

How much government does \$500,000 buy?



Last week was a bad week for democracy in Anne Arundel County. But the developers got a bargain.

The citizens of AACo want to ban money from developers with business before the County.

More than 100 people spoke up -- ALL in favor -- in emails, testimony, and our Rally for Our Voice at People's Park. (Watch the Rally video [here](#).) Nary a nay to be heard, except by 5 council members voting down the clearest call for clean and transparent government.

They did it stealthily, at the bill's first hearing to cut off testimony, and silently, without a word of objection or explanation. Two yeahs, five nays was all it took. It was over in less than a minute.

But the blowback has only just begun:

Our GAN op ed appeared in the Capital last Thursday: <https://www.capitalgazette.com/2026/04/23/matt-minahan-developers-bill/>

The next day, a [Capital investigation](#) revealed that members of the County Council, including two who are running for County Executive, have accepted more than half a million dollars from the very development interests they should be regulating:

"Anne Arundel County Council members voted Monday to kill a bill that would have barred developers with pending projects from contributing to their campaigns—after already accepting more than half a million dollars from developers since 2019", according to a review of campaign finance records by theCapitalGazette. The 5-2 vote comes on the heels of the council advancing a string of pro-growth measures, including discounted land sales and zoning changes."

"It leaves intact a system in which council members can accept campaign money from developers, vote on legislation affecting those contributors, and not be required to disclose those contributions before casting those votes. That arrangement has fueled growing frustration from residents who say public land-use decisions are being shaped by political money rather than community concerns."

That same day the Capital ran an editorial on the same topic: ""Many residents are understandably wary of the influence deep-pocketed developers may wield when major land-use decisions are on the table, decisions that can generate significant profit for a few while reshaping entire communities for many.""

By any measure, \$500k is a lot of money. And it appears to have worked.

And sadly, this huge step backward comes just two years after an important step forward, when the council voted to establish a public campaign finance fund, allowing candidates who participate to raise only small amounts (up to \$250 each) from only small donors in order to receive matching funds from the county. No money from developers or real estate interests or unions or PACs. James Kitchin is running for County Executive using the system. We understand that Gavin Buckley, running for County Council from District 6 has applied to use the system. And, we know it worked well enough to get Larry Hogan elected to his first term as governor.

We have since heard some hemming and harrumphing from the County Council justifying their votes against the bill We'll address that in our next newsletter.



Third Annual Community Association Summit May 2nd

We are excited again this year to co-sponsor the 3rd Community Association Summit, along with the Community Engagement and Constituent Service office. We've had great feedback on the first two, and this one promises to be even better. It is designed to provide help, support and just-in-time information for leaders of HOAs and community associations dealing with compliance issues, board management challenges, stormwater management, interfacing with the various departments in county government, and compliance with the latest requirements from the state.

We have a terrific lineup of speakers and activities, including an end-of-the-day tour of some stormwater projects similar to those in many HOAs.

Visit <https://www.aacounty.org/ca-summit> to see the full agenda and to register.

Broadneck Council of Communities meetings

Meet County Candidates and Hear Summer Traffic Management Plans

Dates: April 30th and May 14th at 7pm

Location: Cape St Claire Clubhouse, located in the heart of Cape St. Claire

Address: 1223 River Bay Road, Annapolis, MD 21409

Parking: Free parking is available

April 30th Meeting: 16 Confirmed Candidates

AACO State's Attorney - Candidates Grammas & Colt Leitess are confirmed.

AACO Sheriff - Candidates Fredericks & Sesker are confirmed.

Clerk of the Court - Candidates Fowler

Register of Wills - Candidates Buiniskis & Jackson are confirmed.

Circuit Court of Judges - Candidates Nelson, Stevenson & Sydney

Judges of the Orphan Court - Candidates Carr-York, Knapp, O'Connell, Rzepkowski, Scott

Delegate 30A - Candidate O'Neal confirmed

May 14th Meeting: 12 Confirmed Candidates

State Senator District 30 - Candidates Haire & Henson

State Senator District 33 - Candidates Gile

Delegates Districts 30A - Candidates Behler & Jones

Delegates 33C - Candidates Bagnall

County Executive - Candidates Kitchin, Nembhard, Pickard, & Smith

County Council District 5 - Candidates Fielder & Ogilvie

YOUR VOICE MATTERS!

Every 5 years, the State of Maryland requires Recreation and Parks to submit a Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP). The foundation of the LPPRP is public feedback and serves as our roadmap for developing parks, improving recreation facilities and services, and advancing land preservation efforts in the county. By participating in the LPPRP 2027 survey, you ensure the recreation and parks system reflects your needs and priorities for the future.

To take the survey, please visit aarecparks.org/lpprpsurvey

Next GAN Board meeting is May 27, All members are welcome to observe and comment. See calendar for link.

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