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# NEWS

For Immediate Release!

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## **Annapolis, Maryland, Alderman Calls for Town Hall Meeting on War Costs**

Annapolis Alderman Sam Shropshire is calling for a “town hall” meeting in City Council Chambers to discuss the War in Iraq and its effects on our local economy. This meeting will be held Thursday, May 29, at 7:00 pm at City Hall.

“During the past several years I’ve personally witnessed dwindling federal support for many of our city projects.” Shropshire says he’s not alone in expressing concern. “Municipal leaders across the nation are alarmed about the economy and how this unpopular war is posing problems for their cities,” he says.

Shropshire points to hundreds of thousands of dollars in federal cuts to the State of Maryland for local transportation. He says public safety, public housing, the environment, healthcare and education have also been affected.

A complete breakdown on the costs of the war will be examined at the meeting—including a detailed cost for each city and county citizen.

Shropshire, a member of the City Council Finance Committee, is currently proposing a one percent cut in the City’s 2009 fiscal budget. He says that current hyper-inflation is reaking havoc on the city budget and that this cut, “will undoubtedly be problematic for department directors, however, many of our citizens are suffering financial hardship. We cannot raise taxes to offset higher prices and living costs.” He points out that the City’s residents are also facing higher prices for food, gas and other commodities and services. “They are suffering. They need help.”

Anne Arundel Peace Action, Greg Speeter of the National Priorities Group, and Alderman Sam Shropshire are sponsors for this town hall meeting.

Greg Speeter, president of the National Priorities Project (NPP), will lead the discussion. The National Priorities Project is an educational foundation that exists to assist community groups and the public in understanding and participating in critical federal budget decisions.

According to Shropshire, there will be no judgment passed on the rights or wrongs of the War in Iraq. “This will solely be a discussion of what the War in Iraq is costing us as families and individuals and the effects of this war on our local economy.”

Asked what difference he thought such a meeting could make, Shropshire said it would serve to assist him and other leaders in better understanding our local economy and “how it is affected by national decision making.”

“It will also equip me in my conversations with other state and federal officials,” he said.

“We are a very small piece of the puzzle in the grand scheme of things,” he says, “but we’ve proved several times during the past year that our city can make a difference and that our opinion counts.”

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*Greg Speeter, National Priorities Project / Speeter founded the National Priorities Project in 1982 as a way for community groups and the public to understand and participate in critical federal budget decisions. He has been a featured speaker at both policy conferences and training sessions for community organizers, has held a number of budget briefings on Capitol Hill, and is frequently sought out by the media for analysis of budget policies. Before founding the National Priorities Project, Greg worked for six years at the Citizen Involvement Training Project in Amherst, MA, where he authored training books on community organizing and access to the political process. He began his career as a VISTA Volunteer in 1966, and spent the first decade of his professional life as a community organizer and policy analyst. Mr. Speeter can be reached at 413-584-9556.*