

UPDATED SENATE HB 1064_Montgomery Planning Board_T

Uploaded by: Jordan BaucumColbert

Position: FAV



POSITION STATEMENT

Bill: HB 1064 Montgomery County Planning Board and Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – Open Meetings – Live Streaming Requirement (MC/PG 101-25)

Position: SUPPORT

Date: April 1, 2025

Contact: Debra Borden, General Counsel

Jordan Baucum Colbert, Government Affairs Liaison

Dear Chair Brian Feldman,

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (“M-NCPPC” or the “Commission”) has voted in support of HB 1064.

What this Bill Does. This bill alters the requirement that the Montgomery County Planning Board and the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, respectively, stream live video or audio of their open meetings to apply only to meetings held at certain locations. This bill was recently amended to add that a project site visit or educational field tour may not be considered a meeting pursuant to *Land Use § 20-202 (e)(2)* under paragraph 1, if no organizational business is conducted.

We support this Bill. *The Commission has worked closely with the sponsor on this bill and we support the proposed amendment.* At M-NCPPC, we provide inclusive and transparent engagement at the Planning Board, Planning Department, and Parks Department. The Montgomery County Planning Board follows all the requirements of the Maryland Open Meetings Act – which requires many State and local public bodies to hold their meetings in public, to give the public adequate notice of those meetings, and to allow the public to inspect meeting minutes. Compared to other public bodies, the Planning Board and WSSC have more stringent requirements, which currently are not efficient uses of resources.

The Land Use Article currently requires all Montgomery County Planning Board meetings to be livestreamed, which is not possible in certain circumstances when the Planning Board desires to have site

visits or in-person public hearings in affected communities. This is a unique open meetings requirement that does apply to most other public bodies.

Given the technical challenges with mobile streaming, the Planning Board and Planning and Parks departments currently must replicate master plan and parks tours three times so as not to create a quorum. This means six or more staff people for at least three to four hours each tour, numerous vehicle trips, coordination for access to specific sites, etc., to simply educate the Planning Board members about a master plan area or park facility.

This bill would allow educational tours to occur with the Planning Board without the live video streaming requirement. If this legislation passes, the tours would now be conducted as a full meeting of the Planning Board, subject to all other open meetings act requirements. Tours will be Planning Board will provide:

- i) notice of the tours;
- ii) the itinerary;
- iii) minutes.

These tours allow staff to provide geographical information so that board members are well informed. No business is transacted, no votes are taken; it is simply an opportunity for the Planning Board to be educated and for all members to receive the same information simultaneously. These tours are only for master plans and Parks matters and would not be related to any regulatory matters (subdivisions, site plans, etc.).

Additionally, this bill would allow the Montgomery County Planning Board to hold in-person public hearings in communities impacted by a master plan or project without needing to find a facility with the capacity to livestream. The current requirement leads us to hold most public hearings in our M-NCPPC Wheaton Headquarters rather than in locations that are more convenient to the community.

Commitment to transparency and equitable engagement. Montgomery Planning, Parks and the Planning Board are committed to equitable engagement. This includes removing barriers to participation and providing access and information in multiple platforms and methods to our community members. M-NCPPC has been a regional leader in live streaming events – we offer accessibility, translation, and other accommodations to allow people to participate in Montgomery County Planning Board meetings. Additionally, we offer virtual and call-in options for every Planning Board meeting. Our community members have come to expect a reliable and consistent live video streaming experience.

For these reasons, the Commission requests a favorable vote in support of HB 1064.

Delegate Palakovich Carr Testimony - HB 1064 (MCPG)

Uploaded by: Julie Palakovich Carr

Position: FAV

JULIE PALAKOVICH CARR
Legislative District 17
Montgomery County

DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Ways and Means Committee

Chair, Early Childhood
Subcommittee

Chair, Montgomery County
House Delegation



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of HB 1064 (MC/PG 101-25)
Montgomery County Planning Board and Washington Suburban Sanitary
Commission – Open Meetings – Live Streaming Requirement**

This bill would alter the live streaming requirements for meetings of the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) and the Montgomery County Planning Board.

