

## QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES



On June 26<sup>th</sup>, we had our primary elections for Anne Arundel County Council and County Executive as well as for state candidates. CEPA is interested in how the County candidates feel about some of the issues we have been working on. We gave both the Democratic and Republican candidates for County Council and County Executive the opportunity to respond to the following six questions, and the comments from the three candidates who replied are given below. Please consider these when voting in November.

**Question 1:** *Much of the stress on our environmental resources comes from rapid development in AA County. Currently, our tax/fee policies provide a sustained incentive to growth. Failing to recover the full cost of creating and sustaining infrastructure plus the cost of depleting environmental resources creates an ever escalating demand for tax revenues. If you agree, how would you correct this situation?*

**James Kitchin:** I full-heartedly agree, and there are a few things that I will do to correct this issue.

First, we have to go after the power that large campaign donations give to development interests. The system is currently set up to favor developers over citizens, and we have to fundamentally change that. At a minimum, we need to ban developers from donating to political candidates, or sitting politicians, while they have business pending before the county. Ideally, we'd create a system of publicly-matched funds for small-dollar donations that would truly create a financial incentive for policymakers to prioritize people over developers. Check out this op-ed I wrote in the Capital to see what that kind of system would look like: <http://www.capitalgazette.com/opinion/ac-ce-column-kitchin-20180122-story.html>

Second, we need to raise impact fees to 100% of their full cost. Currently, they are close to 80% of the costs - and that's only for the areas in which we collect them. We don't even collect an environment impact fee, which is outrageous in my opinion.

Third, we need to create an environmental impact fee.

Fourth, we need to strengthen the Forest Conservation Act at the local level. Protecting our priority forests, and then replacing the non-priority forests that we do cut down at a 1:1 ratio would both help our environment and slow down the rate of growth.

Fifth, we need to strengthen and then actually enforce our adequate public facility ordinances. This, in my opinion, would also help to slow down the rate of growth in the county and at least make sure that when we do build we are doing so in a way that our public infrastructure can keep up with.

**Andrew Pruski:** I have and will continue to support the Storm water remediation program in Anne Arundel County. I have also supported remediation and preservation. I believe the County should be spending more money on Open Space purchases.

**Lisa Rodvien:** It is time to set impact fees for Anne Arundel County that cover the full impact of new development, rather than current estimated 80% of that impact.

**Question 2:** *Presently, things like the value of forests in absorbing CO<sub>2</sub> and reducing stormwater runoff are not considered in evaluating development projects. There have been studies on the monetary value of such "ecoservices" which could be used for that purpose. Should the value of ecoservices be considered in impact studies and impact fees for development?*

**Kitchin:** Yes. See my answer above. Destroying these eco-services is a public cost that must be considered when making public policy decisions. This is a classic example of a "negative externality," which is a market failure that justifies government intervention on an efficiency basis. We absolutely should create an environmental impact fee that takes this into account.

**Pruski:** We currently require environmental impact studies on projects. I certainly believe we can look into expanded studies to help reduce runoff. I would make sure that proven scientific practices are considered.

**Rodvien:** Including the dollar value that forests provide (and the value of what would be lost) in the evaluation of a new development project is a great idea. The continual externalization of those costs and failure to recoup them at appropriate times encourages the reckless destruction of forests. Adding a monetary value will help ensure that cost of environmental destruction is assessed, accounted for, and recovered whenever possible.

**Question 3:** *The Wolman report ("Water for Maryland's Future: What We Must Do Today," [http://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Water/water\\_supply/Pages/wolman\\_fullreport.aspx](http://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Water/water_supply/Pages/wolman_fullreport.aspx)) recommended various measures to manage our water resources more effectively. One of the recommendations, arguably the most important one, was to install more monitoring wells. Should more monitoring wells be installed for monitoring our aquifers?*

**Kitchin:** Yes. This is information that we must have if we are going to make informed public policy decisions. I will commit to introducing legislation to make this happen.

**Pruski:** Yes, I support this report and also believe we need to monitor aquifers to manage our water resources.

**Rodvien:** While we need to be thoughtful about how new development will occur in Anne Arundel County, it is inevitable that it will occur. Better monitoring of our water supply can help us ensure that we make wise decisions about where new development is feasible given the existing water supply. It can also provide important information about our water quality. Considering that a state-commissioned report recommends increasing monitoring wells, our county would be wise to follow their recommendation.

**Question 4:** *Groundwater is the source of drinking water for Anne Arundel County residents, and supplies are shrinking. How would you protect critical ground water recharge areas in West County?*

**Kitchin:** We absolutely need to stop paving over the recharge areas. I think that in the next comprehensive rezoning process we need to make a conscious effort to re-zone these areas as open space and protect them from further development.

**Pruski:** Open space purchases, monitoring wells, and stormwater remediation can assist with water recharge areas. We also need to educate the public on the importance of water quality.

**Rodvien:** Anne Arundel County needs to ensure a safe drinking water supply for our residents and visitors. Lands that serve as groundwater recharge areas merit special protection. We must work to minimize development in these areas, or at a minimum, ensure that development does not reduce the quality or quantity of the water supply that comes through that area. Trees and vegetation that can provide important filtration, limited use of impervious surfaces, and minimized development can all help protect our groundwater.

**Question 5:** *In the last Maryland legislative session, a bill was passed by both houses which authorized the Maryland Department of the Environment to develop proposed requirements for residential graywater use. This would be subject to local (county) plumbing codes. Should requirements for residential graywater systems be developed for AA County?*

**Kitchin:** Yes, absolutely. I'd love to work with your group to make this happen. I'd be very eager to introduce this kind of legislation.

**Pruski:** I am unfamiliar with this legislation and would consider a pilot program.

**Rodvien:** Especially for new construction, requiring local plumbing codes to incorporate residential graywater systems would result in a more efficient use of our water supply. Not only would the graywater systems facilitate multiple uses of water in a location, it would also reduce the waste water headed for our treatment facilities. As a result, the burden on those facilities is correspondingly reduced.

**Question 6:** *CEPA has been overseeing the monitoring of the closed unlined PST Landfill in Harwood for several years, and the owner has been directed by means of a consent decree to develop a plan to mitigate the several toxic substances found. The other unlined landfills are not subjected to the same scrutiny. Should the monitoring of all the unlined landfills in AA County be reviewed by a third party?*

**Kitchin:** Yes, they absolutely should. This should be a budgeting priority for our county.

**Pruski:** Yes, I have a closed, active rubble fill, and potential landfill in my district. I believe we should monitor all landfills. Also, a third party should be required by MDE to monitor all landfills for environmental and public safety.

**Rodvien:** Anne Arundel County should prioritize the health and safety of our residents and our environment by requiring an independent review of test results from unlined landfills. Self-monitoring brings the risk of biased or even rigged results. Furthermore, it is critical that the monitoring is ongoing as some dangerous materials such as heavy metals may not be detected for years after they are discarded.