PRESS RELEASE

Dorchester Citizens for Better Government

June 5, 2021

A group of Dorchester Citizens have come together to establish a Ballot Issue Committee that was formally approved June 4, 2021, by the Maryland State Board of Elections. The group is called the “Dorchester Citizens for Better Government” with its mission being to find ways to improve the functioning of the Dorchester County Government, which has shown too many of its flaws and lack of transparency since the last election in 2018.

The initial idea for this effort came from a “Cambridge Matters” report written in February of this year questioning some of what were considered unusual and unhelpful actions taken by County Council that included unexplained departures of senior staff such as the County Manager and some department heads.

The response to that article was immediate and overwhelming, with many people coming forward to help and support the effort. As a result, names and contact information were collected some research was done to figure out what might be next steps to undertake. Creation and registration of Dorchester Citizens for Better Government is the first concrete step.

The group will be working with lawyers to draft proposed changes to the County Charter and then seek enough signatures from registered voters in the County to place a Charter Petition on the November 2022 Ballot. These proposed changes would modify some of the provisions of the existing Charter in order to improve operations of County Government through a more detailed County Manager position that minimizes the political interference of County Council and its President in the day to day operations of the County Manager and county employees, provides adequate protection of employee positions to avoid them being subject to the political whims of the elected majority of County Council, and ensures that future County Council meetings will comply with the Maryland Open Meetings Act and be broadcast to the public over the internet or on county wide television.

The Dorchester Citizens for Better Government will be led by Allen Nelson, who grew up in Dorchester County. Following graduation from college, he spent 40 years working here in the printing sector with Western Publishing and Cadmus Communications in finance and general business management roles. During this time, he also held leadership positions in statewide trade organizations and the Maryland Chamber of Commerce.

Following his retirement, he became Executive Director of the Dorchester Chamber of Commerce. Always community minded, Allen is a Rotarian, Chair of the Salvation Army Advisory Board, active with The Cambridge Power Boat Racing Association, and a member of Grace UM Church.

The Treasurer for the group is Ted Brooks, who was born and raised here and is very well known in the community as a local CPA and a consistent volunteer in the community. After graduating from Cambridge High School, he attended the University of Delaware and received a B.S. in Accounting. He has been a CPA on the Mid-Shore since 1978 and received his Certified Financial Planner (CFP) credentials in 1988.

Some of the many committees and boards that he has served on include the Dorchester General Hospital board, Dorchester General Hospital Foundation, the Cambridge Rotary Club, The Cambridge Yacht Club, and Grace United Methodist Church.

As the organization has just registered with the State Board of Elections, it is at its early stages of developing the ideas to strengthen the County Charter to ensure a better, more organized, and more effective government for the citizens and businesses of Dorchester County that will make the County an even more responsive and economically self-sufficient community in which to live and work.

If you would like more information about what the Dorchester Citizens for Better Government is doing and planning or would like to support this effort, please contact Steve Rideout at swrideout@aol.com.