

**COUNTY COUNCIL OF CECIL COUNTY
LEGISLATIVE SESSION MINUTES
LSD 2026-01
January 6, 2026**

The County Council of Cecil County met in Legislative Session at the County Administration Building, Elk Room, 200 Chesapeake Blvd., Elkton, MD. The following members of the Council were present:

Al Miller, Council President
Robert Meffley, Council Vice President
Rebecca Hamilton, Council Member
Dawn Branch, Council Member

NOTE: The recording with transcription of this meeting is available on the County website at www.cecilcountymd.gov

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the County Council of Cecil County of January 6, 2026, was called to order by Council President Miller at 7:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLIEGIANCE

Parker Ferrell, Boy Scout Troop 336, Chesapeake City, led all those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Council Manager Henson called the roll and noted that four members were present.

OPENING PRAYER/MOMENT OF SILENCE

Pastor Richard Berry, Faith Southern Baptist Church, Elkton, offered the Opening Prayer.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On a motion made by Vice President Meffley, seconded by Councilwoman Branch, the Council moved to approve the agenda of January 6, 2026. The motion was approved unanimously.

PRESENTATION

Proclamation – National Mentoring Month – Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Eastern Shore
Councilwoman Branch read a Proclamation recognizing January, 2026 as National Mentoring Month, a copy of which was presented to Mr. Dayquan Stewart, representing Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Eastern Shore.

PUBLIC HEARING

BILL NO. 2025-11 Amendment – Cecil County Code – Chapter 110 – Taxing Districts, Special – Stormwater Management Facility Maintenance Districts

President Miller opened the Public Hearing at 7:08 p.m.

Council Manager Henson stated for the record:

Bill No. 2025-11 Amendment – Cecil County Code – Chapter 110 – Taxing Districts, Special – Stormwater Management Facility Maintenance Districts

An Act to amend the Cecil County Code, Chapter 110, Taxing Districts, Special, by creating and adding a new Article V for the establishment of Special Taxing Districts to fix and levy a special tax to fund the County's repair and perpetual maintenance of privately owned stormwater management facilities within a designated district with the special tax to be paid annually in the same manner as all other county taxes by the owners of properties served by those stormwater management facilities for the period of time established by the Cecil County Council.

Introduced and ordered posted on December 16, 2025; Public Hearing scheduled on January 6, 2026; and scheduled for consideration on January 20, 2026.

Director of Administration Dan Schneckenburger stated that the Department of Public Works (DPW) is sponsoring Bill No. 2025-11.

Councilwoman Hamilton stated that the County currently notifies the owner of a stormwater management (SWM) facility that needs repair, and if the owner fails to address the facility, the County performs the required repairs and places a lien on the property. She stated that Bill No. 2025-11 proposes an option for SWM facility owners to pay a special tax over time. Director of Public Works Scott Flanigan answered in the affirmative, adding that Bill No. 2025-11 would require support from 2/3 of the property owners in the area served by the SWM facility to establish the Special Tax District.

Councilwoman Hamilton queried if the proposed Special Tax District will provide the County with the ability to recover costs associated with maintenance and repairs of privately owned SWM facilities.

Director of Administration Schneckenburger answered in the affirmative, adding that a tax lien on a property is not recovered until the property is sold, which could take many years.

Director of Administration Schneckenburger noted that many privately owned SWM facilities are maintained by the owners, adding that creation of the Special Tax District would address those owners who do not maintain their facilities.

Director of Administration Schneckenburger advised Council that the renewal process for the County's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit, issued by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), includes a request from MDE to identify the most non-compliant SWM facilities in Cecil County.

Vice President Meffley queried if the formula to determine the amount of the special tax would be based upon SWM facility size, number of properties served, etc.

Director of Administration Schneckenburger stated each facility is different, adding that the goal of the proposed district is to incentivize the residents to band together and perform the required repairs and maintenance.

Director Flanigan stated that if Bill No. 2025-11 is approved, DPW will provide a cost estimate to owners of properties serviced by a SWM facility that requires repair maintenance or repair. He added that if 2/3 of those property owners support creation of the Special Tax District, the matter will be forwarded to Council for consideration.

Hearing no additional questions or comments from Council, President Miller queried members of the audience for comments in support of or opposition to Bill No. 2025-11.

Mr. Sean Brimm spoke in favor of Bill No. 2025-11.

Ms. Elizabeth Bolt spoke in opposition to Bill No. 2025-11.

