



A Pet Person
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State Delegate Headlines City Breakfast

By Sonya Burke

Maryland State Delegate Luiz Simmons of District 17 was the keynote speaker at the Gaithersburg Economic and Business Development Committee's appreciation breakfast on Jan. 6 at the Kentlands Mansion.

Simmons' remarks, just a few days before the Maryland General Assembly convened in Annapolis, focused on two issues: the lack of the business community's input in the lawmakers' work and the imminence of raising the gas tax.

Although it remains unclear if the governor will propose an increase in the gas tax this year, Simmons said the funds are needed for roads, infrastructure and mass transit.

"I personally think a rise in the gas tax is necessary," Simmons said.

Still, he said he will only support an increase in the gas tax if there is a guarantee that the funds collected will be spent only on transportation needs such as roads and bridge repairs and mass transit.

In the past, according to Simmons, the state's transportation trust fund has been used to

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Photo | Phil Fabrizio

A "Stunning" Sunrise

The Jan. 6 morning sunrise over these Kentlands homes was a beautiful sight to behold. Some early morning commuters made note of the majestic morning sky on their Facebook pages and other Internet sites. One Lakelands mom said her entire car went silent when she pulled onto Great Seneca Highway and everyone gazed upwards to the "stunning" view.

Ross Resigns from KDP's Executive Board

By Sonya Burke

The Kentlands Downtown Partnership (KDP) announced on Jan. 10 that founder Paula Ross has stepped down from her position as vice president of the executive board.

Previously, Ross served as president of the board and most recently she ran, unsuccessfully, for a seat on the Gaithersburg City Council.

According to her resignation letter dated Dec. 20, she formally stepped down from the board on Dec. 31 following her experiences on the campaign trail.

"The mud that was slung at me, full of lies and innuendo, by community members and the incumbents, particularly during the final week before the election, puts me in a position of wanting to fight a different fight," Ross said in a letter to the KDP's board of directors.

She said she has not heard one apology from city officials.

"Also, none of them has disavowed their shameful tactics or those of their supporters, and so I do not desire to work in partnership with them through the KDP any longer,"

■ **RESIGNATION** Continued on page 10



Photo | Phil Fabrizio

Lakelands resident Paula Ross ran unsuccessfully for City Council last November.

Record Remains Open on APFO Amendments

City Leaders Call for Stakeholders Meeting

By Karen O'Keefe

At a joint public hearing Jan. 3, the Gaithersburg City Council and the Gaithersburg Planning Commission voted unanimously to hold open the hearing record on two proposed amendments to the "adequacy of school capacity" section of the city's Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO).

The Planning Commission hearing record on the amendments will remain open until Jan. 25 with anticipated recommendation on Feb. 1. The Mayor and City Council will hold the record open until Feb. 2 with anticipated policy discussion on Feb. 21.

Currently plans for residential development (excepting age-re-

stricted development) cannot be approved in the city if the proposed development is within the attendance area of a public school forecasted to have enrollment exceeding 110 percent of MCPS program capacity two years in the future. However, current law permits waiving the 110 percent limit and substituting 120 percent if three conditions are met.

The proposed amendments, sponsored by Council member Jud Ashman, loosen this school enrollment test on "a case-by-case basis," allowing the 120 percent exception if just two conditions are met.

Because several schools are over capacity in the city today, more than half of Gaithersburg is in moratorium for residential

■ **APFO** Continued on page 8

Police Arrest Suspect in Kentlands

By Sonya Burke

A Germantown man was arrested on Jan. 10 and charged with breaking into cars in the Kentlands community. Another suspect remains at large.

Gaithersburg Police Officer

Dan Lane said Antawn Delanta Diggs (25) of Gunners Branch Road in Germantown was apprehended without incident, but "the other suspect fled on foot."

