There is again talk of changing Carroll County’s form of government. We went through this about 12 years ago and it was soundly defeated; but proponents are pushing for it again.

Not long ago we had 3 commissioners who were elected county-wide. We changed to five commissioners, elected by district. Each commissioner must answer to one fifth of the county in their own neighborhood. The benefit of this system is that you can pick up the phone, talk to the commissioner representing only your area, and present your case. Your commissioner must then convince two other commissioners of the merit of your case.

Proponents of change point to other counties which have switched to the Executive form of government, like Baltimore County. They point to other counties, like Cecil and Frederick, which have recently changed to Executive.

One of the most common complaints of our current form of governing is that when the county wants to do certain things (not everything), they have to get permission from Annapolis. While that is true, it is not necessarily a negative. The commissioners must meet with our Senators and Delegates (who you have elected), and convince them that it is a good idea. They, in turn, must go to Annapolis and get the approval of the General Assembly. It is implied that approval from Annapolis is hard to obtain. However, the fact is that there is a process known as LOCAL COURTESY. Annapolis, with very rare exceptions, approves whatever a county’s legislators want.

Since Frederick has recently switched from our current system to County Executive, I thought I would call some elected officials I know in Frederick to see how they feel about the switch. Their opinion? “Keep what you have.”

Here are some criticisms lf the new system:

1. It adds more county employees, thus adds money to the county budget
2. It goes from a committee being in charge, where a majority of members have to convince the others of their position, to ONE person being in charge.
3. Overhead is increased dramatically, since each entity has their own staff, often with competing positions.
4. Each additional employee needs office space, and some need a car.
5. The County Executive has power never held by an individual under the old system.

To read an article on this, go to the Frederick Post website under Local/State titled, “Constituent Conversation Continued.” Written by Daniella E. Gaines.