

DACCA NEWSLETTER

Dunkirk Area Concerned Citizens Association

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Autumn 2007

Chartered December 1983

Are They Helpful Signs or Litter?

The Dunkirk Area Concerned Citizens Association (DACCA) General Membership meeting Tuesday, October 16, 2007, 7 p.m. at the Dunkirk Firehouse will be discussing the proliferation of signs that appeared most notably at the entrance to Dunkirk District Park. High attendance is anticipated since voting is likely for determining DACCA's position. DACCA invited the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) and the Director of Parks and Recreation to also attend.

Background: In 1999, the county commissioners passed a regulation allowing businesses to advertise along the roads from Friday after 4 p.m. through Sunday. That ordinance permits the very types of "Trash on a Stick" ugly signs county citizens often detest. DACCA opposes such signs. These temporary commercial small signs actually harm local businesses when out-of-county business interests post them. Some DACCA members specifically refuse doing business with those who resort to "Trash on a Stick."

DACCA opposes unsightly proliferation of signs at the entrance to Dunkirk District Park as well as other existing illegal signs. Signs on a state highway, other than traffic related state highway signs, are litter.

At Issue: September 11, 2007, on a 3 to 2 vote, the county commissioners instituted a change to county ordinances to permit installation of 5 green 4' x 8' boards at the entrance to Dunkirk District Park, Hallowing Point Park, Cove Point Park, and the entrance to the Landfill in Lusby on Route 4. Actual ordinance is elsewhere in this newsletter. Implementation began with removal of all signs and construction of the county boards, September 21.

The issue with signs at Dunkirk District Park is legion. Citizens groups such as DACCA oppose signs that clutter the county. Their location is an abuse of public property. They:

- were all crowded together
- distracted from the tasteful Dunkirk-Town-Center sign 100 or so feet away
- distracted drivers
- provided cluttering "eye pollution" for those looking for sanctuary in a park environment.

Collectively, these attributes define "tacky." This collective "monument to tacky" is at the northern gateway to our county. The message contradicts our true character, and for a county trying to promote tourism, it does not present a pretty picture. Newcomers are given a first impression there is little respect here for natural beauty or good taste.

The previous ad-hoc posting of signs spoiled the visual environment in Dunkirk. Removal of signs did not routinely occur. Did the recent ordinance by the BOCC set the stage to spread the opportunity for "tacky signs" throughout the county as happened with the 1999 ordinance?

Finding advertising opportunities for businesses (yes, non-profits are businesses too) is not a government function. The BOCC goes to great lengths to save land and preserve the rural atmosphere. Will the new ordinance destroy the viewscapes at the entrances to the parks? The competition for the new boards will be intense and those not afforded the opportunity will be very disappointed. Yet alternate views may exist.

Your Views?

Are there better solutions? For example:

- A small but distinctive and improved Visitor Center (the one at Fairview Library comes to mind).
- A welcome to Calvert sign as an information guide identifying various functions such a Rotary meeting (maybe a DACCA meeting) in northern Calvert.
- A Welcome to Calvert County sign displaying various service club symbols and tastefully containing an electronic sign alerting to any traffic alerts rotating through upcoming events of interest to both locals and visitors.

Posting signs can benefit the public, profit and non-profit businesses/organizations. DACCA believes too many signs already exist throughout Calvert County.

DACCA Board of Directors desires input from its membership concerning their views regarding signs. By attending and voting, you will have a say. Remember, our by-laws dictate you must be an active member to vote. Not a member? Come and join; then vote!

DACCA itself, a non-profit organization displays for 24 hours "DACCA Meeting Tonight" signs throughout the Dunkirk area supplementing other announcements about its general membership meetings. Posting of signs serve legitimate purposes. Those previously at the Dunkirk District Park entrance long ago exceeded common sense.

General Membership Meeting
FireHouse, Dunkirk
7 p.m. Tuesday, October 16, 2007

***A Little DACCA History --
By Evan Slaughenhaupt
DACCA President***

I recently read previous DACCA newsletters and hope you enjoy the following. Note the views of former DACCA Presidents are just as valid and applicable today. Those of us fortunate enough to serve as a DACCA officer truly believe that Informed Citizens Have Better Governments.

