental Planner, and Mr. Andrew Illuminati, Esq. came before Council.

Mr. Illuminati said we're looking at Chapter 125, Section 55, Subsection A and renumbering the current 6 and 7 to become 7 and 8 respectively, and to insert as number 6 the following language:

*Adjacent and adjoining property owners will be notified by mail of an application for an administrative variance as part of the Planning Director decision. Following a decision by the Planning Director, the adjacent and adjoining property owners will be notified by mail of the decision as to the administrative variance.*

Mr. Illuminati said that is the language and what would be the request for the motion, and then by moving the former 6 to becoming 7, it then logically follows that 7 will now say:

*Decisions on administrative variances by the Planning Director may be appealed within 30 days to the Board of Appeals.*

Mr. Illuminati said 8 will state:

*Administrative variances granted for the expansion of existing structures are intended to be construed as cumulative for each structure.*

Mr. Illuminati said that is the new language that would be the recommendation for the motion to amend the current 6 and 7 to become 7 and 8, and to insert what I read as 6, and we can insert that into the Bill if approved.

On motion by Mr. Ennis and seconded by Mr. Holloway, Chapter 125, Section 55, Subsection A of Legislative Bill No. 2026-02 was unanimously amended to insert language that was just submitted by Mr.

Illuminati regarding public notification and to further change the existing application process number 6 to number 7, and number 7 to number 8.

There being no further discussion, on motion by Mr. Ennis, seconded by Mr. Hastings, and by roll call vote, Mr. Holloway, aye; Mr. Hastings, aye; Mr. Winn, aye; Mr. Ennis, aye, and Mr. Merritt, aye, Legislative Bill No. 2026-02 was unanimously approved as amended.

**Public Comments:**

There were none.

**Council Comments:**

Mr. Winn said wintertime is almost done. He said I was in a t-shirt the other day and then I was in a jacket and hoodie the next day. He said thank God we have that service where we can take our brush to the landfill because I think I've done at least 12 loads with my truck and trailer, so it's been a very busy couple of weeks for me on that front. He said we're approaching springtime, so I hope to see everybody in t-shirts and shorts soon.

Mr. Holloway said our illustrious Governor just declared Friday Meat Out Day, Meat Free Day, or whatever it's called. He said I see it's been getting some press. He said I'm going to be sure and get a great big tub of chicken on Friday and I think it's a shame that he's put it on the farming industry like he's done. He said it sure doesn't show any support.

**Council Vice President Comments:**

Mr. Merritt said I just want to recognize again the achievements of Coach Butch Waller. He said to do anything for 60 years is quite an accomplishment, and to think about the number of lives he's touched—both the kids, the parents, his fellow teachers, fellow coaches—what an amazing accomplishment.

Mr. Merritt said this past Saturday I had the opportunity to attend the Sharptown Fire Department 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary awards banquet and again, things that have stood the test of time, if you can think back what was going on 100 years ago and how far we've gone as a society and a community. He said just to hear the people receive their years of service awards, there was one lady who served in the ladies auxiliary for 65 years, so she started serving when I was 2. He said that's just amazing. He said I think at the end, after President Cannon got done handing out all the years of service awards, the combined total was 395 years in one fire company. He said that is just amazing. He said next month is Hebron Fire Company's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, so again, what a great achievement. He said all of our fire companies in the County do such great work for everybody.

Mr. Merritt said James brought up the brush situation at the landfill and I know the Parsonsburg location had to be closed a couple times due to being full. He said this is a shout out to those guys over at the Brick Kiln Road location trying to keep up with it. He said many times I was over there and the line was down the road and around the corner with trucks loaded up with sticks and branches and whatnot. He said the guys were just going as hard and as fast as they could, and we appreciate everything they do. He said it's a lot of work and that was a heck of a storm.


There being no further business, on motion by Mr. Winn, seconded by Mr. Ennis, and unanimously approved, the Legislative Session was adjourned at 11:09 a.m. to go into Open Work Sessions.

absent  
John T. Cannon, President, At-Large

  
Jeff Merritt, Vice President, District 2

  
James Winn, At-Large

absent  
Shanie P. Shields, District 1

  
David Ennis, District 3

  
Josh Hastings, District 4

  
Joe Holloway, District 5

  
Laura Hurley, Council Administrator