

AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

REMARKS - Exchange of the Gavel
The Honorable Samuel H. Dean
Chairman, Prince George's County Council
Legislative Year 2008, Tuesday, December 2, 2008

- GOOD MORNING!
- I HAVE BEEN RICHLY BLESSED TO SERVE THE GREAT PEOPLE OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, AND OVER THE LAST YEAR, TO SERVE AS COUNTY COUNCIL CHAIRMAN.
- I BEGIN THIS MORNING THANKING MY GOD AND MY COLLEAGUES – WHO HAVE, FOR THE SECOND TIME, ENTRUSTED ME WITH THIS GAVEL OF LEADERSHIP.
- I ALSO WANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE PEOPLE WHO TWICE ELECTED ME TO REPRESENT THEM—I CONTINUE TO BE HUMBLLED AND HONORED BY THEIR FAITH IN MY SERVANT LEADERSHIP AND I AM GRATEFUL FOR THEIR PRAYERS.
- I HAVE TO ADMIT, A SECOND ROUND AS CHAIRMAN WAS THE RESULT OF WHAT WAS PROBABLY THE SHORTEST CHAIRMANSHIP IN COUNCIL HISTORY – THE TENURE OF MY FORMER COLLEAGUE, NOW STATE SENATOR DAVID HARRINGTON.

- IN FEBRUARY, SENATOR HARRINGTON RESIGNED THE CHAIRMANSHIP AND THE COUNCIL UPON HIS APPOINTMENT TO THE STATE SENATE SEAT LEFT VACANT BY THE PASSING OF THE HONORABLE GWENDOLYN BRITT.
- IN ADDITION TO MY SECOND YEAR AS CHAIRMAN, SENATOR HARRINGTON'S ELEVATION, ALSO PRESENTED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A NEW DISTRICT 5 COUNCIL MEMBER.
- THE VOTERS SPOKE....AND IN MAY, THE COUNCIL'S NEWEST MEMBER, ANDREA HARRISON WAS SWORN IN, OCCUPYING THE SEAT ONCE HELD BY HER LATE FATHER, THE HONORABLE JAMES C. FLETCHER, AND BECAME THE FIRST WOMAN ELECTED TO SERVE DISTRICT 5 ON THE COUNCIL.
- MAYA ANGELOU REMINDED US IN A CONVOCATION ADDRESS TO CORNELL UNIVERSITY THIS PAST SPRING, THAT -- "YOU CAN BE KIND AND TRUE AND GENEROUS AND JUST, AND EVEN MERCIFUL OCCASIONALLY, BUT TO BE THAT THING TIME AFTER TIME, YOU REALLY HAVE TO HAVE COURAGE."

- ALWAYS COMMITTED TO OUR CORE VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES, THIS COUNCIL IS A COURAGEOUS ASSEMBLY OF LOCAL LEGISLATORS GIFTED WITH A VISION FOR THE FUTURE--WILLING TO DO THE HARD WORK AND NOT AFRAID OF THE TOUGH DECISIONS TO BENEFIT THE COMMON GOOD.
- THIS HAS BEEN A DIFFICULT YEAR AS WE CONTINUE TO GRAPPLE WITH FISCAL CHALLENGES OF ENORMOUS PROPORTIONS—AN ONGOING DECLINE IN THE NATIONAL AND STATE ECONOMIES; CONSIDERABLE REVENUE LOSSES; A CLIMBING RATE OF FORECLOSURES; AND THE LOSS OF CRITICAL STATE SUPPORT AMID PROJECTIONS OF A \$437 MILLION STATE BUDGET DEFICIT.
- BUT WHETHER THE ISSUE HAS BEEN FURLOUGHS OR FORECLOSURES, THE MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL HAVE COURAGEOUSLY STEPPED UP TO THE PLATE AND MADE THE DECISION TO LEAD.
- A SPECIAL THANKS TO MY CO-LEADER VICE-CHAIR MARILYNN BLAND.

- MARILYNN, YOUR EXCEPTIONAL PARTNERSHIP HAS SERVED THIS COUNCIL AND THIS COUNTY WELL, AND I OFFER MY SINCERE APPRECIATION FOR YOUR INVALUABLE SUPPORT AND CONTRIBUTIONS.