DACCA's original stated purpose is unchanged, to keep people "informed on what's happening in our community, as well as what our elected officials are saying or doing that impacts on the quality of life in the Dunkirk area as well as our county." **Joyce Lyons Terhes, Spring, 1984.**

The inaugural issue of the newsletter Spring 1984, envisioned quarterly publications mailed-out in hardcopy. Since then, postage costs for hardcopy increased while the yearly membership fee since 1991, remained constant (\$10 year/household). Newsletters decreased to 2 per year, but e-mail permits more frequent communication. Currently, over 760 e-mail addressees receive newsletters, periodic public service announcements, and various letters of interest. Our reach continues to grow.

Local newspapers publish many of DACCA's Letters to Editors and one (The Voice) is known to print our entire newsletter.

DACCA benefits today from the leadership of the 7 previous Presidents, namely Joyce Lyons Terhes, Tom Kilcullen, Linda Kelley, Tom Mero, Richard Alu, Jack Schofield, and Jay Lounsbury. Their energy and devotion is documented in the content of those newsletters covering a variety of issues typically within 4 pages, but at times as many as 8 pages

Yet, it is more than the content of newsletters and the range of issues that identifies DACCA as an effective civic organization. Doing research, taking positions, making suggestions, and asking needed questions is our role. "Our active, positive DACCA offers citizens of Dunkirk our best chance to improve the quality of life on the peninsula we all cherish. Won't you join with us as we work to continue Maryland's proud heritage?" **Joyce Lyons Terhes, Spring, 1984.**

Initially, DACCA formed several committees such as Town Center Committee, Zoning Ordinance Committee, and Membership Committee. By charter, various standing committees exist. Recent activities are run more by the current board of directors. This board will always welcome volunteers to reform any particular committees. The general membership is reminded their involvement is not only welcomed, but encouraged. We need new members. Ask your neighbors to join.

To preclude becoming just a minority of citizens standing for narrow-minded opinions (accused of being the same old people with the same old views), DACCA cannot become a stale organization. "Instead, we must exhibit a continued vitality while still maintaining the integrity of what DACCA stands for. To do this, fresh people with renewed purpose and drive need to step forward and take charge." **Tom Kilcullen, Autumn 1986.**

Our history shows heavy involvement in planning & zoning. Related topics include terms such as Transfer Zones, Development Rights, and Site Plans. We remain true to our objective of controlling growth to maintain the rural character of northern Calvert County. Reading county code is not flashy, but is important. "While zoning issues are most frequently brought forward, and they are the most visible issues in the county (they make the news headlines), that is not all a citizens' group should be involved in..." **Tom Kilcullen, Winter 1986.**

Besides DACCA, other citizen civic organizations exist in Calvert County. Currently, the Calvert Citizens Coalition (CCC) includes representation from Dunkirk, Owings, St. Leonard, and Solomons. DACCA is looking to increase the membership of the CCC as well as assist forming other citizen organizations. "Additional citizens organizations do not dilute DACCA's position. On the contrary, they strengthen the overall citizen input to County government..." **Linda Kelley, Autumn 1987.**

DACCA along with other citizen associations reviewed school budgets and other county services. DACCA objected to previous scare tactics used by officials to increase funding (1988 school budget specifically).

DACCA sought the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) which prohibits new subdivisions if adequate public facilities are unavailable, or would not become available within 2 years.

For various commercial projects within Dunkirk, Calvert County receives our input. "DACCA has been carefully monitoring the project through its members on the Dunkirk Architectural Review Committee (DARC)." **Richard Alu, July 1992.**

Work is Never Done

The Master Water and Sewerage Plan is being revised, and DACCA participates. The Dunkirk Town Center Master Plan will be revised in 2008, and DACCA will be involved. "Several important issues lie ahead for DACCA, one of which is the revision of the Comprehensive Plan." **Tom Mero, May 1994.**
Calvert County Comprehensive Plan

Join DACCA

Expanding and increasing membership involvement is always high on the list for leaders of volunteer organizations. "If you want to become involved with the improvement of our community – growth, zoning, economic development, jobs, traffic, schools, environment and more – I urge you to join DACCA and bring a friend." **Jack Schofield, September 1995.**

As we citizens enjoy what Calvert County provides, we can easily become too complacent and unaware that forces want to change us to become more like other nearby counties. "For years, Dunkirk has been in the bullseye of the growth issue. It has been too easy for residents in other parts of Calvert County to think, 'That's Dunkirk's problem – it doesn't affect me.' *Wake up neighbor!* What they are trying to do to Dunkirk this year, they can and probably will try to do to your community next year or the year after." **Jay Lounsbury, Summer 1998.**

