Federal Hill Neighborhood Association

General Meeting Minutes

June 17, 2025

Date: June 17, 2025

Meeting called to order at 18:31

May meeting minutes adopted

Senate President Bill Ferguson:

- The 2025 session has been very challenging
- Some of the major topics covered in the session include:
- They are facing a very large budget deficit
- The rising costs of healthcare and increased childcare subsidies are large cost drivers
- The price of electricity will likely go up in the coming months due to increased demand and lowered supply
- The impact of the Trump administration

- They balanced the budget (largely through income tax, even though the majority of Marylanders will not be paying more)
- There is a new energy reform package, increasing sustainable energy production and in-state production
- They are doing as much as they can to protect Marylanders from actions by the new administration

- Suggestion from a resident to have a serious audit, especially for money going to education
- The school systems are audited every 3-5 years, and, of course, with such a large system, there is waste - but the vast majority of the money covers salaries for educational professionals
- They are trying to improve public schools, and so a lot of money goes to investing in good professionals

- Resident raised disappointment at the lack of focus on bettering quality of life, as well as the lack of youth development outside of school

- There has been progress with DJS, but it hasn't been made or executed as well as it should be
- The recent changes to DJS should hopefully allow for further progress, though - especially for better collaboration with others, and higher accountability for the department

Maryland House of Delegates Chair Luke Cliffinger:

- They passed legislation about retail theft, making it so that the value of stolen goods is combined across counties
- Made the possession of ghost guns a felony
- Passed legislation to better data collection about electronic home monitoring
- Signed an MOU with the liquor board regarding better enforcement
- Passed legislation bettering the expungement system
- Proposed a bill to allow those breast feeding to seek an exemption from jury duty
- Depending on age and the severity of crime, juveniles are charged as adults
- One of the big reasons for the juvenile issues is the lack of space within juvenile services, they tend to let them off or put them on electronic home monitoring when they cannot accommodate them

Public Safety:

- The sheriff's deployments end at the end of this month
- They are planning on trying to use the data collected from those deployments to advocate for better police presence
- BPD will be closing certain streets for the 4th of July
- One of the juveniles that was breaking car windows has been identified
- There are still a few ongoing robbery cases
- A bench warrant has recently been issued for a big package thief, but he has yet to be caught
- If you have cameras, please register them with the camera network
- If you have cameras, please also make sure they work

DHHS:

- School is out for the summer, but there is summer school
- Summer school is being run by the district, not the school
- The snack program for the athletic department is continuing, but they need more donations

- They are serving homeless students breakfast daily
- Two students have been deported this past spring

State's Attorney Ivan Bates:

- Recently increased the number of prosecutors available
- Their victim witness division has also grown and is starting to reach out earlier and maintain contact with victims and witness in order to avoid more cases being voided
- Their body worn camera division has received more funding, and now, instead of prosecutors having to sift through hours of footage, there are other people to write those motions for the prosecutors
- They have increased sentencing for repeat violent offenses
- The homicide rate has dropped substantially, it is on track to be the lowest it has been in years
- They put together a citation docket for quality-of-life crimes
- Despite that, the police have not really been writing citations
- As far as actions a resident can take, emails and letters can be sent to representatives and police asking to increase citations
- With the citation docket, they require a certain amount of community service, but they also have affiliated services to offer assistance (health, employment, education, etc.)
- If a juvenile is charged with a particular violent crime or possession of a gun, many of them are not held (only put on poorly monitored home detention,) but they are trying to change that

- Question about the relationship with the new DJS leadership
- They have not particularly built one yet, however, her job focuses on the best interest of the children, while his is primarily the best interest of citizens and residents. Despite that, he thinks they will be able to find a middle-ground eventually

- Question raised about what is being done to advocate for the mayor to adopt the citation docket system
- The mayor runs the police department, so while the state's attorney office has established the system and asked police to write citations, they cannot force anything - residents can request that city council members advocate for it more, though

- Question about what is being done to streamline victim support
- Their victim witness advocates are meant to reach out early in the case and stay in contact, if that hasn't happened in a case over the past two years, reach out to the office

- Question asked about whether there is any part of the citation system that would apply to homeless people and/or trespassers
- Legally, they could write a citation for loitering and/or trespassing, and from there they could encourage them to make use of the assistive services provided beyond the community service (mental health, employment, etc.)

- Question raised about the dirt bikes and how they are not being reprimanded adequately
- They can receive citations for it, and they are also establishing a program in the proper environment to invite youth to ride dirt bikes somewhere that isn't in the streets

- Question asked about whether residents can petition the office to investigate the legality of a dispensary
- Unsure about that, but do reach out to the office and they will look into it

Open Floor/Misc.:

- Thank you to Jen for taking the lead on the social for after the meeting!
- This is the last meeting before the association goes on break for the summer

Meeting adjourned at 19:59