



## Ward One Residents Association

### May 2025 In This Issue

**WORA Summer Pot  
Luck Social**

**Sunday, July 13  
4:00-7:00**

**Paca House Gardens,  
Prince George St.**

**President's Message**

**Alderman's Corner**

**USNA Commissioning  
Week**

**Historic Annapolis  
Update**

**Annapolitans for a  
Better Community**

#### **Membership**

Dues can be  
paid online at  
[wora.org/join-renew](http://wora.org/join-renew)  
or by mail to the  
address below.

**Ward One Residents  
Association**  
[worapresident@wardone.org](mailto:worapresident@wardone.org)  
P.O. Box 3592  
Annapolis, MD 21403  
[wardone.org](http://wardone.org)



### *President's Message*

Dear Members,

Now that spring has finally arrived, it is refreshing to see our neighbors outside enjoying the warmer weather and the wonderful May Day flowers, as the photos in this newsletter illustrate!

Your WORA Board has addressed several issues since the last newsletter.

Board members met with Karen Brown, the President and CEO of Historic Annapolis (HA) to discuss HA's concerns regarding the City Dock Project and HA's appeal of the Historic Preservation Commission's approval of the Maritime Welcome Center (MWC). Karen pointed out that HA's charter is to focus on the preservation of Annapolis—addressing budgetary concerns and funding is not their mission. She asked that WORA have a voice in the decision-making process and to issue a statement supporting HA in its objections to the MWC. The issue was brought to a vote and the board members present voted unanimously to support the appeal. We then sent out a statement supporting HA.

*Continued on next page*

## President's Message cont'd

Bill Kardash presented us the position of Annapolitans for a Better Community on the City Dock project, which the WORA Board believes accurately reflects the concerns of much of our membership. Key points:

- The full \$100M funding for the project is in doubt now that the FEMA grant (approximately \$30 million) is questionable. The answer I have heard is that the city would need to raise general obligation bonds, which could translate into a greater tax burden on citizens.

- The WORA survey on the City Dock project revealed that resiliency is needed but other aspects that were added in later plans are not. The City Dock Action Committee recommended the resiliency but none of the additional features proposed by the administration.

- There are questions regarding resiliency. For example, if the wall is to be phased in across three years, who will pay for the construction at the Fleet Reserve, 100 Compromise Street (to include the Choptank) and the Waterfront Hotel?

Finally, we are looking forward to the annual potluck dinner membership meeting at the Paca House on Sunday, July 13, from 4:00–7:00, which will include the election of board members. Please bring side dishes, appetizers, or desserts. We will provide a main dish.

Craig Harrison  
WORA President  
[worapresident@wardone.org](mailto:worapresident@wardone.org)

## Social Committee

### WORA Summer Pot Luck Social

Sunday, July 13

The 2025 WORA summer pot luck social and membership meeting will be Sunday, July 13, at Paca House Gardens on Prince George Street from 4:00–7:00.



Photo by Lisa Fontaine

## U.S. Naval Academy Commissioning Week

Commissioning week is longer than a week now, as events will begin with the Class of 2028 climbing the Herndon Monument at 8:00 am on Wednesday, **14 May**. The Academy made this adjustment last year to align the climb with the plebes completing Sea Trials the day prior. Major events for the rest of Commissioning Week are as follows:

### 17 May:

6:00 PM: USNA Band Concert Radford Terrace  
7:00: Ring Dance Dahlgren Hall

### 20 May:

2:00 PM: Blue Angels Flight Rehearsal  
8:00 PM: Combined Concert – Main Chapel

### 21 May:

2:00 PM: Blue Angels Demonstration Show  
7:30 PM: Graduation Ball

### 22 May:

11:00: Color Parade – Worden Field

### 23 May:

9:00: Graduation Procession  
10:00: Graduation and Commissioning –  
Navy/Marine Corps Stadium

Bill Bray  
WORA Board

## Alderman's Corner



Happy Spring, Ward One! As the weather gets brighter and we can all spend more time on the water, I'm even more grateful for the incredible natural beauty that surrounds us from the Chesapeake Bay to Spa Creek to my favorite little creeks and coves.

Did you know that the Severn River was recently selected for restoration funding under the state's Whole Watershed Act? In my day job, I was proud to help then-Senator Elfreth develop this law to increase the effectiveness of water quality improvements.

