

June 8, 2021

Attention: Mayor Brandon Scott  
Council President Nick Mosby  
Councilman Zeke Cohen  
Madam State's Attorney Marilyn Mosby  
Commissioner Michael Harrison

Dear City Leaders:

We represent dozens of businesses and countless residents who call Fell's Point home. We have lived and raised our families here for decades. We run stores and restaurants and small businesses that provide hundreds of good jobs for people across the region.

What is happening in our front yard — the chaos and lawlessness that escalated this weekend into another night of tragic, unspeakable gun violence — has been going on for far too long. We have struggled through a global pandemic, enduring restaurant shutdowns and mask mandates. For months, we have been holding on by a thread, waiting for daybreak, worrying whether we will make it or if we will be the next business to shutter our doors for good. Through this adversity, at great expense to ourselves, we have sacrificed for the sake of our customers, employees, and community. We have done this because we love Fells Point and believe it represents the very best of Baltimore.

But we have reached our breaking point. Our elected leaders have closed their eyes and ears and turned their backs on our community for long enough. We are fed up and frustrated, and we now realize that nothing will change unless we demand action.

So, to compel our leaders to do their job and to stand up for neighborhoods all across Baltimore, the undersigned parties are prepared to withhold our city taxes and minor privilege and permit fees and place those funds into an escrow account, which we will not release until and unless basic and essential municipal services are restored.

- 1) Pick up the trash. The trash that piles up every week drifts into the Inner Harbor and hurts the environment, attracts rodents and fosters disease, and stinks up the streets and damages the beauty of our wonderful waterfront community. Every neighborhood, residential and commercial, is entitled to regular and reliable trash removal. This does not happen in Fells Point (and many other parts of the City), and we're sick of it.
- 2) Enforce traffic and parking laws through tickets and towing. Cars, motorcycles, dirt bikes, and a wide range of legal and illegal vehicles have discovered that Baltimore City's traffic and parking laws are, at best, erratically enforced in Fell's Point. This contributes to illegal activities that impede traffic, drive noise pollution, place riders and bystanders at risk, and make the neighborhood hostile to children and families.

- 3) Stop illegal open-air alcohol and drug sales. Many of us have obtained expensive liquor licenses and are subject to routine code inspection. We are carefully regulated and pay taxes on the proceeds of our liquor and alcohol sales. Yet, there are individual vendors in Fells Point illegally selling large volumes of alcohol, marijuana, and a range of other illicit substances directly in front of our establishments with no consequences or penalties. These are not concealed, clandestine operations by sophisticated gangs with suppliers and lookouts. These are brazen individuals who conduct their business in plain sight because they know Baltimore City will do nothing to prevent or punish them. This hurts the family fabric and tourist value of the community; it leads to a wide range of more serious problems like what we saw this weekend; and it is profoundly unfair to the legitimate businesses and our employees who are working around the clock to make a living.
- 4) Empower police to responsibly do their job. It is harder than ever to recruit and retain quality staff. On top of everything else, some of our employees are now scared, and we are scared for our employees. In a city with organized crime and soaring gun violence, we appreciate the extraordinary demands on our police. Our officers cannot and should not use the power of arrest to address every situation. At the same time, police cannot be directed to ignore manifest lawlessness that happens right before their eyes. When it comes to prostitution, public urination and defecation, and the illegal sale and consumption of alcohol and illicit drugs on the streets, we know these crimes are not as serious as the carjackings, shootings, and homicides that have become routine. But, as this past weekend proved, a culture of lawlessness rarely remains confined to petty offenses and invariably leads to the kinds of violence and tragedy we witnessed late Saturday night.

These demands are as simple as they are vital to our community's future: Ask police to do their job, stop illegal alcohol and drug sales on the streets, enforce basic traffic and parking laws, and pick up the trash. Frankly, it is pathetic that we have to beg for these basics. But this is where we are.

Fell's Point is one of the crown jewels of Baltimore. It has become the heartbeat of city commerce; its rich history, stunning views, and cobblestone streets make it a landmark destination for residents and tourists alike; and, at its best, it reflects the remarkable diversity and magic of Baltimore. But if there is a cautionary tale in the decline of the Inner Harbor and Baltimore's Downtown, it is that where small issues go unchecked, it is only a matter of time before deeper problems take root and a neighborhood collapses. No one wants this to happen to Fells Point, least of all the people and families who have devoted themselves to creating a residential and commercial district that is welcoming, prosperous, diverse, and safe, where you can raise a family, build a business, savor a meal and enjoy the splendor of our city in peace.

Bottom line: Please do your job so we can get back to doing ours.

*The Fells Point businesses that have joined this letter to date are alphabetically listed on the next page.*

Businesses in Fells Point that have joined this letter to date are alphabetically listed below:

Marigot Miller <b>Abbey Burger</b>	Darin Mislan <b>Admiral's Cup</b>	Tom Rivers <b>Ale Mary's</b>
Carrie Podles <b>Alexander's Tavern</b>	Claudia Towles <b>aMuse Toys</b>	Shane Gerken <b>Barcocina</b>
William Packo <b>Barley's Backyard</b>	Andy Norris <b>Bertha's</b>	Mike Beckner <b>BOP Pizza</b>
Denzel Washington <b>Denzel's Shark Bar Grill</b>	Marka Browning <b>Dogwatch Tavern</b>	Doug Yeakey & Lance Sovine <b>EC Pops</b>
Luana Kaufmann <b>Emporium Collagia</b>	Essayas Hable <b>Fells Point Creamery</b>	Alison Schuch <b>Fells Point Surf Shop</b>
Ginny Lawhorn <b>Friends and Family</b>	Patrick Russell <b>Koopers Tavern</b>	Jascy Jones <b>Luna Garden</b>
Ron Furman <b>Max's Taphouse</b>	Charlie Gerde <b>Papi's</b>	Susan Singer <b>Party Dress</b>
Murat Mercan <b>Pie in the Sky</b>	Kelley Heuisler <b>Poppy &amp; Stella</b>	Kevin Havens <b>Red Star</b>
Mike Katris <b>Rodos Bar</b>	Kaite Russell <b>Slainte</b>	Nick Johnson <b>SuCasa</b>
Candace Beattie <b>Thames Street Oyster House</b>	Ted Jabara <b>The Admiral Fell Inn</b>	Alex Smith <b>The Choptank</b>
Eric Mathias <b>The Horse You Came In On</b>	Erica Russo <b>The Point</b>	Essayas Hable <b>The Pretzel Twist</b>
Bryan Burkert <b>The Rockwell</b>	Kevin Havens <b>The Waterfront</b>	Sean Brescia & Jennifer Olivia <b>The Wharf Rat</b>
Beth Hawks <b>Zelda Zen</b>		