

GBC's facilitator

Monk wants politicians, businesses to get along

BY ANDY ROSEN
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In an address after his election as chairman of the **Greater Baltimore Committee's** board of directors, Charles O. Monk II said that the regional business group is going to have an important role building consensus to achieve goals for the area in coming years.

He's got a job ahead of him. Just a few days into his two-year term, he's outlined some ideas that he thinks could shape the city and its surroundings as a better place to do business, including finding a new vision for the Inner Harbor and reinforcing the region's infrastructure.

Monk, 60, who grew up in Ruxton and now lives in Roland Park, has practiced law here both as a deputy state attorney general and in two decades of private practice. Now the managing partner at **Saul Ewing LLP's** Baltimore office, Monk has been a co-counsel to **Constellation Energy Group Inc.** in its quest to gain state approval for a new nuclear power plant in Calvert County.

His firm has also represented **The Daily Record**, whose publisher and president, Christopher A. Eddings, was elected to the GBC's board of directors on

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Tuesday.

Monk spoke at length about Constellation in an interview, citing the company as an example of how governments in the area could have a more productive relationship with the business community. Monk also discussed the Inner Harbor — whether the existing streetscape works and how to re-evaluate the utility of Harborplace in light of its owner's financial troubles — and how regional interests can work together to improve the area's infrastructure.

Question: What are some of your aspirations as chairman?

Answer: I'd like to see our business community and our political leaders find a less adversarial relationship, so that's a general theme. In that regard, I'm very concerned about Constellation Energy. ...

Certainly in the Baltimore region, they're our No. 1 business, one of our largest employers, one of the largest contributors to our community, and we seem to be far too adversarial with them over far too long a period of time.

I do think we have to be realistic about the marketplace, and sometimes the pressures on our political leaders are great and they wish that they could affect the marketplace in ways that are unrealistic. That's a general subject of which I have some concern and I'd like to find new ways to open dialogues there.

Let's take, for example, this [**Electricite de France**] deal. We understand that Constellation got itself into problems with its trading operation. We understand that they have struck a deal with EDF to buy half of their fleet of nuclear power plants. We understand the importance of that \$4.5 billion investment in this



company, and honestly I don't understand why we are still struggling to get that transaction approved. It certainly can't be good for **Baltimore Gas & Electric Co.** if Constellation has got economic issues.

Q: On Constellation, you've expressed a desire to see Baltimore take advantage of the company's intention to develop new nuclear power plants.

A: Another subject that I'm concerned about is getting on the positive side of economic development opportunities ... We know that Constellation is starting down the path of nuclear redevelopment in this country. That could be a huge opportunity for our community, a huge opportunity to train new engineers and train new math and science people. I mean billions and billions of dollars are going to be spent over the next couple of decades on redevelopment of nuclear power in this country as one of the ways that we address our energy issues, and our ... state government and local government ought to be reaching out to encourage that opportunity.

Q: You have also said one of your goals as GBC chair is to encourage regional cooperation to help build infrastructure for the area. What needs to be improved?

A: Well, you know, the obvious No. 1 right now is the water and sewer system. And the last couple of weeks has certainly been a blunt reminder to all of us about the age that our water and sewer system is and the consequence of living with a system that hasn't been invested in, in a major way for many years.

And, you know, it's not just Baltimore. That water and sewer system supports the whole Central Maryland region in one way or another. So that's something. It seems to me that we need to find a

way to make capital investment there both to support growth in the region and smart growth in the right places in the region, as well as to protect the [Chesapeake] Bay because we want to make sure that this population center does its part in making sure that we don't put excess loading on the bay.

Q: What are your thoughts on the future of the Inner Harbor?

A: I think the Inner Harbor has lost some of its hum. And, you know, it was a fabulous idea. It continues to be an important component of a revitalized city but, candidly, it's lost a little bit of its luster...

You only have to walk through those buildings and walk through that area to start to feel that those properties are getting tired, and that the business model there is not living up to its expectations in the same way that it did when it was developed ... 35 years ago...

I guess the right answer is, the GBC of course feels some great interest in that area because we, in large measure, created the vision that started the whole Inner Harbor redevelopment. And now we think it's time for us to bring the best minds and thinkers together to come up with a new, exciting plan that will bring the hum back for the Inner Harbor.

Q: How do you compare the Baltimore you grew up in to the city that exists now and to what you're hoping to see in the future?

A: I think Baltimore in many ways is a city with an exciting future. It's a city in transition. It has brought back many young people that it lost. It has a real downtown that works, but at the same time it's troubled by its crime problem and its drug problem, and it's up to the business community, as we're

thinking about the exciting new opportunities, not to forget that those problems have to be addressed and to work with law enforcement and the mayor's office to address those issues.

We're delighted with [Baltimore City Public Schools CEO Andres] Alonso's efforts, with the board of education. We think that, that is a great start. We would like to see more of the good works that he's doing. Education is key to, ultimately, the success of Baltimore.

Q: Transportation policy has been a big issue for the GBC for years. What are your hopes on that front for your tenure?

A: One of the real concerns is that as a state we have essentially used our transportation dollars as a fallback, a rainy day fund almost, when we had a budget shortfall. As a consequence of that, we continue to have real failings — I would say is probably the right word — in developing an adequate transportation system for the Baltimore region...

Baltimore has to — our region has to address our transportation needs. They will pull us together as a region and allow economic development to go forward and allow us to take advantage of the fact that we are in such close proximity to Washington, D.C. So we think that transportation as a whole is something that has got to be a focus of the GBC and of the business community.