Under existing law, both WSSC and the Montgomery County Planning Board are subject to the requirements of the Maryland Open Meetings Act. Additionally, these specific entities are required to go above and beyond the Open Meetings Act by live streaming the video and/or audio of all open meetings.¹

HB 1064, as amended during the bi-county bill process, exempts educational field tours and project site visits from the live streaming requirements so long as no official business is conducted. All requirements of the Open Meetings Act are preserved under this bill.

The bill, as amended, has the unanimous support of both the Montgomery County House and Senate Delegations and the Prince George's County House and Senate Delegations.

¹ HB 789 of 2021 and HB 396 of 2022.

HB 1064 - MoCo_Council President Stewart_FAV (GA 2

Uploaded by: Kate Stewart

Position: FAV



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND**

KATE STEWART
PRESIDENT
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

April 1, 2025

TO: The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Kate Stewart
President, Montgomery County Council

RE: House Bill 1064, *Montgomery County Planning Board and Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – Open Meetings – Live Streaming Requirement MC/PG 101-25*

Support

I am writing on behalf of the Montgomery County Council to express our support for House Bill 1064, *Montgomery County Planning Board and Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – Open Meetings – Live Streaming Requirement MC/PG 101-25*, which amends State law governing open meetings of the Montgomery County Planning Board (Planning Board) and the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC Water). Under current law, both entities are required to stream live video or teleconference audio of all open meetings. The bill exempts a project site visit or educational field tour from the live streaming requirement when no organizational business is conducted.

The bill is intended to allow all Planning Board members or all WSSC Water Commissioners to conduct project site visits or educational site visits in locations where live streaming is difficult or not feasible. All other provisions of the Open Meetings Act still apply, including advance notice and preparation and approval of minutes.

We respectfully request that the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee give this bill a favorable report.

cc: Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

Witness Testimony - HB 1064 - Live Streaming Requi

Uploaded by: Kenneth Simons

Position: FAV



COMMISSIONERS
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Mark J. Smith, Vice Chair
Fausto R. Bayonet
Lynnette D. Espy-Williams
Jonathan Powell
Regina Y. Speed-Bost

GENERAL MANAGER
Kishia L. Powell

March 28, 2025

The Honorable Brian Feldman and
Members of the Senate Education, Energy and the
Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401


Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee:

The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC Water) appreciates the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB 1064 Montgomery County Planning Board and Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – Open Meetings – Live Streaming Requirement.

This proposed legislation, sponsored by Montgomery County House Delegation Chair Julie Palakovich Carr, would alter the current requirement that WSSC Water and the Montgomery County Planning Board live stream video or audio of its open meetings. This live streaming requirement limits both entities from conducting educational activities in the field and site visits in locations where live streaming is not feasible. The current live streaming requirement was implemented in response to COVID-19 postures during the pandemic and is more stringent for WSSC Water and the Montgomery County Planning Board than other entities covered under Maryland's Open Meetings Act. This bill, as amended, would provide an exception to the live streaming requirement for educational field tours and project site visits conducted by WSSC Water and the Montgomery County Planning Board.

WSSC Water Commissioners voted unanimously to support this legislation. This bill gives the Commission more flexibility to engage and communicate in the communities it serves. WSSC Water requests a favorable report from the committee on HB 1064.

Sincerely,

Signed by:

Kenneth Simons

Government Affairs Manager

HB 1064 - MoCo_Elrich_OPP (GA 25) (Senate).pdf

Uploaded by: Marc Elrich

Position: UNF



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

April 1, 2025

TO: The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Marc Elrich
County Executive

RE: House Bill 1064, *Montgomery County Planning Board and Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission - Open Meetings - Live Streaming Requirement MC/PG 101-25*

OPPOSE

I am writing to express my opposition to House Bill 1064, *Montgomery County Planning Board and Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – Open Meetings – Live Streaming Requirement MC/PG 101-25*, which amends State law governing open meetings of the Montgomery County Planning Board (Planning Board) and the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC Water). Under current law, both entities are required to stream live video or teleconference audio of all open meetings. The bill exempts a project site visit or educational field tour from the live streaming requirement when no organizational business is conducted.

I believe that current law reflects the appropriate balance between ensuring transparency in the work of the Planning Board and WSSC Water and supporting their respective missions, and respectfully request that the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee give this bill an unfavorable report.

cc: Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee