

Expansion Issues Discussed at Beach Forum

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A dozen candidates vying for the six seats on the Chesapeake Beach Town Council answered audience questions Tuesday, Oct. 23 during a two-hour candidates' forum. The event was held at Northeast Community Center and sponsored by the Calvert County Chapter of the League of Women Voters. League officials reported approximately 130 people in attendance.

Five incumbent councilmembers—Patrick J. “Irish” Mahoney, Stewart Cumbo, Dr. Valerie Beaudin, Julie Spano and Robert Carpenter—are seeking re-election. The seven non-incumbents in the running are Gail Harris, David Hendry, Jeffrey LaBar, Wes Donovan, Jeff Krahlung, Frank Purdy and Eric Reinhardt.

Issues discussed included economic development, residential growth, infrastructure and—an issue driven by political will—annexation. The annexation issue is one that is potentially looming in the next four years depending on the makeup of the six member panel.

“I oppose it,” said Mahoney, who is seeking his fifth term on the council. Mahoney referenced a proposed development that would have been comprised of 400 town houses in an area just outside the town limits. The large number of units would only be allowable with a connection to public sewer. The development was proposed in 2009 and caused alarm among the Calvert County Board of County Commissioners, who were concerned such a plan would overcrowd public schools and cause additional gridlock on Route 261. The Developer, Brooke Kaine, withdrew his proposal when it became clear the town council majority did not favor annexation. The proposed development, said Mahoney, “would create 1,000 new cars passing by Beach Elementary School.”

“Overcrowding in schools, that’s a conversation we need to have,” said Beaudin, who in her opening comments expressed a desire to “maintain the small town charm” of Chesapeake Beach.

“I can’t see another 400 homes going up,” said Spano, who stated in her opening remarks the election was about whether residents “want to live in the town of Chesapeake Beach or the city of Chesapeake Beach.”

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