

Redacted

Eldersburg, Maryland 21784

Carroll County Government
Commissioner Robin B. Frazier, District 1
Commissioner Haven Shoemaker, District 2
Commissioner Dave Roush, District 3
Commissioner Richard Rothschild, District 4
Commissioner Doug Howard, District 5
225 North Center Street
Westminster, Maryland 21157

HAND DELIVERED to all Addressees, and COPIED TO persons listed below, on June 19, 2014

Re: Activity of Commissioner Doug Howard and of the Board of Commissioners, and the related consequence, Vision 2030 (a.k.a. Carroll 2030), including activity by additional County officials and/or employees

Dear Carroll County Board of Commissioners:

The content of this letter concerns individual and personal activity of Commissioner Doug Howard, and responsibilities of the Board of Commissioners as a whole. The Board of Commissioners, the Carroll County Ethics Commission, and possibly the Board of Education have purview over various issues, and I have listed some of those directly below:

1. Commissioner Howard's use of prestige of office, and use of official stationery, County government website, resources, and buildings for Mr. Howard's meetings - To be investigated by the County Ethics Commission under County Ethics Ordinances.
2. Commissioner Howard's promotion of Carroll 2030 on the Carroll County government website/equipment, his workgroup using County employees and officials, presentation of Carroll 2030's concepts and work products to the Board and to the public - The Board of Commissioners has a duty to conduct its actions through official and public process. The Board must hold each individual commissioner accountable to that corporate process, and must not allow an individual commissioner to act or appear to act on behalf of the Board, which is Carroll County's governing body.

3. County employees who are part of Carroll 2030 – their participation representing their County government capacity, charging any costs to the County, to include salaries while participating, attending the meetings, generating work product, yet 2030 is a private citizen's work group with no official enabling legislation – To be investigated by the Carroll County Ethics Commission under County Ethics Ordinances, and by the Board of Commissioners under County Personnel Ordinances.

Ordinances Chapter 36 - Personnel Policies § 36.016 MANAGEMENT.

(A) Management exercises only those powers delegated by the County Commissioners.

(B) The County Commissioners retain complete authority to direct the actions of all personnel.

4. Superintendent Guthrie's participation in Carroll 2030 – To be investigated by the Board of Education under Board of Education Policies, and/or by the County Ethics Commission, if applicable.

5. County employees who have allowed Commissioner Howard free access to County buildings for his personal meetings – To be investigated by the Board of Commissioners under County Personnel Ordinances.

Since Carroll County citizens expect a republican form of government, we assume and know there are rules by which the Board may conduct its business. Some of the rules that specifically pertain to activities of the Board as a unit or to individual Board members include the State "Open Meetings Act" and the County Ethics Ordinances. I have not found a set of written rules that describes how the Board conducts its meetings (both Open and Closed), and how the Board makes official decisions on behalf of the People of Carroll County. But I have observed activity by this Board which causes me great concern.

This Board has the responsibility of making official decisions on policies, and those decisions must be officially rendered by votes taken at the Board's meetings. Those policies usually involve County resources in some way, and have real effects on county residents and businesses. This is a grave responsibility and it is your duty to obey the law and conduct business transparently in order to be non-partial. Process matters in assuring a non-partial and accountable government, and that is the reason for having rules for conducting the business of government.

If members of this Board of Commissioners believe that new ideas about the County's future need to be planned, discussed, and presented, it seems that this Board should have officially created a task force for that purpose, through a public and official process. While citizens themselves have the freedom to create their own planning groups, and they may offer their own 3-minute input to the Board during the Public

Comment time in Board Meetings, I am asking you why the Board entertains presentations by a non-official group called Carroll 2030. I am also asking whether the Board has acted on any of Carroll 2030's recommendations, especially given the lack of clarity to the public on the official or unofficial nature of the group, and the appearance of one commissioner's acting as a sole executive authority in place of the distinct powers and duties of the entire Board of Commissioners as a body.

On March 6, 2014, on camera in Open Session, Commissioner Howard states that Vision 2030 has no initiative from the Board, means nothing, and costs nothing. By his using County stationery of the Carroll County Board of Commissioners and many assets of the County for Carroll 2030 and his own aggrandizement, the public can easily assume, or be deceived into believing, that it is an officially tasked undertaking. Since much information regarding Carroll 2030 was published by Howard via announcements to public newspapers, I feel it is an obligation of the Board to make it perfectly clear to the public that this group is not representative of, or tasked by, Carroll County Government. Mr. Howard's brief statement on camera on March 6, 2014 is not sufficient to repair the damage he has done.

This Board of Commissioners seems to have given Carroll 2030, a private collection of people, de facto "official" status by receiving their presentations. Doug Howard uses this body to present his own private work. If that is a courtesy shown to him individually because he is a Commissioner, it seems to me that Howard is improperly using the prestige of office, he has assumed powers which he does not have, and this Board of Commissioners has not held in check the misuse of this Board by refusing the mixture of his personal, private work with the official duty and work of the Board of Commissioners.

The copyrighted, Carroll 2030 website, at www.vision.carr.org is hosted on the Carroll County Government website and yet Carroll 2030 is not a creation of the Board of Commissioners. How is this happening? Who owns the copyright? How did that end up on our equipment?

This is sloppy handling of government, to the harm of the People of Carroll County. The Oath of Office required by the Maryland Constitution states that the elected person will "diligently and faithfully, without partiality or prejudice, execute" his office. Allowing one commissioner to use his position to commandeer the powers and duties of the Board of Commissioners is partial treatment. There is no reason to believe that I or another unelected citizen would be permitted the same power.

A number of the participants in Carroll 2030 are County employees or officials, seeming to represent offices of government, yet the creation of this group and the conducting of meetings is no more than the personal activity of one man, regardless of his elected position. He has no authority to do this on behalf of the Board. As the Board has

allowed and encouraged this activity, rather than carefully separating itself from even the appearance of Carroll 2030 as official action, this Board has misled the public and has helped to set up the scenario for other government officials and employees to be using their government positions on something which has not gone through the necessary governmental, therefore public, process, for accountability to the citizens.

I am asking this Board to consider the points I am making, contained in this letter, hand delivered to each of your offices on June 19, 2014. In addition:

1. I am asking the Board to publicly – and conspicuously – announce that Carroll 2030 is not a creation of the Board of Commissioners, and has no official relationship to Carroll County Government.
2. I am asking the Board to publicly list any actions it has taken based upon the input of Carroll 2030, and reference meeting dates for those actions.
3. I am asking the Board to address personnel issues regarding those County employees or officials who have participated in Carroll 2030, a private collection of citizens. I ask that the Board publicly inform the public how this was addressed while also identifying the positions involved and hundreds of hours of paid staff time.
4. I am asking the Board to publicly advise a Commissioner, Mr. Howard, of how official work of the Board is decided and to cease giving the appearance of official Carroll County work in his personal or private ventures. This includes the use of official-looking letterhead in any press releases, announcements, flyers, or correspondence regarding work which is not official work of the Board, and his language in speaking with the press, citizens, and members of the business community or of government.
5. I am asking the Board to remove Carroll 2030 from the Carroll County Government website and to account to the public for the reason it is also copyrighted; and what the total cost of hosting and maintenance has been for Carroll County to date.
6. I am asking the Board to acquire and have advanced knowledge of the techniques named "Collaborative Government," "Delphi Technique," and "Consensus," to include specific phraseology related to these documented processes. This knowledge includes the definitions/intentions of such words as visioning, cluster, collaboration, and facilitator – basically, a thorough understanding of these subversive techniques against our constitutions, laws, and ordinances. All of the "cluster" groups enlisted by Commissioner Howard and his highly paid County assistant were trained in these techniques; therefore, all participants need to be de-briefed, and re-trained about what our lawful form of government is.

Without further notification, I also consider this letter to be a formal Carroll County Ethics Violation complaint.

Sincerely,

Redacted

cc: Mr. Timothy C. Burke, County Attorney

Ms. Jo Vance, Administrative Hearings Coordinator, Ethics Commission

Mr. Jerry Barnes, Carroll County State's Attorney

enc.: Note: "It has no Board initiative, means nothing and costs nothing," Doug Howard

CC Times, June 26, 2013

CC Times, October 17, 2013

Carroll 2030 Presents Announcement, October 18, 2013

Town Hall Release of February 10, 2014

Carroll Hospital Center Letter, February 26, 2014

Carroll 2030, Release, March 6, 2014

Town Hall Release of March 7, 2014

Carroll County Government Announcement, March 10, 2014

Carroll County Public Library 2030