Hearing no additional comments, President Miller closed the Public Hearing at 7:20 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING

REZONING FILE 2025-05

Council Manager Henson stated for the record:

Rezoning File 2025-05 Applicant: EcoWood Resource Group LLC, Henry Ray, Property Location 0 W Old Philadelphia Road, North East Maryland 21901. Election District 5, Tax Map 031D, Parcel 0485. Property Owner EcoWood Resource Group, LLC. Presently Zoned: Low Density Residential (LDR); Proposed Zoning Employment Mixed Use (EMU).

President Miller opened the Public Hearing at 7:20 p.m.

Witnesses presenting testimony were sworn in by Council Manager Henson.

David Beste, Esquire, representing EcoWood Resource Group LLC introduced himself and owner Mr. Henry Ray to Council.

Attorney Beste requested Council's approval to hear Rezoning Files 2025-05 and 2025-06 together, as the petitions are identical.

President Miller requested a motion to amend the agenda to permit combining Rezoning Files 2025-05 and 2025-06 for the purposes of the Public Hearing.

On a motion made by Councilwoman Hamilton, seconded by Councilwoman Branch, Council voted to approve the request to amend the agenda by combining Rezoning Files 2025-05 and 2025-06 for the purposes of the Public Hearing. Vice President Meffley opposed the motion.

President Miller directed Council Manager Henson to read the synopsis of Rezoning File 2025-06 into the record.

REZONING FILE 2025-06

Council Manager Henson stated for the record:

Rezoning File 2025-06 Applicant: EcoWood Resource Group LLC, Henry Ray. Property Location 760 W Old Philadelphia Road, North East Maryland 21901. Election District 5, Tax Map 031D, Parcel 0170. Property Owner EcoWood Resource Group, LLC. Presently Zoned: Low Density Residential (LDR); Proposed Zoning Employment Mixed Use (EMU).

Attorney Beste provided an overview of the properties and recent rezonings of adjacent parcels, stating that his client's request for rezoning is based upon a substantial change in the character of the neighborhood. He noted that the properties are located directly across the road from parcels which are zoned Heavy Industrial (M-2).

Attorney Beste stated that the requested Employment Mixed Use (EMU) zoning designation provides for business offices as well as residential development.

Attorney Beste stated that his client is in the forestry industry and proposes a 6,000 square foot facility in which to process wood by-products to manufacture wood pellets. He stated the proposed facility will be self-contained.

Attorney Beste noted that the property is located within the State of Maryland Opportunity Zone and Cecil County's Growth Area.

Attorney Beste stated that recent rezonings in the area demonstrate Council's concurrence that there has been a substantial change in the neighborhood.

Director of Land Use and Development Services (LUDS) Stephen O'Connor stated that LUDS staff recommended disapproval of both rezoning requests, based upon the petitioner's failure to demonstrate a substantial change in the neighborhood in the original application. He stated the Planning Commission recommended approval of the rezoning requests, based upon the applicant's demonstration of a substantial change in the neighborhood.

Director O'Connor presented the Findings of Facts report, a copy of which was read and placed in the record of the minutes.

Director O'Connor stated that the applicant did not define the neighborhood in the original application for rezoning. He stated LUDS staff, for the purposes of delineating a neighborhood, considered the area encompassed by Route 40 to the north, Red Toad Road to the east, Philadelphia Road and Bellvue Road to the southeast, the railroad tracks to the south, a tributary of the North East River to the southwest, then Route 40 to the northwest.

Director O'Connor stated the properties will be served by onsite water and septic for the foreseeable future.

Director O'Connor stated the proposed rezoning is expected to substantially increase traffic on Philadelphia Road.

Director O'Connor stated the proposed EMU Zoning District is not consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan.

Director O'Connor stated the Findings of Fact Report for Rezoning File 2025-05 contains the same information and conclusion as Rezoning File 2025-06.

Vice President Meffley queried if the proposed facility would be similar to a facility located in South Carolina. He asked if the proposed facility is close to water and queried if the applicant could provide information regarding anticipated emissions from the facility.

Attorney Beste noted that the applicant is at the first step of the process, which is the request for rezoning designation, adding that his client would comply with all County regulations should the project move forward.

Applicant Mr. Henry Ray stated his plans are to mirror the operations of a facility on the Eastern Shore, but on a smaller scale. He stated his plan is to recycle material from saw mills to create wood pellets.

