

THE LOCAL

A publication of the Maryland Municipal League



CONTENTS



4 | League Leadership: Smart Growth Means Sustainable Communities by Secretary Serena McIlwain, Maryland Department of the Environment

6 | Seen and Scene: Town Halls, Cannabis Symposium and More

9 | MML Excellence in Leadership Fall Conference College Park 2023

10 | Delegates CT Wilson and Jheanelle Wilkins Highlight MML's Inaugural Symposium — A Deep Dive on Cannabis Legalization by Justin Fiore, MML Deputy Director for Advocacy and Public Affairs

12 | MML Best Practices: The Town of Walkersville — The Water Treatment Plant Story

14 | Smart Growth Reconsidered

- **Celebrating a Sustainable Partnership** by Tom Reynolds, MML Senior Director, Leadership Development
- **Five Ways to Reimagine Smart Growth** by Andrew M. Fellows, Faculty Research Specialist, University of Maryland, College of Information Studies, Campus Community Connection & Affiliated National Center for Smart Growth
- **The Town of Bel Air Milton Reckord Armory and Smart Growth** by Kevin Small, Planning Director, Town of Bel Air
- **Residential Clustering & The Town of Thurmont** by Jim Humerick, Town Administrator, Town of Thurmont
- **Salisbury's Path to Sustainability and Inclusion** by Dylan Laconich, Sustainability Specialist and Sophie Detorie, Communications Intern, City of Salisbury
- **Climate Resilience Model for Comprehensive Plans** by Owen Bailey, Director of Land Use and Policy, Eastern Shore Land Conservancy
- **Greater Baybrook Green Network Plan: A Community Vision Plan for Increasing Connectivity and Enhancing Green Assets** by Kimberly Fisher, Program Director, Partnership for Action Learning in Sustainability, School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, University of Maryland
- **An Historic Main Street Sees New Life: Middletown Takes Off** by Kristen E. Humphrey, MLA, Local Assistance and Training Planner, Maryland Department of Planning

30 | Welcome New MML Members



Volume 54, No. 2 September/October 2023

THE LOCAL

A publication of the Maryland Municipal League



ON THE COVER:

MML President John Carroll and President Elect Michael O'Connor check out equipment at future Midland town hall site during MML's Town Hall with Allegany/Garrett County Chapter

Publisher

Theresa Kuhns, CEO

Editor-in-Chief

Patricia Foss-Bennie, CAE, IOM, CMP

Contributing Editors

Justin Fiore

Bill Jorch

Thomas C. Reynolds

Steve Lopes

Circulation

Sharon P. Easton

Design

Paragraph 2 Media LLC

THE LOCAL (USPS 331-980), a publication for and about Maryland's cities and towns, is published six times a year (bi-monthly January/February, March/April, May/June, July/August, September/October, November/December issues) by the Maryland Municipal League, 47 State Circle, Suite 403, Annapolis, MD 21401.

The Maryland Municipal League is a non-profit, non-partisan association of Maryland's cities and towns. Information in THE LOCAL does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Maryland Municipal League.

Postmaster: Send address changes to THE LOCAL, 47 State Circle, Suite 403, Annapolis, MD 21401. Second-class postage paid at Annapolis, Maryland 21401.

For advertising rates contact: Maryland Municipal League, 47 State Circle, Suite 403, Annapolis, MD 21401. Telephone: 410-295-9100.

Subscription rate: \$40/year



The Town of Bel Air Milton Reckord Armory and Smart Growth

By KEVIN SMALL, PLANNING DIRECTOR, TOWN OF BEL AIR

Take a drive through Bel Air and you are sure to notice the historic Milton Reckord Armory in the heart of downtown on North Main Street. Constructed in 1915 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Reckord Armory has a long history of being a focal point for community activities in Bel Air, providing a year-round facility to host events. The Town of Bel Air purchased the Armory from the Maryland National Guard in the early 2000s and completed a renovation of the property. Since that time, the Armory has served as a catalyst to bring people downtown to experience the arts, meet neighbors and support local stores

and restaurants. In the center of historic downtown Bel Air, the adaptive reuse of the Armory is easily and safely accessible for many of the Town's residents.

With a robust calendar of events, the Armory now serves as an economic driver for downtown and fills a critical need as a centrally located cultural and recreational facility as well as a venue for private events throughout the year. On any given weekend, you might find a wedding celebration, a chess tournament, a concert, a dance performance, or an event showcasing local authors and artists. A signature event in December is Winter Wonderland which features tens of thousands of warm white lights and live music which provides an opportunity for local residents and families

to enjoy the spirit of the holidays.

Some Town goals that have been met following the renovation include encouraging pedestrian traffic, establishing Bel Air as a visitor destination and fostering recreational and social opportunities downtown in the evenings and on weekends. Moreover, the renovation of the Armory has drawn investment to the northern end of Main Street providing a spark for façade improvement projects, new business development, and other types of capital reinvestment in the area. The Armory has served as a cornerstone of Bel Air's downtown and helps strengthen a sense of community while providing an opportunity for residents to expand their cultural horizons.

In 2010, to complete the Armory complex, the Town added the Frederick Ward Armory Park. In 2016, Bel Air introduced the Armory Marketplace, the Town's award-winning business incubator facility. The once vacant garages behind the Armory now offer an innovative service provided by the Town of Bel Air to encourage retail development, nurture entrepreneurs, increase pedestrian traffic, and create new jobs in the community.

Armory Marketplace is a highly selective program that offers new business owners an opportunity for a flexible, below market-rate lease for up to three years which gives them time to establish their business, understand the local demand for their product or service, and strengthen their financial standing. The program provides business coaching, marketing and technical assistance, and an opportunity to build strong community partnerships. The

startup period for any business is a critical time and having additional support from the Town of Bel Air creates a strong foundation that allows the business to graduate from Armory Marketplace and be successful in a permanent Bel Air location. One of the goals of the program is to make sure that Bel Air is consistently infused with new life through various new businesses that contribute to the Town's unique appeal.

The Reckord Armory complex is a community asset that enhances the vibrancy of downtown Bel Air. The smart-growth rehabilitation and repurposing has maintained the historical integrity of the property while offering a community center and an innovative resource for entrepreneurs.

