For the week of May 1, 2017

My fellow residents of Cecil County:

I would like to extend my deepest sympathy to the family, friends and fellow officers of Delaware State Trooper Cpl. Stephen J. Ballard who lost his life in the line of duty this past week. The loss only reconfirms my commitment to our own public safety personnel and the tremendous level of gratitude I have for the jobs they do each and every day.

On May 2nd at 1:30, the County Council will review my FY2018 proposed budget for the following departments: the Sheriff’s Office, Liquor Board, Board of Elections, Orphan’s Court and both the capital and operating budgets for Parks & Recreation. I continue to urge you to get involved and learn about my proposed budget for these specific areas of County government and how I intend to move Cecil County forward. As you read about their budgets and listen to their presentations, please keep in mind the following:

- The Sheriff’s Office budget includes Law Enforcement, the Detention Center and Community Corrections. From January 1 to December 31, 2016 the Sheriff’s Office responded to 44,844 calls for service, a 9.8% increase from the prior year. The Sheriff’s Office arrested 1,186 individuals as a result of subsequent investigations, of which 369 were drug related offenses. Our Law Enforcement agency is plagued daily by crimes related to illegal drugs and drug abuse within our County. It strains our resources and also requires us to reinforce our efforts to resolve this problem. The three new positions I have proposed in the FY2018 budget are only a small part of what is truly needed to support a County of our size. I strongly urge you to support this proposed request.

- The average daily inmate count within the Detention Center for calendar year 2016 was 229. The average cost of active incarceration is $90 per day per inmate. DO THE MATH. On average it costs Cecil County $7,500,000 to staff and operate the Detention Center. The Medication Assisted Treatment/Re-entry Program was introduced in FY2016 and grant funds have allowed for the introduction of the Vivitrol Program (a once a month injection that binds to the brain’s opioid receptors). This program has allowed for behind the walls treatment initiatives including the identification of community based resources to help offenders after their release from incarceration. We as a community need to continue to address incarceration before it starts and aid in the support that will assure that offenders do not repeat and return.

- I have included in the FY 2018 Capital Budget the installation of a synthetic turf field at Perryville High School. It is important to note that this expense is included in the Capital Budget and not the Operating Budget. This action will continue a multi-year plan to regionalize Parks and Recreation services so programs and activities are geographically accessible to all citizens. Calvert Park has been a tremendous success but the lone downside is that it is not convenient on a daily basis for all Cecil County citizens. My staff is currently in discussions with the Cecil County Public School System that will allow our residents, through Parks and Recreation programs, access to school system facilities at the end of the day and on weekends when school activities are done. What an effective and efficient use of publically funded indoor and outdoor facilities! This will allow us to promote more programs and activities for citizens of all ages in closer proximity to their homes. Other community sports organizations will be provided greater access as well. (Please see the following pages for synthetic turf field vs natural grass.)

- One aspect of our antidrug abuse program is to educate our youth as to the perils associated with the misuse and abuse of drugs. Providing greater opportunity for parents to enroll their children in healthy, safe afterschool and year-round programs and activities will be a welcome relief for the situation many face when both parents are working and children are alone at home. *Idle time is the devil’s workshop* certainly applies to some of our youth who become bored and make poor decisions that start them down the wrong path in life. Regionalizing the Parks and Recreation Program through the upgrading of facilities and creating greater access to public school facilities is a major component of our campaign to rid this county of heroin and opioid abuse.

The issues above are only a small portion of what I face as County Executive every day. Unless we as a County decide that now is the time to come to terms with these issues and agree that additional resources are needed to fund a solution, the inmate population and sheriff calls for service will continue to escalate. Educating the youth of today and providing better choices for them in the future are what this County needs to keep them out of the judicial system. The increases in the income tax rate and property tax rate will allow us additional resources to move Cecil County forward!!

Sincerely,

Dr. Alan McCarthy
Cecil County Executive
INCENTMENT WEATHER:

As is evidenced by the synthetic field at Calvert Park, this surface can be used during rain or snow events. The only weather related event that would prohibit play is lightning.

Grass fields cannot be used during inclement weather events due to the inability to remove standing water and the damage caused by cleats in every sport. Sustained weather events like rain over several days can render a field unusable for extended periods of time.

DURABILITY:

The synthetic turf field can be used on a non-stop basis 7 days a week with very minimal maintenance required. Life expectancy of a synthetic turf field is 10 to 12 years.

Natural grass fields are utilized on a rotating schedule so at a minimum one field is always kept off line to rest. Constant use (5-7 days per week) on natural grass fields requires heavy maintenance and in most cases require a complete renovation within a 3 to 5 year time period to maintain safe, reliable playing standards.

Synthetic Turf fields can be used by a multitude of sports literally 24 hours a day 7 days per week.

Natural Grass fields should only be used a maximum of 4 days a week and for no more than 2 hours a day to maintain a consistent and safe playing surface. Playing on a natural grass field during a rain event, or under severe dry conditions could expose that field to long-term damage and require repair or replacement.
SAFETY:

Injuries sustained during competition are likely to be 10 to 14 percent less on Synthetic Turf fields vs. Natural Grass fields. (Resource: Journal of Sports Medicine June 2013)

There is no evidence to support claims that playing on synthetic turf fields exposes athletes to higher health risks.

CHEMICAL USE/IRRIGATION:

Synthetic turf fields require no chemical, paint, fertilizer, or irrigation use. Surfaces are also recycled for a plethora of uses at the end of their lifecycle.

Natural Grass fields require routine irrigation, chemical and fertilizer applications not to mention numerous paint applications throughout a playing season.

PLAYING SURFACE:

Synthetic turf fields provide a constant and consistent playing surface for all sports.

Natural Grass fields depending on use, care and the sports played, do not provide a constant or consistent playing surface. Field hockey, as an example, requires a very smooth, level consistent playing surface at all times.

MAINTENANCE COSTS:

The Calvert Park Synthetic field requires an annual maintenance budget of less than $700.

Natural Grass fields require $4500 to $5000 per field in annual maintenance. County Parks and Recreation maintains 15 natural grass fields at an approximate costs of $75,000 annually. To renovate one field due to over use would cost an estimated $50,000.
SUMMATION

When compared to Natural Grass fields, Synthetic Turf fields have proven to be safer, more cost effective, reliable, durable, eco-friendly, provide a consistent playing surface and are user friendly.

Maintenance costs are lower, durability and usability levels heightened and consistent playing surfaces are just a few of the benefits of a Synthetic Turf surface.

(Provided are photos showing Calvert Park and the current stadium field at Perryville High School.)

For more information on the comparison of synthetic turf and natural grass fields or the proposed regionalization of the Cecil County Parks and Recreation Program contact: Mr. Clyde Van Dyke, cvandyke@ccgov.org or 410-996-8101.