

MPCA Regional Workshop: Elkton, MD

Wednesday November 12, 2025

Discussion Notes

Discussion Led by Bill Butts, MPCA Vice President



Bill Butts: What issues are of particular concern in this area/region of the state?

Steve O'Connor: To get things started, there is an example of a recent commission meeting in Cecil County where a mining application was raised. The issue was that it became quite contentious even with police present. So, how in such circumstances does one keep a level of decorum?

MPCA Representative Insights

- Might sound simple but first you can use your gavel.
- You can remind attendees that decorum must be maintained and those who don't will be asked to leave.
- You can't clear the room and continue the meeting, however, without violating the Open Meeting Act.
- If it becomes necessary to clear the room, the meeting will have to be rescheduled.
- If you don't already have a Code of Conduct on file (which governs everything about how you run your meetings), you need to create one and include guidelines for participants as well as commission members.
- Schedule special listening ONLY sessions for especially contentious subjects/projects, so everyone has a chance to feel heard (whether or not it affects the outcome)
- If meeting is anticipated to attract an especially large crowd, consider moving it to a larger venue so the room isn't too crowded – may help to diffuse some tensions.
- It is important to conduct your hearings in a predictable and consistent manner.

Another Attendee: On a different topic, what can commissions do about school overcrowding when it comes to new development?

- Cecil County adopted [Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance](#) (APFO) legislation but has not yet adopted an APFO.

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- If your jurisdiction doesn't have an APFO, it is up to the legislature to develop/pass one (with public input) or create development fees to offset the costs of new schools, community facilities, fire and police services, water, sewer, and/or other infrastructure needs that will be created by their project.
- Word of caution, however: there can be unintended consequences, particularly when it comes to imposing fees as they can be viewed as a deterrent to developers when in fact you may want or need the development.
- APFOs need to be publicly available and communicated.
- MDP will be publishing an APFO webpage with more resources soon, as well as hosting a webinar on APFOs on Monday, Dec 15. You can learn more about the [webinar and register here.](#)

Another Attendee: Elkton is having trouble compelling developers to pay for infrastructure.

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- One option is [impact fees](#), which can be enacted at a county or municipal level. But a word of caution for these as well, because if they are not targeted or carefully applied, they can dissuade or push away desired development.
- See impact fees resource guide transmitted with these summary notes.
- Other options are Developer Rights and Responsibilities Agreements (DRRAs) and for municipalities, Annexation Agreements.
 - DRRAs are legal contracts between a developer and a local government which cement development regulations for an agreed upon amount of time, which provides certainty to the developer. In return, the developer is obligated to meet other agreed upon requirements of the DRRA, which may include the provision of infrastructure, open space or public facilities desired by the jurisdiction.
 - DRRAs are addressed in [Module 3](#) of MDP's Planning Commissioner Training Course
 - Example MD DRRA Codes
 - [Frederick County](#)
 - [Town of Easton](#)
 - Annexation agreements are contracts made between a municipality and the owner/developer of a land to be annexed. Similar to a DRRA, it is a legal document laying out the benefits to and responsibilities of the developer, which may include the provision of infrastructure, open space, or public facilities.

- Annexation agreements are addressed on [page 9 of the Maryland Municipal League Annexation Handbook](#).
- [Town of New Market, MD Example Annexation Agreement](#)