Countering High Density

DACCA challenged others who would change Calvert County from Rural to High Density. These groups have included the *United Builders and Citizen's Alliance* (UBCA) (1989) comprised of the building and development community, as was *Responsible Growth Alliance* (1996), *Reality Check Plus* (2006), and *Citizens Alliance for Responsible Leadership* (CARL) (2006). Did we not mention *Save the Farms* and the *Calvert Business Alliance*? The organizational names have changed over time, but their motivations exist; a far different vision for Calvert County.

Dunkirk Post Office

In autumn 1999, the Dunkirk Post Office lease was due to end in 2003 (it did). Discussions ensued to potentially relocate the post office due to safety and customer convenience concerns. The post office did not move and is unlikely to move. In 2007, DACCA Board of Directors did a comparison (table elsewhere in newsletter) of all other post offices within Calvert County with the following observations:

- Parking arrangements for Dunkirk Post Office at Dunkirk Towne Square when compared to four other post offices of comparable size or number of patrons (Owings, Huntingtown, Prince Frederick, and Lusby) is inadequate and unsafe.
 - In inclement weather, the parking lot is dangerous. It is poorly plowed and sanded. Melting snow refreezes and creates a further hazard.
 - Three vehicles have crashed into the lobby.
- Direct access in Dunkirk from Town Center Boulevard to the Post Office is cumbersome for patrons living east of Dunkirk.
- County zoning requirements indicate that 18 parking spots should be available for the Dunkirk Post Office.¹
- The current office is poorly located in the Town Center.
 - It has poor and hazardous access to/from Rt. 4.
 - Not easily accessible to the high-traffic Rt. 4.
 - The lobby and box areas are too small.
- Postal Service currently has "No Plans" for improving the Dunkirk Post Office.
- Some physical problems with Dunkirk parking stem from the management company (Site Reality), including its inability or unwillingness to keep vehicles of adjacent businesses from using Post Office spaces.

- The facility has plenty of room inside the building, but the loading dock arrangements cause inefficiencies and contribute to hazardous working conditions.
- Current two-level staging area highly inadequate and inefficient though current postal employees are "very happy with the size" (square footage) of the current building.
- Currently, over 2800 Dunkirk addresses exist or an increase of 259 (9.1%) over the past 4 years or 2.2% annual average.
- Sufficient open spaces currently exist within Dunkirk Town Center for construction of a new postal facility whether owned by the Postal Service, or leased to as yet unidentified builder/owner. Future space in a planned, but not yet built shopping center is also an option.

Sheriff Department Manning

Recently, the Calvert County Sheriff department made a case for significantly increasing the number of deputies on patrol. DACCA obtained funding, population, staffing, and crime figures and performed an assessment. A chart contained within this newsletter shows the rate of increase in these attributes allowing for an "apple to apple" comparison among disparate values. This provides the viewer the ability to see the relationship among Population Growth, Funding Increases, Staffing Increases, Crime Statistics and Calls for Service.

The figures were obtained from both the County Budget staff and the Sheriff's Department. Disparities in these figures were found between the two departments.

Calls for service and crime figures have insufficient history and appear unstable to be viable metrics.

Rate of Population Growth is trending downward as funding is trending upwards coincident with the increases in staffing.

The Sheriff Deputies and Maryland State Police are doing something right as the crime rate during first half of 2007 was reported to be low (overall rate of -13%). Of course, the upstanding citizens of Calvert County deserve much credit.

DACCA continues to believe that increased police presence is needed in northern Calvert as this area is truly a gateway to Calvert County. There are those who come into the county solely to commit crime and then quickly depart. Of concern most recently was the armed robbery at *Mr. Tire* in Dunkirk and recent shop-lifting at Giant grocery.

Dunkirk Water & Sewer Update (The Third Rail of Calvert's Politics)

An update to the Calvert County Water & Sewerage Master Plan is being presented for public review and comment. Look for inclusion of words that indicate public water and sewer for Dunkirk within the next 10 years. Yet, before concluding there is another coordinated attack on Dunkirk, please note the following.

