

Schaefer criticizes governor's decisions on police lab, bypass

Glendening canceled funds for projects

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For the record, Comptroller William Donald Schaefer was in office a full 30 days before his first public spat with Gov. Parris N. Glendening.

A visibly irritated Schaefer complained to Glendening during yesterday's Board of Public Works meeting, criticizing the governor's decision to cancel funding for a state police training center in Sykesville in Carroll County and a road bypass around Brookeville in Montgomery County.

Neither issue was on the three-member board's agenda yesterday, but the former governor, who has had a rocky relationship with Glendening, clearly had them on his.

Near the end of the 90-minute meeting, Schaefer began talking about the bypass to a transportation official who attended the meeting.

When Glendening intervened by suggesting the board call a separate meeting to discuss the issue, Schaefer turned his head and, looking over his reading glasses, admonished the smiling governor.

"You told the people that Sykesville was going to get" the training center, Schaefer said, referring to Glendening's apparent support for the center on a past visit to Carroll County. "When you make a promise to a group and then all of a sudden, without warning, just say no, that's not right."

Last month, Glendening said he would not fund the long-planned center after deciding the Sykesville site did not meet his criteria for Smart Growth, the anti-sprawl policy that favors develop-

ment near existing residential and commercial hubs.

He used similar reasoning for not providing planning money for the Brookeville bypass in next year's budget.

Some critics have suggested Glendening's decisions have less to do with sprawl than with politics, particularly in Republican-dominated Carroll.

Sitting as the Board of Public Works, which reviews state contracts and other projects, Glendening, Schaefer and Treasurer Richard N. Dixon can hear appeals of Glendening's Smart Growth rulings. Schaefer and Dixon, who is from Carroll County, have formally asked for such a hearing March 10.

But Glendening noted that such appeals essentially are pointless because Schaefer and Dixon can't force him to put money in the budget for the projects.

"We'll have a hearing, but as a practical matter ... the decision is up to the legislature and the governor," Glendening said. "I understand that these decisions aren't pleasing everybody, but I wasn't elected to please everyone. I was elected to stop sprawl, and that's what I'm doing."

Schaefer walked off quickly, apparently unsatisfied after the meeting. Glendening said he wasn't worried about working with the former governor or Dixon, even as the Smart Growth issue continues to simmer.

"They're absolutely fine," Glendening said. "They are both mature professionals."