- I WANT TO MAKE A SPECIAL NOTE OF YOUR WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE. THE PARTICIPATION OF THE YOUTH COMMISSION THIS YEAR PRODUCED ONE OF THE COUNCIL'S MOST SUCCESSFUL AND WIDELY ATTENDED COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP SESSIONS.

- THAT SAID, I LOOK FORWARD TO THE COMING YEAR AND NEW COUNCIL LEADERSHIP WITH GREAT ANTICIPATION.

- THE NATIONAL ECONOMY HAS NOW BEEN FORMERLY DECLARED IN A RECESSION. STATE AND COUNTY DEFICITS CONTINUE TO GROW. NO ONE HAS BEEN SPARED.

- TO ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE TO LEAD IN TIMES LIKE THESE WARRANTS OUR COMPLETE RESPECT AND COOPERATION, BUT THIS IS A COUNCIL THAT BELIEVES IN SHARED LEADERSHIP.

- AS I AGAIN MOVE TO THE RANKS OF FORMER COUNCIL CHAIRMAN, PLEASE JOIN ME IN A MOMENT OF PRAISE FOR MY ESTEEMED COLLEAGUES. COLLECTIVELY AND INDIVIDUALLY, JOB WELL DONE! (APPLAUSE)

- WHEN I REFLECT UPON THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THIS PAST LEGISLATIVE YEAR, THERE ARE TWO THAT RISE ABOVE THE REST – I HAVE ALREADY MENTIONED THE TREMENDOUS COURAGE DEMONSTRATED BY MY COLLEAGUES.

- THE OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENT IS THE STRONG COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT AS WE WORK TOGETHER TO EFFECTIVELY PREVENT AND MANAGE CRISES.

- I’LL HIGHLIGHT A FEW:

- AS THE COUNTY’S FISCAL AUTHORITY, THE COUNCIL HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO ADDRESS THE REALITIES OF THE CURRENT ECONOMY, AND MAKE THE TOUGH DECISIONS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR OUR CITIZENS.

- FINDING WAYS TO ADDRESS A SIGNIFICANT AND GROWING BUDGET SHORTFALL HAS BEEN A HUGE CHALLENGE.
- THIS COUNTY IS STILL LIMITED IN ITS ABILITY TO RAISE REVENUE BY TAX RESTRICTIONS SUCH AS TRIM, A VOTER-IMPOSED CAP ON PROPERTY TAXES.
- THE COUNCIL ADOPTED A \$2.7 BILLION SPENDING PLAN FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008 IN MAY THAT CONTINUED TO MEET THE CRITICAL NEEDS OF THE COUNTY, BUT ALSO RETURNED THE INCOME TAX AND RECORDATION TAX RATES TO 2006 LEVELS.
- COUNTY EMPLOYEES ARE OUR GREATEST ASSET AND WE CONTINUE TO WORK HARD TO INSULATE THEM AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE FROM THE IMPACT OF FALLING REVENUES AND RISING COSTS.
- WHILE UNION CONTRACTS, AND COST OF LIVING AND MERIT PAY INCREASES FOR COUNTY EMPLOYEES WERE APPROVED, THE COUNCIL MADE THE PAINFUL DECISION TO AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S FURLOUGH PLAN FOR OUR EMPLOYEES TO ENSURE THE PROVISION OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES TO OUR CITIZENS.

- ANOTHER TOUGH BUDGET DECISION INVOLVED NEGOTIATING THE WITHDRAWAL OF \$14 MILLION FROM EDUCATION SPENDING.

- THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL CONTINUE TO CLOSELY MONITOR THE COUNTY'S FISCAL SITUATION AND MAKE ADJUSTMENTS AS REQUIRED.

- THIS CONSERVATIVE APPROACH CONTRIBUTED GREATLY TO THE SUCCESS OF A TRIP TO WALL STREET THAT THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND I, ALONG WITH THE COUNTY'S FINANCIAL EXPERTS, TOOK THIS SPRING. THE MEETING WITH WALL STREET EXECUTIVES RESULTED IN A COVETED TRIPLE-A BOND RATING FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY.

- IT WAS AN ACHIEVEMENT THAT AFFIRMED THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S EXEMPLARY FISCAL LEADERSHIP AND THE REMARKABLE FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP OF THIS COUNCIL.

