

Fisher Attempts to Derail New County Office Building

By Dick Myers
Editor

Calvert County Delegate Mark Fisher (R: 27-C) is attempting to jettison the Calvert County Commissioners' plan for a new county office building at the armory site in Prince Frederick. "I have some concerns about the cost of the project in light of the two recent tax increases," Fisher told The County Times.

So, instead of introducing a bill to increase the county's bond authority by \$67 million, as requested by the commissioners, Fisher has instead spearheaded the introduction of two bills, one of which would only increase the county's bonding authority by slightly more than \$7 million. The second bill breaks out the county's Enterprise Fund request of \$9.6 million.

Fisher notes that the county already has bond authority to cover the cost of the new animal shelter now under construction and the additional bonding authority would allow them to do the other projects in the Capital Improvement Plan, except the county office building.

The two bills were introduced by the Calvert County Delegation, which requires support of the majority of the three members, Fisher, Del. Jerry Clark (R: 29-C) and Del. Michael Jackson (D: 27-B).

Clark said the delegation never met and he is not sure how the bills got introduced.

Fisher said that Jackson went along with his requests.

Jackson appears to be having second thoughts about his initial support. He said that although he had some reservations about the county's request, he generally goes along with local prerogative and thus is leaning towards supporting some additions to the bond request.

Both bond bills (HB 1102 and 1354) are scheduled for a hearing before the House Appropriations Committee on March 6 at 1 p.m. Clark said he would introduce an amendment to add the monies requested by the county for the new office building.

If Jackson goes along with Clark, then Fisher would fail in his attempt. Both Clark and Fisher said they are reviewing how to proceed to achieve their goals.

Clark pointed out that the county has reduced its initial request for a bond authority increase by removing the North Beach Fire Boat, the Calvert Marine Museum Renovation and the Prince Frederick Recreation Center. They will use existing county funds for that \$2.6 million.

How the scenario plays out will become clearer with the hearings on the two bond bills and what amendments are introduced and by whom.

dickmyers@countytimes.net