

## Gagnon, Trish

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**From:** Al Carr <alfred.carr@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 21, 2024 10:01 AM  
**To:** AA\_ENT  
**Subject:** FAVORABLE testimony for HB1364 (People's Counsel for Land Use)

Dear Chair Korman and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

I am asking you for a FAVORABLE report on HB1364, as introduced and without amendments.

Montgomery County has a People's Counsel codified in County law but County Councils have refused to fund it since 2010. The current and previous County Executives both support funding a People's Counsel. There is no evidence that such a position prevents housing from being built.

HB1364 offers a way around an intractable disagreement between 2 branches of County government by requiring that this position be funded.

Citizens of Maryland's largest jurisdiction deserve a People's Counsel just like citizens of Prince George's. Howard, Baltimore and Harford Counties also have people's counsel positions.

The amendments adopted in the Montgomery County Delegation HARM rather than help racial equity and social justice as demonstrated by the OLO analysis of Council President Friedson's similar bill 18-23.

Montgomery County Delegates: here is why it is in YOUR interest that a People's Counsel for Land use be funded and not weakened in any way. In my experience as a Delegate, there were many examples of constituents contacting my office on land use matters. They did not want to stop housing but they needed assistance or answers and they weren't able to get it through the normal channels of Planning Board, Planning Staff, County Council or County agencies.

For example, in Kensington Estates (Knowles Avenue corridor) people's safety, property and housing was being threatened by increased flooding. Their pleas through normal channels fell on deaf ears. Only after they contacted state legislators and began pulling manholes was it revealed that the Planning Board and Department of Permitting Services had been approving projects based on false information in MCDOT's database of stormwater infrastructure. And our Housing Agency (HOC) had illegally paved over a community green space and constructed a parking lot which exacerbated the problem.

A People's Counsel for land use might have greatly helped and allowed me and my staff to better focus on matters of statewide importance.

Sincerely,

Al Carr  
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