- YET ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THE IMMEASURABLE VALUE OF WORKING TOGETHER, THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE, COUNTY COUNCIL AND THE GOVERNOR ENTERED INTO A FUNDING AGREEMENT FOR THE HOSPITAL SYSTEM WHILE A BIDDING PROCESS IS BEING CONDUCTED TO FIND A NEW OWNER TO OPERATE THE SYSTEM.

- TOGETHER, WE CREATED THE FRAMEWORK FOR A LONG-TERM SOLUTION TO PROVIDING ACCESS TO THE QUALITY HEALTHCARE THAT OUR CITIZENS DESERVE AND THAT IS SO IMPORTANT TO A VITAL ECONOMY.

- WHILE PRINCE GEORGES COUNTY CURRENTLY LEADS THE STATE IN FORECLOSURE RATES, RECENT ACTIONS BY THE COUNCIL WILL HELP PREVENT SOME OF THE ECONOMIC AND PUBLIC SAFETY IMPACTS OF THE VACANT PROPERTIES, BY REDUCING THE NUMBER OF ABANDONED AND FORECLOSED HOMES AND RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES.

- THE RECENTLY APPROVED NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION PROGRAM (CR-97-2008) WILL GO A LONG WAY TO HELP RESTORE OUR NEIGHBORHOODS AND THE COUNTY'S TAX BASE.

- THIS INFUSION OF RESOURCES INTO OUR HOUSING MARKET WILL HELP ALL RESIDENTS BY MAINTAINING PROPERTY VALUES AND REDUCING ISSUES THAT ARE ASSOCIATED WITH VACANT PROPERTIES.
- WE ENCOURAGE OUR RESIDENTS TO TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF THIS PROGRAM.
- THIS COUNCIL HAS ALWAYS BEEN COMMITTED TO PROMOTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, WITH A PARTICULAR FOCUS ON ENSURING LOCAL AND MINORITY PARTICIPATION IN PROJECTS IN WHICH THE COUNTY IS INVOLVED.
- WORKING TOGETHER WITH THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE, THE COUNCIL RECENTLY APPROVED A BOND BILL TO PAY FOR PUBLIC FACILITIES AND IMPROVEMENTS AT NATIONAL HARBOR.
- THE LEGISLATION ALSO PROVIDES FOR LOCAL MINORITY PARTICIPATION IN PROJECTS ASSOCIATED WITH NATIONAL HARBOR. MINORITY CONTRACTORS WILL GET AT LEAST 15-PERCENT OF THE WORK FROM NEW CONSTRUCTION.

- FURTHER, THE LEGISLATION INCLUDES \$5 MILLION TO PRINCE GEORGE'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY TRAINING FOR LOCAL, SMALL AND MINORITY OWNED BUSINESSES. THIS ENSURES A GOOD POOL OF QUALIFIED CONTRACTORS FROM WHICH TO CHOOSE.

- I AM PARTICULARLY PROUD OF THE COUNCIL'S WORK ON THIS LEGISLATION IN COOPERATION WITH THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE. THE COUNCIL IS ALREADY COMMITTED TO TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT AND REVITALIZING ESTABLISHED COMMUNITIES. THIS LEGISLATION SETS A POLICY DIRECTION FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND MINORITY BUSINESS PARTICIPATION IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY.

- NATIONAL HARBOR IS A \$4-BILLION DEVELOPMENT, AND THERE ARE EVEN LARGER DEVELOPMENTS COMING TO THE COUNTY. EVEN IN THIS ECONOMY, PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY IS STILL GROWING – WHETHER IT'S M-SQUARE, PRINCE GEORGE'S PLAZA, KONTERRA, WESTPHALIA, OR THE COMCAST CALL CENTER, WHICH PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES FOR 500 JOBS.

