

Montgomery council overrides veto of land disposition change

by Kate S. Alexander, Staff Writer, The Gazette. Published: Tuesday, May 15, 2012

The Montgomery County Council will maintain its oversight of county land sales and leases.

Tuesday, the council overturned with a 6-3 vote, a veto from County Executive Isiah Leggett (D) issued a day before.

The executive vetoed the council's May 2 action giving the nine-member body authority over county property sales and leases — requiring public hearings and council approval of most transactions.

In his memorandum to Council President Roger Berliner (D-Dist. 1) of Bethesda, Leggett said his veto was reached with reluctance.

"I believe there is a more constructive way to enhance Council oversight of the types of transactions that county cares most about," he wrote.

The executive argued that the council is already vested with authority regarding the disposition of county property.

The bill's author, Councilman George Leventhal (D-At Large) of Takoma Park, said the legislation put a check in place before property is sold or leased.

"This bill clarifies that the power to sell off property owned by the public worth millions of dollars should not be in the hands of solely one person," he said.

Council members who opposed the initial bill — Valerie Ervin (D-Dist. 5) of Silver Spring, Craig Rice (D-Dist. 2) of Germantown and Nancy Floreen (D-At Large) of Garrett Park — also voted against the override Tuesday.