Speaking of funding, the city council is fully in the midst of budget season. On April 14, the mayor introduced his proposed operating and capital budgets. The operating budget was 4.6% higher than last year, while the capital budget was 50.6% lower. The proposed budget includes no property tax rate increase, and the city's financial health continues to be quite strong, despite national turbulence. As the chair of the Finance Committee, I'm currently leading the council's process of amending the proposed budget, and it must be passed by June 9.

Here are some proposed budget items that will help Ward One residents:

- Rehabilitation of Acton Cove Park's boardwalk and bulkhead
- A new building inspector (funded by fee increases, not general taxes)
- New ball fields at Weems Whelan fields so kids can walk to their games
- Adding salt brine tanks to city snow plows to improve winter storm readiness
- Technology upgrades to speed police response time

While these are great, there are parts of the proposed budget that I don't support. A question I've asked every director (since this was suggested to me by a Ward One resident) is "If you had to cut 10% of your budget, where would that come from, and how would it affect residents?" The answers informed the council on where we could make cuts and where we really don't want to (such as ambulance response times).

My top priority in this budget is to rebalance us toward commonsense maintenance, which you can read about in my opinion piece in the *Capital Gazette*. That means increasing the capital funds toward roads and sidewalks, among other basics of local government. It will also mean identifying some new investments that are not the highest use of taxpayer money to amend out of the budget.

There also are structural changes I'd like to make, such as breaking out the funds and performance metrics for sidewalk repair into brick and concrete. Because brick sidewalk repair is more costly, lumping the two together can lead to our historic sidewalks not getting the attention they need. We're examining a few positions that may better serve Annapolitans by moving them to different departments or offices.

**I will continue to focus on making the most fiscally responsible budget possible, on ensuring all investments generate returns in improved quality of life, and on verifying that every dollar budgeted is spent in the most cost-effective manner.**

On the legislative front, I'm continuing to work on bills that improve affordability, clear sidewalks of snow, and make elections more fair. I'm hopeful you'll see many of those finally getting introduced in the next month or two. One piece of legislation I've led is already making a big difference—the abandoned gas station on West Street has been sold to a home-builder in Murray Hill, thanks to a city council resolution that brought absentee owners to the table. If you walk by, you can already see the new orange chain and "No Trespassing" signs that signify something is finally happening here after a long time of no improvement.

I also want to address a worry I've heard from a lot of residents. A couple months ago, state officials proposed to the city that the area of State Circle between North and School Streets be closed to vehicles for vague "security" reasons. I joined the meeting to hear their proposal and strongly represented how this would harm residents. Our State Circle and Maryland Avenue businesses made

## *Alderman's Corner cont'd*

an impassioned plea about how this would devastate their businesses after years of depressed sales from State House construction.

The city's Director of Public Works clearly asserted that closing the city-owned road could only happen by a city decision, which I'm fairly confident would not have the council's support. At this time, I do not think the proposal is likely to move forward, but I've spoken with local leaders and our state delegation to spring into action if it does come back.

As your alderman, I will always listen and respond to your concerns, questions, and needs. If you see something that needs to be fixed in the ward, I want to hear about it. You deserve responsive city government.

Contact me at [Harry@HarryMHuntley.com](mailto:Harry@HarryMHuntley.com) or [aldhuntley@annapolis.gov](mailto:aldhuntley@annapolis.gov). I hope you'll sign up for my biweekly newsletter that shares all of the legislation before the council and my thoughts on it, as well as other news relevant to the ward. You can do so at [HarryMHuntley.com](http://HarryMHuntley.com).

Sincerely,  
Harry



### **Budget Process Timeline for Fiscal Year 2026**

**April 14, 2025:** Introduction of Mayor's Budget for Fiscal Year 2026 at Regular City Council meeting.

**April 17, 2024:** City Council Work Session – budget overview and review of the City Council budget binder.

**April 21–May 9, 2025:** Finance Committee budget hearings and deliberation.

**April 24, 2025:** Council Work Session for CIP presentation, debt affordability and other budget items. This will be a joint meeting with the Financial Advisory Commission.

**May 9, 2025:** Due date for budget amendment ideas and recommendations 37 from City Council members to the Finance Department. Budget 38 changes and amendments will not be accepted after this date.

**May 12, 2025:** Finance Committee budget report due at Regular City Council meeting.

**May 22, 2025:** City Council Work Session to discuss the submitted budget amendments created by the Finance Department from the ideas and recommendations submitted by the City Council members. This will be an extended meeting from 2:00 to 5:00 PM.

**June 2, 2025:** Full day (starting at 10:00 AM) Special City Council Meeting for budget discussion and deliberations. There will be no other agenda items for this meeting.

