

PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release
Statement of Maurice T. Lusby & Michael Phipps

In 2016, Commissioners Hejl, Hart and Slaughenhaupt over the opposition of Commissioners Weems and Nutter sought to remove Planning Commission Chairman Maurice T. Lusby and member Michael Phipps. In doing so they held a hearing before the County Commissioners and decided in a 3 to 2 vote that Mr. Lusby and Mr. Phipps should be removed.

Citing numerous mistakes on the part of Hejl, Hart and Slaughenhaupt, Mr. Lusby and Mr. Phipps appealed their removals to the Circuit Court. That matter was argued at the Circuit Court level and on December 21, 2017 that court ruled against them. As there are other matters in that Circuit Court case that are not yet decided, the appeal period from the December 21, 2017 decision has not yet begun to run.

Mr. Lusby and Mr. Phipps not only intend to appeal but have in fact filed with the Calvert County Circuit Court for permission to appeal early so that the matter may be decided as quickly as possible. While they have great respect for the Circuit Court judge who made that decision, they, along with their counsel, feel that it is not in conformance with the law or the facts and is in error. Any suggestion that the intermediate Circuit Court decision vindicates Commissioners Hejl, Hart and Slaughenhaupt is completely wrong and naive.

Maurice Lusby and Mike Phipps are confident that their appeal will be sustained at the appellate level and that the numerous mistakes made by Commissioners Hejl, Hart and Slaughenhaupt will be pointed out.

The most important reason for establishing independent Planning Commissions in Maryland was to keep politics and donor influence out of Planning and Zoning decisions. In Calvert County, Planning Commission members can act independently as "citizen planners" who listen to the issues, gather information and make well informed, rational decisions and forward sound recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners. Any attempt by a majority of members of a Board to intimidate, politically influence, interfere or threaten to remove a Planning Commissioner during that process while a Commissioner is serving a duly appointed term, should not and cannot be tolerated.

Mr. Lusby and Mr. Phipps would like to thank the community and the citizens of Calvert County for their overwhelming support during this process, and the encouragement they have received to proceed. Their goal is to demonstrate, for current and future Planning Commission members, not only in Calvert County, but across the State, that they may feel comfortable in rendering independent, well informed decisions and that they need not be intimidated by fear of reprisal.