

Debra L. Jones, Port Tobacco, MD

Public Comments Session Tues, 1/28/25

Good evening commissioners.

My name is Debra Jones and I live in Port Tobacco.

I want to share some thoughts tonight regarding the Town Hall meeting on November 19. It was great to have all 5 of you there and I found it very interesting to hear both community concerns and your feedback.

But my question was not answered by most of you.

The question was:

What actions can be taken to enable the county's infrastructure – both hard infrastructure like roads, and soft infrastructure like emergency services – to catch up with residential development and to keep pace going forward?

Here are highlights of the answers you gave:

Commissioner Bowling:

Emphasized the proposed Adequate Public Safety Ordinance (APSO), which is consistent with the Sheriff's requests to ensure that the number of deputies increases in conjunction with residential growth. A direct answer to the question.

Commissioner Stewart:

You gave a broad statement it comes down to planning, policy, and having more balanced growth with a greater emphasis on commercial. All true.

Then you gave I believe three examples of proposals before the board that you oppose because they would facilitate MORE residential growth. (One of those is the proposed change to the Mixed Use overlay that would effectively change it to all residential.) So that didn't directly speak to infrastructure, but I clearly got your point that we should START by keeping the situation from getting worse, not digging the hole any deeper.

Next Commissioner Collins said:

Infrastructure "...will arguably be the most important issue that confronts our county." I am with you on that one.

But then you followed with, "The challenge is, how do we address the issues of infrastructure and the concerns raised by our residents?" *That's the question I was asking you, and you just repeated it back to me without answering it.*

Then Commissioner Patterson responded, saying:

"There's only certain things we can do..." *But then you didn't say what any of those things are.*

Then you added "...The residential growth, it is kind of scary...and the infrastructure I don't think is keeping up." I

agree about infrastructure not keeping up; *that's why I asked you the question, which you didn't answer.*

Finally Commissioner Coates responded, saying:

“How do we attract commercial?...Infrastructure is very important to a commercial entity.”

Absolutely! That's ONE reason I asked about infrastructure, but *you also didn't answer the question.*

But then something very interesting you said was,

“We don't have any future permits.” and

“I don't think anyone knows that we really don't...all the permits for building – it's all been issued”

Charles County is done issuing building permits? Seriously?

So I didn't get an answer from the majority of my Commissioners for something that is “arguably the most important issue that confronts our county.”

And that's frightening. I will continue to inquire about this subject, and I would suggest that more of my fellow residents do the same.

Thank you.