- WE REALLY BELIEVE IN THE CONCEPT OF LEGACY WEALTH -- THAT COUNTY CITIZENS, RESIDENTS, AND BUSINESSES MUST PARTICIPATE AND SHARE IN EVERY LEVEL OF THE WEALTH GENERATED HERE IN THE COUNTY: OPERATIONS, EQUITY, AND PROJECTS. AT LEAST 20-PERCENT OF THE WORK FROM OPERATIONS AT NATIONAL HARBOR WILL NOW GO TO MINORITY CONTRACTORS FROM THE COUNTY.
- THIS HAS BEEN A GREAT EXPERIENCE AND WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED MUCH, BUT EACH ACHIEVEMENT WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY THE PARTNERSHIP OF THOSE ON THIS COUNCIL, IN THIS GOVERNMENT, AND ON OUR STAFF.
- THIS COUNCIL CONDUCTS OUR MOST IMPORTANT WORK, INCLUDING THE BUDGET REVIEW AND ADOPTION, THROUGH OUR COMMITTEE PROCESS.
- I WANT TO MAKE SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF MY COLLEAGUES WHO SERVED AT THE HELM OF THOSE COMMITTEES, GUIDING THE BUDGET, AND CRITICAL LEGISLATION AND INITIATIVES THROUGH THE PROCESS, ESPECIALLY DURING THIS VERY DIFFICULT FISCAL YEAR.

- MY THANKS TO COUNCIL MEMBERS WILL CAMPOS AND INGRID TURNER, CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR RESPECTIVELY OF OUR HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE.
- OUR PLANNING, ZONING, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE WAS HEADED BY FORMER COUNCIL CHAIR CAMILLE EXUM, WITH THE ABLE ASSISTANCE OF VICE-CHAIR ERIC OLSON.
- ANOTHER FORMER COUNCIL CHAIR TONY KNOTTS LED OUR PUBLIC SAFETY AND FISCAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE. HE WAS ASSISTED IN THIS ESSENTIAL WORK BY COUNCIL MEMBER INGRID TURNER.
- AND FORMER COUNCIL CHAIR THOMAS DERNOGA TEAMED UP WITH COMMITTEE VICE-CHAIR ERIC OLSON TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP FOR THE TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE.
- ROBERT K. GREENLEAF, WHO PIONEERED THE CONCEPT OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP, LISTS SEVERAL QUALITIES OF A ‘SERVANT LEADER.’ AMONG THOSE QUALITIES IS INSPIRATION TO SERVICE BECAUSE A SERVANT LEADER KNOWS HE OR SHE CANNOT DO IT ALONE.

- OUR COUNTY EXECUTIVE JACK JOHNSON IS SUCH A LEADER. HE RECOGNIZES THAT WHILE WE REPRESENT TWO SEPARATE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT, EFFECTIVE SERVICE TO THE CITIZENS AND RESIDENTS OF THIS COUNTY REQUIRES WORKING WELL TOGETHER.
- OVER THE YEARS, THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO BRANCHES HAS EVOLVED AND WHAT WE HAVE TODAY IS A TRUE PARTNERSHIP BUILT ON A COMMON MISSION TO SERVE THE PEOPLE OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY TO THE BEST OF OUR ABILITY.
- THANK YOU MISTER COUNTY EXECUTIVE.
- THIS COUNCIL IS SUPPORTED BY A VERY ABLE TEAM OF DEDICATED PROFESSIONALS, AND THEIR HARD WORK MERITS OUR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.
- BEGINNING WITH THE STAFF MEMBERS WHO WORK IN THE OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN: MY LOVELY WIFE DONNA DEAN, NELL JOHNSON, GEORGE BRAXTON, IRETHA TATE AND BERNADETTE HARRIS.

- COUNCIL ADMINISTRATOR CRAIG PRICE WHOSE VAST AND DIVERSE EMPIRICAL KNOWLEDGE PROVIDES IMMEASURABLE WISE COUNSEL IN ALL OUR ENDEAVORS.
- DEPUTY COUNCIL ADMINISTRATOR ROBERT WILLIAMS, AND THEIR SUPPORT STAFF, EDNA HALL, SHARON WILLIAMS, AND KATHERINE LYNCH.
- CLERK OF THE COUNCIL REE FLOYD WHOM I CONSIDER THE MAESTRO THAT KEEPS THIS DIVERGENT GROUP OPERATING AS A UNIT.
- DEPUTY CLERK OF THE COUNCIL DONNA BROWN, AND THE OFFICE STAFF (MS. SHIRLEY, TERI, CELESTE, MIRA AND SHERRY). WE NEVER COULD HAVE MADE IT WITHOUT YOU.
- DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS KAREN CAMPBELL, AND OFFICE STAFF, SHELBY MCRAE, ANGELA ROUSON, GILLIE HAYNES AND GRETA SCOTT. I MUST GIVE SPECIAL KUDOS TO THE BEST COMMUNICATIONS TEAM IN THE COUNTY; NO, IN THE NATION, FOR THEIR PROFESSIONALISM AND EXPERTISE AS THEY HELPED US NAVIGATE THE OFTEN TROUBLED WATERS OF PUBLIC PERCEPTION TO REACH SAFE HARBOR.

