

Good evening

I was inspired to come here after hearing public comment about holding property taxes at last year's rates. I previously wrote to you in support of this proposal. I understand that the County will collect more taxes as a result, and I support the priorities governing how the money will be spent.

But I'm here to respond to the comments of one of the public speakers at your hearing – Bob Lawrence. Now, I'm not responding to Bob Lawrence the retiree on a fixed income. I have three sets of parents in the same situation and I completely understand his concerns. No, I'm here to respond to Bob Lawrence, the former chairman of the Frederick County Planning Commission. To that Bob Lawrence and his comments here, I have one thing to say – You reap what you sow.

You see that Bob Lawrence, sitting there on the dais as Chairman of the Planning Commission during the last BoCC, green-lighted nearly every single residential zoning approval pushed through by Blaine Young. He was there to launch the biggest single period of residential zoning approvals this County has probably ever seen. What's worse, he even took campaign donations from the same developers whose applications he was overseeing. During his unsuccessful bid for the Council seat that Councilwoman Fitzwater now holds, about 60% of Bob Lawrence's donations came from development interests, including from Stanley Enterprises amid several MTC applications.

By my count, nearly 15,000 new homes were approved during Bob Lawrence's tenure. That's about 150,000 new car trips and 7 - 8 thousand new students in our schools. So I ask Bob where did he think all the money would come from to provide essential services and infrastructure to all those new residents? You won't get enough money from the developers for it – and every time you try, you fight tooth and nail for a marginal increase. Some would argue that increasing the tax base with all those new residents will pay for all the additional services,

roads and schools. But that just isn't true. Studies show that for every additional dollar in tax revenue from residential growth, you have to spend \$1.14 in services – you're always behind the curve, you're always playing catch up. What's worse, that calculation doesn't even include major capital projects like rebuilding MD 75 to the tune of \$500 million.

Now, if you don't believe me – just look around. The County continues to grow and add homes, new people continue to move here. The County budget has never been larger and we're collecting more and more taxes. Yet, our schools are still over-crowded, our roads increasingly congested, and every budget cycle we hear again and again that we don't have enough firemen, sheriff's officers, and other emergency services personnel. We're behind the curve. As more and more of the developments that Bob Lawrence approved continue to be built and sold, the County will continue to collect more and more taxes in its efforts to keep up.

We told all this to Bob Lawrence during countless public hearings, but he turned a deaf ear to our fiscal concerns. So Bob Lawrence, I empathize with you and other retirees on fixed incomes trying to make ends meet. But if you're looking to blame someone when taxes go up, don't look up here at the dais – look in the mirror.