Vice President Meffley expressed his belief that Mr. Ray has no intention to cause harm, adding that Council must also consider the concerns voiced by his neighbors.

Councilwoman Hamilton, referring to previously referenced rezonings, stated that the parcels were rezoned from one level of commercial use to another, adding that this request is to rezone residential use to commercial.

Councilwoman Hamilton noted that the EMU zoning designation does not permit manufacturing.

Councilwoman Branch noted that Route 40 lies within the Growth Corridor, adding her concerns regarding increased truck traffic on Old Philadelphia Road.

Attorney Beste, referring to Councilwoman Hamilton's comments regarding allowances within the EMU designation, stated the EMU designation offers flexibility of development, adding that the designation would provide a border between the residential and intensified industrial uses. He stated that light industrial activity is permitted in the EMU Zone.

Attorney Beste, referring to Councilwoman Branch's comments regarding the Route 40 corridor, stated that one of the parcels recently rezoned to M2 is directly across the road from his client's property.

Attorney Lance Young, representing Cecil County Council, stated that major roadways have been considered by Maryland Courts to be a natural demarcation between zoning districts.

Councilwoman Hamilton stated that the application associated with the rezoning to which Attorney Beste referred indicated that there would be no access from Philadelphia Road.

Hearing no additional questions or comments from Council, President Miller directed Council Manager Henson to swear in members of the audience who wished to speak in favor of or opposition to Rezoning Files 2025-05 and 2025-06.

President Miller queried the audience for comments in support of Rezoning Files 2025-05 and 2025-06.

Hearing no comments in support of Rezoning Files 2025-05 and 2025-06, President Miller queried the audience for comments in opposition to Rezoning Files 2025-05 and 2025-06.

Mr. Sean Brimm, referring to Attorney Beste's statement that three recent successful rezonings were based upon substantial change in the neighborhood, stated the first of the three referenced rezonings was based upon a mistake in zoning.

Mark Russell expressed concerns about illegal activity.

Roger Mason expressed concerns regarding the environment.

Alex Russell expressed concerns regarding the environment and impacts on wildlife.

Tammy Doyle expressed concerns regarding the environment and increased truck traffic.

Elizabeth Bolt stated her opposition to the rezoning applications, stating the applicant did not properly describe the neighborhood. She expressed concerns regarding increased truck traffic, noting a low underpass in the vicinity, and concerns regarding the environment.

President Miller advised all in attendance that the issue before Council is to determine if the applicant has met the burden of proof that there has been a substantial change in the neighborhood.

President Miller announced that Rezoning Applications 2025-05 and 2025-06 will be considered at the next Council Legislative Session on January 20th at 7:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

On a motion made by Vice President Meffley, seconded by Councilwoman Branch, the Council moved to approve the minutes of the Legislative Session of December 16, 2025.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Elizabeth Bolt thanked Council for their service to the community. Ms. Bolt reiterated her concerns regarding potential impacts to the environment.

Sean Brimm spoke about stormwater management challenges and recent discussions regarding the Conowingo Dam.

PRESIDENT AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilwoman Hamilton wished all in attendance a Happy New Year.

Councilwoman Hamilton announced that the State Legislative Session will commence on January 14th.

Councilwoman Hamilton stated she will attend Cecil Day in Annapolis on January 15th, which will be hosted by the Cecil County Chamber of Commerce. She noted that the new Speaker of the House is scheduled to address attendees.

Councilwoman Hamilton stated she serves with Councilwoman Branch, County Executive Streight and Director of Administration Schneckenburger on the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) Legislative Committee. She stated that Cecil County is a member of the Rural Caucus which meets regularly.

Councilwoman Hamilton stated MACo and the Chamber of Commerce developed lists of priorities for the upcoming Legislative Session, adding that the public can assist Council in monitoring legislation. She encouraged members of the public to reach out to Council with their concerns.

Councilwoman Branch wished all in attendance a Happy New Year.

Noting Mr. Brimm's comments referencing the County's position regarding the Conowingo Dam, Councilwoman Branch expressed her desire to reach an agreement with the State of Maryland to address issues at the dam.

Vice President Meffley stated that he spoke with representatives from other counties that are affected by the dam during the recent MACo Winter Conference. He noted that Cecil County is working with MDE and expressed his belief that the goal of dredging is becoming a reality. He commended Director of Administration Schneckenburger regarding recent communications with MDE.