¹ Post Offices within Calvert County are considered Government Buildings and require 1 parking space/200 Square Feet. Parking is based on "net floor area", which is typically 85% of gross floor area.

According to the “Smart Growth” Area Act of 1997, Chapter 759 of the Laws of Maryland of 1997, the State must target funding for ‘growth-related’ projects to **Priority Funding Areas**. Growth related projects are defined in the legislation and include most State programs which encourage or support growth and development such as highways, economic development assistance, and State leases and construction of new office facilities. This would include road improvements such as overpasses for Route 4 at Ward Road in Dunkirk.

As confirmed with state authorities, to qualify as a **Priority Funding Area**, towns need to have existing public or community sewer service, or plans for service included in the approved 10-year Water and Sewer Plan. For this reason, all town centers are being designated in the upcoming Master Plan for such service within 10 years.

The systems don’t have to be ‘public’ to meet the criteria for Priority Funding Areas. The existing community system supporting Calvert Gateway shopping center (Giant and Wal-Mart) meets the requirement as an “existing community system.” Also, having a system planned within 10 years doesn’t mean that the County (or someone else) must install it in 10 years; just that such a system is possible in that period. Before a system could actually be installed, the Commissioners would have to change the zoning category from W-5 or S-5 to W-3 or S-3.

Bottom Line: A close review of the plan was done by DACCA. We provided input to ensure wording is such to prevent an end-around against the wishes of the citizens. Planning and Zoning will forward our comments and suggestions as part of their next presentation to the County Commissioners for a public hearing planned for sometime in October or November.

More Signs?

The Calvert County Board of Education is proposing a policy addressing posting of signs on school property. The current proposal delegates the policy to the Superintendent of Schools. The potential exists for the school superintendent to further delegate to each school principal policies for signs on school properties. Doing so could likely yield an unbalanced approach, and could eventually turn the schools into the largest advertising venue in the County.

The web site to review the policy is located at: <http://www.calvertnet.k12.md.us/admin/policies/policiesforreview.asp> Note the comment that indicates a cutoff date is contained on the proposed policy. No date was apparent on the *Policy on Advertising in CCPS* when checked by DACCA. The Board of Education is receiving comments until October 10, 2007. Comments can be made through their website, or by mail to: Board of Education, 1305 Dares Beach Road, Prince Frederick, MD 20678, attn: comments on policy.

The proposed policy gives the appearance of “ducking an issue.” By delegating the authority to the school superintendent, the BOE can go on record having a policy, but not need to take a

firm stand on the issue. Is that why you elected these board members?

Dunkirk Park-n-Ride

Planned for the fall of 2010 is a new Park-n-Ride for Dunkirk. The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) held a community open house regarding their proposal at the Dunkirk Firehouse, Tuesday, September 25, 2007.

Their plan calls for a 480-space parking lot facility replacing the temporarily leased 244-spaced facility. The new location will exist behind the current medical building with access via Town Center Boulevard. Several extra hand-outs provided by the MTA will be available at the upcoming DACCA general membership meeting along with comments cards.

As viewed thus far, the comments heard during the open house were generally positive with many current bus commuters expressing the desire for the additional parking spots now. Also expressed were needs for MTA to use more buses since Dunkirk is the last stop out of the county and seats are often sparse now as well as potentially putting a stop at the nearest Metro Station. The location of the Park-n-Ride as currently planned will be surrounded by trees making it not visible from Route 4. However, some safety and security arrangements such as more Sheriff Patrol stops, and/or inclusion of cameras should be considered.

Transportation Open House Planned

The Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland will hold an Open House Tuesday, October 30, 2007, 7 – 9 p.m. at the Calvert Pines Senior Center, 450 West Dares Beach Road, Prince Frederick. Participation is desired to help identify transportation goals, issues, and needs in Southern Maryland. The study results will be used as a decision making tool for planning, programming, and funding transportation improvement projects throughout the region.

Web Site Maintenance

DACCA Board of Directors could use some help with maintaining the DACCA web site at <http://www.daccamd.com> Interested volunteers who know how to do such would be greatly appreciated. At a minimum, perhaps someone could contact us at Dunkirkdacca@aol.com to identify someone with web site maintenance skills.

Don’t forget the DACCA general membership meeting. Your attendance and participation will be very helpful.

