

December 18, 2013

Good Evening Executive Ulman and Gentlemen,

My name is Jacquie Sentell and I live in High Ridge, the southernmost part of Howard County. I am speaking on behalf of HCCA, Howard County Citizens Association, as a board member and have their full consent on this testimony.

We feel that you should allocate money to adding a new position and role within Howard County government. That position and role would be an Environmental Advisor. This person should be independent of DPZ and give a non-biased and true environmental assessment of an area that has been requested to be developed on.

At a meeting a few weeks ago, Jen Terresa and Marsha McLaughlin met with a few HCCA Board Members & citizens. They felt that this type of position would be an asset to Howard County and the process.

We also feel the environmental laws of Howard County should be revise to reflect more protection of the natural resources in our county and provide a more detail account of the animals, plant life and air & water quality that would be impacted.

As you are aware, in the High Ridge area there is about 5 acres of forest that is being threatened of being destroyed because of development. In the Howard County Green Infrastructure Network Plan of Dec 2012, the High Ridge area green space is not even shown on the maps. To date there has been no assessment of this area, other than to count the trees. The birds, the wildlife and the flora & fauna have not been assessed. This is a prime example of what this position would provide to the citizens, the developer and the government.

To date this county does not assess the environmental issues that sustain our natural resources other than to count & label the trees. Which still can be taken out and banked many miles from the original area. There is also a soil test for the type of soil and how the water should drain when construction is happening. But these 2 things are for development of the area and really don't have that much to do with the environmental impact that would happen in the current or surrounding area.

According to your website – “Preserving & protecting our environment is a top priority”. This position would show that this statement is true. It would demonstrate a commitment to stewardship.

So we ask that you budget money into creating a position that would give a independent analysis towards providing a true assessment of the environmental issues that affect and threaten the natural resources.

Because once they are taken from an area, they are gone for good.

Jacquie Sentell, Board Member
Howard County Citizen Association (HCCA)