President Miller stated that Long Green Farms will be recognized as Cecil Soil Conservation District Cooperator of the Year on January 16th during a banquet at Rising Sun Banquet Hall.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 01-2026

Council Manager Henson stated for the record:

Resolution No. 01-2026 Appointment – Commission on Aging – Denise Hill, Julianne Graham, Lisa Beeman, Jamie McCloskey, and Mark Hill

A Resolution to confirm the reappointments of Denise Hill, Julianne Graham, Lisa Beeman, Jamie McCloskey, and Mark Hill, to terms that expire June 30, 2028, to the Commission on Aging.

Introduced by Council President at the request of the County Executive.

Introduced and ordered posted on January 6, 2026; scheduled for consideration on January 20, 2026.

Director of Administration Schneckenburger stated the first Resolution of 2026 was presented for Council's consideration of reappointments to the Commission on Aging.

CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTIONS

Resolution No. 81-2025

Council Manager Henson stated for the record:

Resolution No. 81-2025 Approval – Nuisance Flooding Plan 2025-2030 (Tabled December 16, 2025)

A Resolution to adopt Cecil County Nuisance Flooding Plan

Introduced by Council President at the request of the County Executive

Introduced and ordered posted on December 2, 2025; scheduled for consideration on December 16, 2025 (Tabled); scheduled for consideration on January 6, 2026

On December 16, 2025, Council tabled consideration of Resolution No. 81-2025 Approval – Nuisance Flooding Plan 2025-2030 in order for Land Use & Development staff to incorporate the Planning Commission's recommended amendments to the Plan. The amendments have been incorporated into the Plan and have been distributed to Council.

President Miller requested a motion to remove Resolution No. 81-2025 from the table.
Councilwoman Hamilton made a motion to remove Resolution No. 81-2025 from the table, which was seconded by Councilwoman Branch.
Roll Call Vote: Hamilton – Y, Branch – Y, Meffley – Y, Miller – Y
The motion was approved 4-0.

President Miller requested a motion to approve Resolution No. 81-2025.
Councilwoman Hamilton made a motion to approve Resolution No. 81-2025, which was seconded by Councilwoman Branch.
Roll Call Vote: Hamilton – Y, Branch – Y, Meffley – Y, Miller – Y
The motion was approved 4-0.

Resolution No. 82-2025

Council Manager Henson stated for the record:
Resolution No. 82-2025 Appointment – Administrative Charging Committee – Devon Perry
A Resolution to confirm the appointment of Devon Perry to fill the vacancy left by William Cain, to a term which expires December 31, 2028, to the Administrative Charging Committee.
Introduced by Council President at the request of the County Executive.
Introduced and ordered posted on December 16, 2025 and scheduled for consideration on January 6, 2026.
Director of Administration Schneckenburger stated Administration offered no further comments.

Vice President Meffley made a motion to approve Resolution No. 82-2025, which was seconded by Councilwoman Branch.
Roll Call Vote: Hamilton – Y, Branch – Y, Meffley – Y, Miller – Y
The motion was approved 4-0.

Resolution No. 83-2025

Council Manager Henson stated for the record:
Resolution No. 83-2025 Appointment – Board of Electricians – Frederick T. Craig, Jr.
A Resolution to confirm the reappointment of Frederick T. Craig, Jr., to a term which expires January 1, 2029, to the Board of Electricians.
Introduced by Council President at the request of the County Executive.
Introduced and ordered posted on December 16, 2025 and scheduled for consideration on January 6, 2026.
Director of Administration Schneckenburger stated Administration offered no further comments.

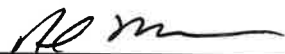
Vice President Meffley made a motion to approve Resolution No. 83-2025, which was seconded by Councilwoman Hamilton.
Roll Call Vote: Hamilton – Y, Branch – Y, Meffley – Y, Miller – Y
The motion was approved 4-0.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Councilwoman Branch, seconded by Councilwoman Hamilton and approved by all present, President Miller adjourned the meeting at 8:42 p.m.

Council President Miller announced that the next Council Legislative Session is scheduled on Tuesday, January 20, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. in the Elk Room of the County Administration Building. The Legislative Session will be livestreamed on the County's webpage at www.cecilcountymd.gov. The recording and transcription will be uploaded to the County's website as soon as possible.

Approved:



Al Miller, Council President

Attest:



L. Michelle Henson, Council Manager