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Comparisons – Calvert County Post Offices²

Zip Code	City	Phone	Status	# Boxes	# Deliveries	Parking	Pop. ³	Sq Ft.	Vol (ft/day) ⁴	LF ⁵	Comments
20714	North Beach	410-257-6328	Lease	1,300	1,500	Shared	4,751	4,948	12	243	Street Parking
20688	Solomons	410-326-3193	Lease	1,200	600	Shared	1,289	936	10	131	Strip Mall
20736	Owings	410-257-1764	Lease	992	3,400	25	7,505	8,000	65	72	Newer Facility
20676	Port Republic	410-586-1419	Lease	300	1,138	17	3,938	2,550	16	58	Newer Facility
20678	Prince Frederick	410-535-1449	Own	2,000	3,428	31	10,800	7,896	80	50	Two Story Building
20657	Lusby	410-326-4406	Lease	1,982	7,500	30	21,234	11,500	120	43	Newer Facility
20754	Dunkirk	410-257-6090	Lease	900	2,200	Shared	7,473	4,256	55	32	Strip Mall
20732	Chesapeake Beach	410-257-6890	Lease	850	2,800	Shared	9,445	5,928	100	23	Strip Mall
20615	Broomes Island	410-586-1728	Lease	200	109	4	465	200	6	22	
20629	Dowell	410-326-2135	Lease	250	0	N/A	680	700	16	16	Gravel Parking (Trailer)
20639	Huntingtown	410-535-9633	Lease	1,200	4,500	30	13,346	4,032	112	15	Insufficient Space
20685	St. Leonard	410-586-0688	Lease	425	2,100	7	6,313	1,200	35	14	
20610	Barstow	410-535-1479	Lease	260	0	16	See P. F.	1,200	N/A	N/A	
20689	Sunderland	301-855-0913	Lease	460	N/A	12	1,162	900	N/A	N/A	Deferred Responses
			Totals	12,319	29,275	182	88,401	54,246			

General Membership Meeting FireHouse, Dunkirk 7 p.m. Tuesday, October 16, 2007

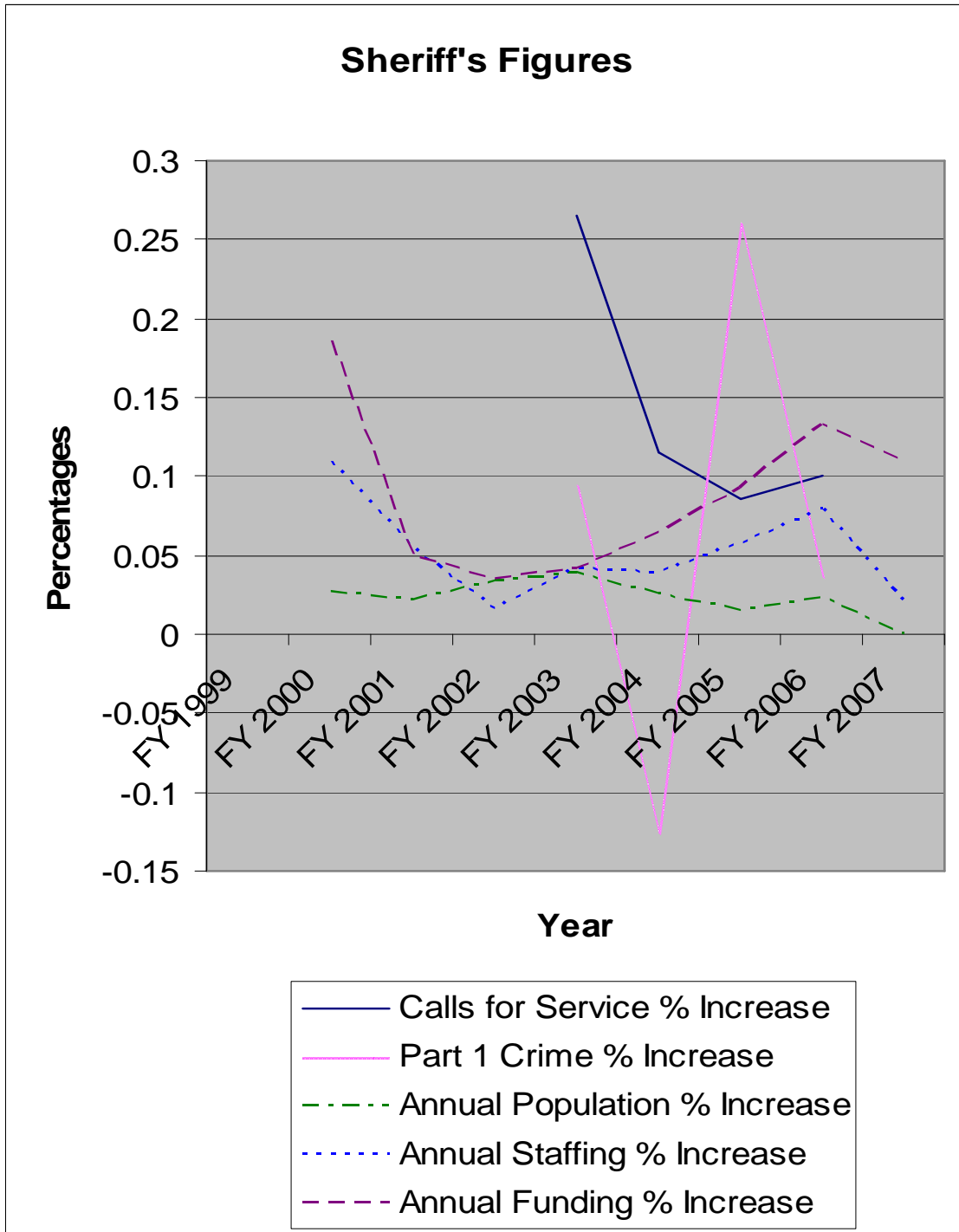
² Towns with Master Plans are Dunkirk, Huntingtown, Lusby, Owings, Prince Frederick, Solomons, and St. Leonard.