**June 9, 2025:** Regular City Council meeting – Approval of Budget for Fiscal Year 2025.

# Historic Annapolis Update

Spring has sprung at Historic Annapolis! We invite you to visit our sites, enjoy our programs, and participate in our 51st annual Mother's Day plant sale May 10–11. This time of year we are especially busy with school field trips and group tours of the William Paca House and Garden and the Museum of Historic Annapolis, making connections with our diverse history. And while much of the work we do at Historic Annapolis is as educators, as storytellers, and museum professionals, we are also the leading community resource and advocate for protecting Annapolis' historic integrity. As of late, our most important advocacy work has been focused on the redevelopment of city dock. We want to ensure the largest, most expensive public infrastructure project in the history of Annapolis is respectful of our city's historic character and setting.



**Artist Rendering of City Dock**

We share the city's excitement for a reimagined city dock and fully support investment to protect our waterfront from flooding. With a dozen historic properties in our portfolio, some of which are immediately adjacent to the city dock project area, we are heavily invested in the success of the city's proposed resiliency effort. We also champion the concept of an elevated green space—a place for people to gather and to celebrate the beauty of the heart of our historic core. Where we part company with the city's proposal is the mayor's insistence on an over-scaled Maritime Welcome Center on the water's edge and attached to the rear of the only historic property in the immediate project area.

The Maritime Welcome Center was approved by the Historic Preservation Commission at their February public meeting. We filed an appeal for judicial review of this decision a few weeks later and are awaiting the court's decision. The basis of our appeal relates to the affect on the Burtis house, to which the Center is attached and overwhelms, and the fair and consistent application of the design guidelines to all applicants, including the city. These guidelines and regulations exist to protect the historic district and waterfront that is the lifeblood of our capital city and make Annapolis such a vibrant place to live and visit. More information about HA's position on city dock can be found on our website at [www.annapolis.org/citydock/](http://www.annapolis.org/citydock/).

Last month the WORA board issued a position statement on city dock, supporting our appeal and expressing significant concerns over the sources of funding to meet the complete scope of the city dock project as currently proposed. As the city is developing next year's fiscal budget, we strongly encourage WORA to follow up on your funding concerns—concerns that relate to the long-term financial implications and sustainability of this plan.

Please consider becoming a member of Historic Annapolis and join us in our efforts to preserve, protect, and connect with our beautiful historic city.

Membership provides discounts to our public programs, free admission to our sites, and regular correspondence to keep you up to date on our many offerings.

[www.annapolis.org/support/memberships/](http://www.annapolis.org/support/memberships/)

Karen Theimer Brown  
President and CEO, Historic Annapolis

# Annapolitans for a Better Community

Dear WORA Members,

If you are interested in improving governance and fiscal responsibility in the City of Annapolis, I hope you will support **Annapolitans for a Better Community** (ABC) as we launch an initiative to, hopefully, bring two issues to referendum for the November 2025 Municipal General Election. They are:

**1. Homestead Tax Credit** for owner-occupied homes. Our initiative calls for a reduction in the rate of increase for tax assessments from the city's existing 10-percent rate to our proposed rate of two percent. This would bring the city in line with Anne Arundel County's two-percent rate of increase. The tax savings for an owner-occupied home could be significant.

**2. Nonpartisan Voting in Primary Elections.** Currently, only those voters registered as Democrat or Republican may vote in primary elections. As a result, about 27 percent (approximately 7,000 residents) of the city's voters are excluded from voting for a candidate in the primary elections. We think that to disenfranchise voters is not good for our city—or democracy.

To bring these issues to referendum, we must first collect signed petitions from "10 percent of the city's registered voters, with no less than 250 voters in each of the city's eight wards." We think the effort is worth it. Our deadline to collect these signatures is 30 June.

We are asking WORA members and residents to support this initiative.

Please go to **ABCAnnapolis.org** and under the tab labeled "Our Projects," scroll down to "Petition Process" and "City Election 2025" to access the petitions. The Homestead Tax Credit petition is available to read, download, print, sign, and send to us. Every registered voter in your household should sign! We hope you will!

We hope to have the **Nonpartisan Voting** petition available soon. It is currently under review by the city attorney.

Please help us by encouraging your friends and neighbors to join in this effort by visiting **ABCAnnapolis.org**. The sooner we reach the required number of signed petitions, the greater chance we will be approved for the referendum.

Thanks for your help and cooperation. Please contact me through the ABC website, if you have any questions.

Bill Kardash  
Chairman  
**Annapolitans for a Better Community**  
PO Box 15  
Annapolis MD 21401

