



GCAAR

GREATER CAPITAL AREA ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

Legislative Update

Thursday, July 2, 2009

GCAAR ON THE FRONT LINES

Meeting with Montgomery County Executive, Ike Leggett

GCAAR's Public Policy Committee has been holding meet-and-greet sessions with our local area government leaders. In April, GCAAR hosted Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett who spoke with members of the Public Policy committee, RPAC committee and the Board of Directors. Leggett spoke about the importance of the real estate market and how it impacts the County's fiscal challenges. Recordation and transfer taxes as well as property taxes play a significant role in bringing in revenue to the County coffers. Therefore, he was very interested in finding ways locally to help get the market moving again and increasing the sales of homes.

Leggett also specifically addressed the County's budget as he presented it to the County Council, which then held hearings and worksessions throughout April and May before voting on a final budget on May 21. The Council ultimately **approved a \$3.73 billion Operating Budget for FY 2010, which starts on July 1.**

Meeting with Economic Development Director, Steve Silverman

In June, GCAAR hosted the County's newly appointed Director of Economic Development, Steve Silverman. Silverman spoke about his visions for the County over the next several years specifically highlighting residential and mixed-use real estate projects in the Wheaton and White Flint areas. He also talked about how the County Executive and he would be hosting small business roundtable discussions and going out into the business community to talk about what the county can be doing better for the business community as a whole and for their individual companies.

Additionally, Silverman talked about the cooperation amongst agencies with similar policy issues. Given that Economic Development and the Department of Housing and Community Affairs can sometimes go hand in hand, he discussed the formation of a working group on workforce housing and mixed-use development projects. Silverman's hope is that the working group will take a look at the current models in place for workforce and moderately priced housing programs that may not be working anymore. Single family large lot properties are no longer the future of County growth, but instead going vertical in mixed-use plans with a concentration of condos, townhomes and rental apartment projects.

Finally, Silverman addressed questions and concerns as they relate to the current economic climate. He told GCAAR members that now may be a good time to put alternative revenue sources on the table for discussion, in order to take the focus away from being primarily on the real estate market. Given that Montgomery County has one of the highest recordation and transfer taxes in the region, this would be a good time to consider ways to ease that burden and provide incentives locally for new and potential homebuyers.

For more information about GCAAR on the Front Lines, please contact Meredith R. Weisel, Esq., VP of Public Policy & Legal Counsel at mweisel@gcaar.com or 301-590-8790.

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