³ Population figures from: <http://www.bestplaces.net/zip-code/>

⁴ (Volume) One foot consists of letters stacked one foot high (common usage to measure volume of mail). Data does not include parcels, newspapers, and magazines.

⁵ Load Factor (LF) consists of ((Number of Boxes + Deliveries) / Population) * Square Footage / Volume (higher number = better conditions). Data provides a single figure of merit that permits a consistent comparison among different post offices. Load factors below 40 represent unfavorable conditions.

Sheriff Department Manning Analysis



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**RULES REGULATING SIGNAGE AT THE
DISTRICT PARK ENTRANCE**

- 1) Only Calvert County based non-profit agencies are permitted to post signs. Proof of non-profit status is required.
- 2) The permanent placement of signs is prohibited.
- 3) Posting of approved signage is limited to two weeks.
- 4) Signage must be removed by the organization within 24 hours after the event or 24 hours after the end of the 2 week posting.
- 5) Signs that are not removed by the deadline will be removed by park staff and disposed of. That organization will forfeit its privilege of posting signs for a period of 18 months.
- 6) Organizations wishing to post signs must submit a completed request form to Parks and Recreation. Forms may be obtained by calling the Parks and Recreation Main office at 410-535-1600 ext. 2225. Forms will also be available for pickup at the main office, community centers, or may be obtained online at www.co.cal.md.us. (look for the Parks section under the Parks and Recreation home page.)
- 7) Placement of signs may not be scheduled earlier than 3 months before the date of the event.
- 8) Size of signs: Only 4' X 8' signs are permitted.
- 9) Number of signs: There is a limit of five (5) 4' X 8' signs.
- 10) Placement of signs: The 4' X 8' signs must be placed on one of the five sign frames that are provided on site.
- 11) Approved signs will be issued a sticker that must be displayed on the front of the sign.
- 12) Signage that displays alcohol or tobacco branding is prohibited.

Approved 09/11/2007
Board of County Commissioners

**General Membership Meeting
FireHouse, Dunkirk
7 p.m. Tuesday, October 16, 2007**

Membership in DACCA doesn't cost – IT PAYS! Dues are only \$10 per household per year.

Name(s) _____ Phone(s) _____

Address _____

E-Mail _____ Special Concerns or Comments:

I want to get my DACCA Newsletter by email in .pdf format -- Adobe Acrobat Reader (free) if needed.

Make checks payable to DACCA. Mail to DACCA; PO Box 887, Dunkirk, MD 20754-0887 – Email DunkirkDACCA@aol.com

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Give Copies to your Neighbors!

Dunkirk Area Concerned Citizens Association (DACCA)
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Complimentary Issue

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Postal Patron