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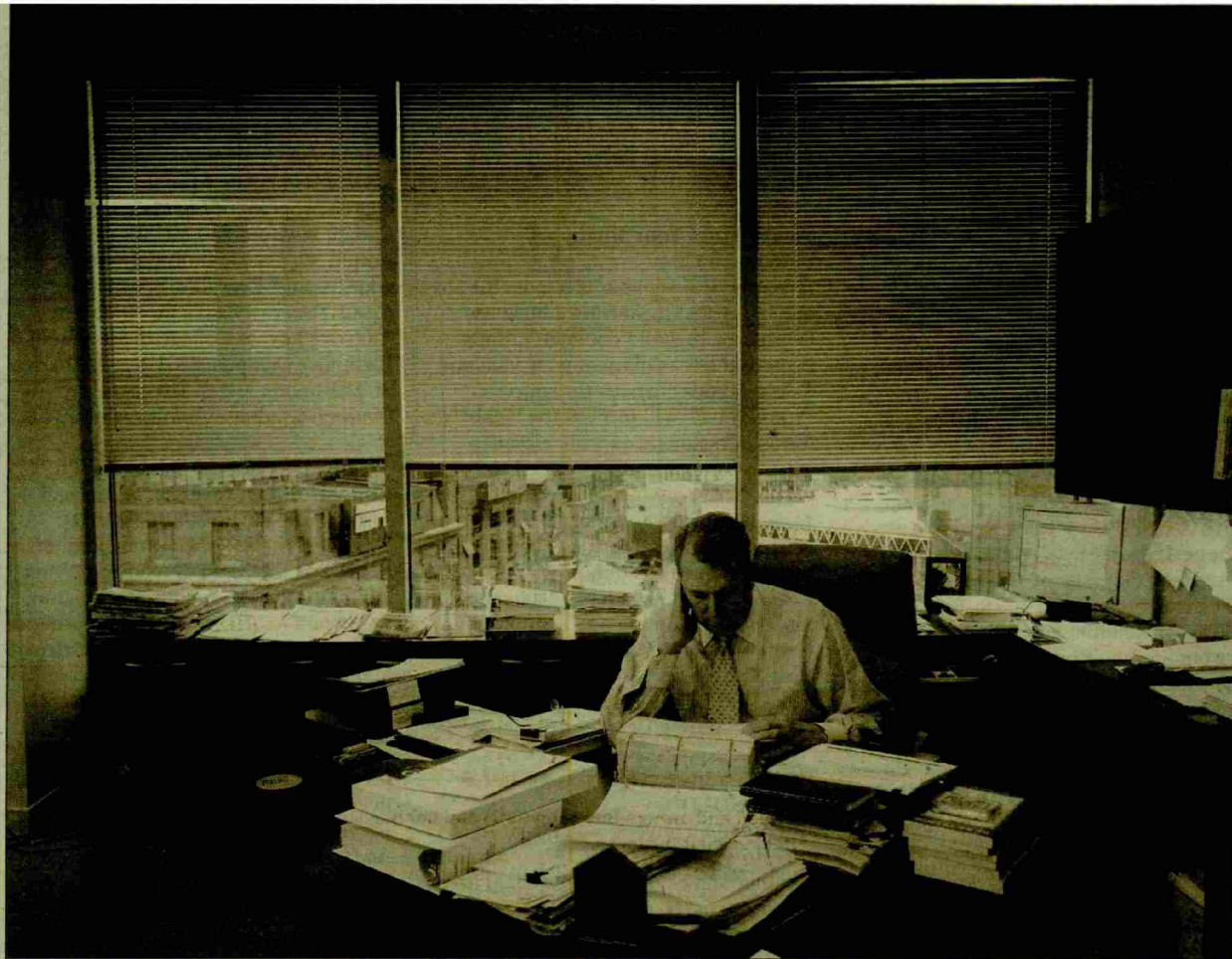
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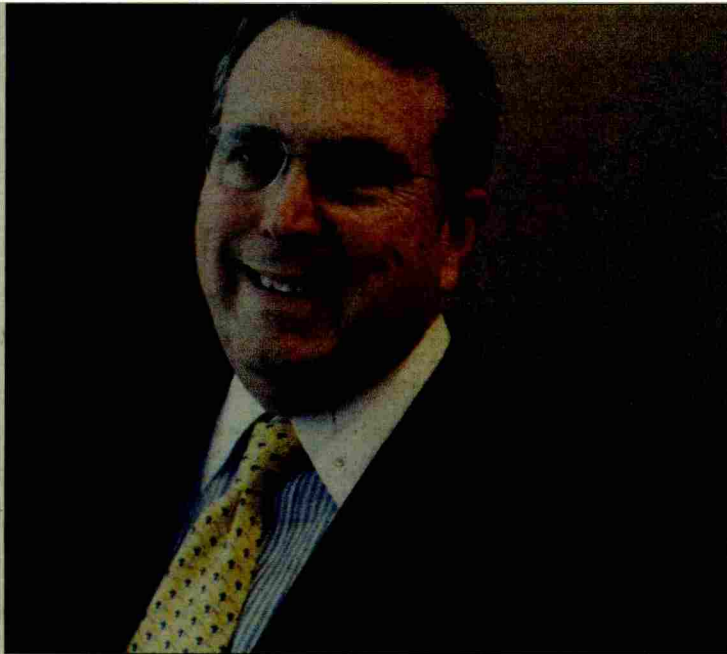
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Monk >> New GBC chairman wants to see region's infrastructure improved



RICH DENNISON

Charles O. Monk II, the new chairman of the Greater Baltimore Committee's board of directors, at work in his Saul Ewing office.



RICH DENNISON

New GBC board chair Charles O. Monk II: 'I'd like to see our business community and our political leaders find a less adversarial relationship ... In that regard, I'm very concerned about Constellation Energy.'