According to Lane, at 12:43 a.m. on Jan. 10, police received

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A Badge of Bravery

By Sonya Burke

Montgomery County Police Officer Edward E. Paden Jr. received the Congressional Badge of Bravery Award on Jan. 10 for his efforts to ensure the safety of visitors and employees at the Discovery Channel Headquarters in Silver Spring when a suicide bomber entered the building back in September 2010.

U.S. Senator Ben Cardin, U.S. Congressman Chris Van Hollen and Maryland U.S. Attorney Rod Rosenstein helped present the award at the Public

Safety Training Academy in Rockville.

The award was created by Congress in 2008 to honor local, state and federal law enforcement officers who have distinguished themselves for exceptional acts of bravery in the line of duty. This is the first year the badge has been awarded. Paden joins 20 other law enforcement officers from across the nation who received the honor.

Also at the ceremony: Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett, Montgomery County Police Chief Thomas Manger and County Council member Phil Andrews.



Photo | Phil Fabrizio

Officer Edward Paden Jr. is one of the first officers in the country to receive the Congressional Badge of Bravery. He is seen here with Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett, U.S. Senator Ben Cardin and Congressman Chris Van Hollen.

ARREST

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a call from residents in the 300 block of Little Quarry Road about two suspects attempting to gain entry in various vehicles that were left unlocked.

Both city of Gaithersburg and Montgomery County police responded,

Lane said.

“One suspect was apprehended without incident, and the other suspect fled on foot,” said Lane. “At this time I am unable to advise the status of the other suspect and/or if the suspect apprehended is involved in other crimes.”

At press time, Lane said there was no further information available.

POLICE BEAT

COMPILED BY SONYA BURKE

Crime Stats Trend Downward

The city of Gaithersburg announced that crime is down 8.6 percent for the third quarter of 2011 compared to the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) statistics for the third quarter of 2010:

Part I Crime **decreased by 3.2 percent** (from 472 to 457).

Part II Crime **decreased by 11.1 percent** (from 1,022 to 909).

Overall, Total Crime (Part I and Part II totals) **decreased by 8.6 percent.**

- **Homicide:** No change (from 1 to 1)
- **Rape:** 40.0% decrease (from 5 to 3)
- **Robbery:** 26.7% decrease (from 15 to 11)
- **Aggravated Assault:** 9.1% decrease (from 22 to 20)
- **Burglary:** 8.2% increase (from 49 to 53)
- **Larceny:** 4.7% decrease (from 360 to 343)
- **Auto Theft:** 30.0% increase (from 20 to 26)

An analysis of Part I Offense data shows that there was an increase this quarter (as compared to the same quarter in 2010) in burglaries and auto thefts. There was a decrease in rapes, robberies, aggravated assaults and larcenies.

An analysis of the data between the second quarter of 2011 and the third quarter of 2011 shows an overall **decrease in crime of 2.4 percent.** Part I Offenses increased

by 0.4 percent (from 455 to 457) with the following categories showing increases — 200.0 percent increase in rapes (from 1 to 3), 25.0 percent increase in aggravated assaults (from 16 to 20), 8.2 percent increase in burglaries (from 49 to 53) and 13.0 percent increase in auto thefts (from 23 to 26). Part II Offenses decreased by 3.7 percent (from 944 to 909).

Part II Crimes are defined as minor assaults, arson, forgery-counterfeiting, bad checks, embezzlement, stolen property, vandalism, weapons offenses, prostitution, sex offenses, controlled dangerous substance (CDS) violations, gambling, family offenses, juvenile offenses, liquor law violations, disorderly conduct, suicide and non-traffic offenses.

In addition, there has been an **8.2 percent decrease** in crime within the city of Gaithersburg for January — September 2011, as compared to the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) statistics for January — September 2010.

Stop For Pedestrians

Montgomery County police have relocated a flashing mobile traffic sign to Kentlands Boulevard in order to warn motorists to yield for pedestrians in the approaching crosswalk.

The sign will be up for at least another week and followed safety complaints, according to a district commander.

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Movie night?

Check out "Mike at the Movies" for his latest reviews before the show.

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