- THANKS TO OUR INVALUABLE COMMITTEE DIRECTORS JACKIE BROWN, SANDRA EUBANKS, FRANK PORTER, HAWI SANU AND THEIR SUPPORT STAFF.
- COUNTY AUDITOR DAVID VAN DYKE, DEPUTY AUDITOR STEVE MCGIBBONS, BILL HUNT, HOWARD STONE, AND THE ENTIRE AUDITS AND INVESTIGATIONS STAFF, THAT MECCA OF KNOWLEDGE, FACTS AND FIGURES WHICH SKILLFULLY UNVEILS “WHAT IS” FROM “WHAT APPEARS TO BE.”
- STAFF ATTORNEYS CARMEN JACKSON-BROWN, STEVEN GILBERT, COLETTE GRESHAM, RALPH GRUTZMACHER, TODD TURNER, AND KAREN ZAVAKOS. THANKS FOR YOUR EXEMPLARY GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT.
- CHIEF ZONING HEARING EXAMINER MAUREEN EPPS – WEBB AND ZONING HEARING EXAMINER JOYCE NICHOLS- GREAT JOB!
- ANNE CARTER AND THE BOARD OF APPEALS

- PEOPLES ZONING COUNSEL STAN BROWN WHOSE CALM DEMEANOR AND DIVERSE EXPERTISE SHORES US UP ON MANY FRONTS.
- FINANCE OFFICER KERRY MACWILLIAMS AND STAFF.
- THANKS TO OUR GENERAL ASSEMBLY LOBBYISTS DAVID JACOBS AND DARRYL KELLEY.
- SPECIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR CAROL JOHNSON
- OUR COUNCIL RECEPTIONISTS, ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT STAFF MEMBERS, AND OUR HOUSEKEEPING AND FACILITIES STAFF.
- THANKS TEAM COUNTY COUNCIL. EVERY ONE OF YOU IS VALUED FOR YOUR DEDICATED AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE.
- TO THE MEMBERS OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S STAFF WITH WHOM WE HAVE WORKED CLOSELY OVER THE COURSE OF THIS YEAR - MARCUS JACKSON, IRIS BOSWELL, MICHAEL HERMAN, VERNON HERRON, DR. JACKIE BROWN, WANDA SLATER AND DEBRA JAMES-MORRIS, JON SEEMAN, BONITA WILLIAMS, KATHY CANNING, RUSSELL KING AND JOSH HAMLIN. THANK YOU.

- THIS YEAR HAS BEEN MARKED ON MANY LEVELS BY AN HISTORIC SEASON OF CHANGE.
- WHAT COMES IMMEDIATELY TO MIND IS THE ELECTION OF THE NATION'S FIRST AFRICAN-AMERICAN PRESIDENT, BARACK OBAMA.
- THE CHANGES THAT WILL BE USHERED INTO OUR NATION'S CAPITOL WILL GREATLY ASSIST ALL OF US AS WE WORK TO MEET THE CHALLENGES POSED BY THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS BEING FACED IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY AND ACROSS THE COUNTRY.
- DESPITE THE CHALLENGES WE FACE AND THE AWESOME TASKS AHEAD, WHAT A PRIVILEGE IT IS TO BE IN PUBLIC SERVICE AT THIS MOMENT IN HISTORY. I AGREE WITH PRESIDENT-ELECT OBAMA...THIS IS OUR TIME.
- IT'S OUR TIME TO EMERGE A STRONGER, WISER, MORE COURAGEOUS AND VIBRANT PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY. THANK YOU FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE THIS COUNCIL AND THE GREAT PEOPLE OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY.

- I APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT. I CONTINUE TO ASK FOR YOUR PRAYERS. AND I PROMISE TO KEEP YOU IN MINE.
- I CLOSE WITH THE WORDS FROM APOSTLE PAUL IN **2 TIMOTHY 4: 7**: “I HAVE FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT”, WITH YOUR HELP, “I HAVE FINISHED THE COURSE.” “I HAVE KEPT THE FAITH.”
- GOD BLESS THIS COUNCIL.
- GOD BLESS PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY.