

The most striking aspect of Courtney Watson's fundraiser Friday October 30, 2009 was the cross section of diversity represented. Active families in Font Hill attended including members of the Crowe family, Lederer family and Weaver family along side Joe Rutter, developer insider who plans to place 300+ homes on nearby Doughoregan Manor.

Angela and John Beltram attended and were seen talking with Monica Machovec, the HOA president who took valued family time to battle eminent domain that was planned for her community, eminent domain apparently supported by County Executive Ken Ulman's budget. Per Watson, the budget money to be used for eminent domain was not approved by her.

Ken Ulman gave a speech to the crowd of more than 70 people and spoke about Watson's countywide reach. Attendees who participated in the prior year's fundraiser exclaimed on the enthusiastic and voluminous crowd this year. Per the campaign, 121 people attended the two hour fundraiser.

Parking presented a problem even with the four adjoining streets provided by the Brantwood Ellicott City home offering side street parking. Bumper stickers on one car supported both Obama and State candidate Jonathan Weinstein.

Maryland State level candidate Maryann Maher also attended, along with state level representatives Guy Guzzone, Jim Robey and County representative Mary Kay Sigaty showing support for Courtney Watson's candidacy.

County Historical Society's Phil Stackhouse attended as well as Jud Malone who has been vociferously pro-development particularly in Columbia where the county is currently considering 5,500 new residences amounting to 13,000 voters in Towne Center alone.

The Howard County District 1 representative from the term prior to Watson's, Republican Christopher Merdon was also in attendance at this fundraiser with admittance of \$35 and sponsorships going to several hundred dollars. Merdon ran for County Executive as a Republican raising a million dollars but lost to Ken Ulman who raised 1.3 million.

While Watson drew powerful people from both parties, new and seasoned politicians, and activists along side of developers, she also sought transparency and openness by inviting Howard County Issues to attend, a data collection and publishing organization toward which some council members have expressed dismay following the organization's distribution of data on campaign money. By comparison to Watson's Friday fundraiser, Calvin Ball's office has refused to release the names of any attendees for his early 2009 fundraiser. Ball's data will not be released until he is forced to do so by law.

Per the Board of Elections website, Robert Flanagan has not declared a District 1 County Council candidacy as of October 21, but is widely rumored to be a contender. Watson's Republican opponent Flanagan has his work cut out if he's battling against the inner circle of Howard County connecteds, activists, diversity, and transparency at Watson's level.