

HCCA Board Meeting

Minutes of the March 3, 2015

Attendees: Paul Verchinski, Stu Kohn, Brian England, Howard Johnson, JD Smith, Jacquie Sentell, and Alan Schneider.

Guest Speaker: Roy Appletree.

1. The meeting started at 7:10 PM.
2. The minutes for the February Board Meeting were approved.
3. The Treasurer's report was approved. Discussion included income from member dues and PayPal.
4. Stu Kohn discussed HCCA Board openings, requests for interested persons to apply, and Alan Schneider's offer to serve. Brian England moved for immediate appointment of Alan Schneider as a Board member, effective immediately. The motion was approved unanimously. Additional nominations are expected for the May 13 Membership meeting.
5. Stu Kohn announced with appreciation that Allen Kittleman is confirmed to be the guest speaker at 7:45 PM at the May 13 Membership meeting. The audience will be able to submit written questions. Questions will be randomly selected. Stu Kohn will be moderator. Also at the meeting, HCCA members will be asked to submit suggestions on HCCA activities for the coming year.

Stu Kohn was a member of the County Executive Transition DPZ / DIPL and he commended the Chairman of that Committee in well conducted meetings to fairly to accept information from all. Stu expressed his confidence in County Executive Allan Kittleman, especially with Allan's commitment that "All regulations will be followed".

6. Guest Speaker Roy Appletree was introduced. He is Chairman of the Columbia Downtown Housing Corporation, a nonprofit entity, which is charged with administering the affordable housing funds for downtown Columbia. Downtown Columbia developers contribute funds for affordable housing; unlike developers in other parts of Howard County they must meet the requirement to 15% of the units as affordable housing units. The Downtown Columbia developer contributions now total seven million dollars. So far 800 units are built, 200 are under construction, and there are 4,000 more units approved for future construction. The corporation would use the funds to assist developers in providing affordable housing units, provide low-income residents with rental assistance or homeownership loans and aid in eviction prevention and foreclosure assistance.

The County Council asked the Columbia Downtown Housing Corporation to submit its recommendations before any changes are made in allocating funds for affordable housing. Roy Appletree reported that its report recommended that allocations be changed as follows: 1/3 of the fund allocated for housing for those with median income of 40%, 1/3 of the fund allocated for those with median income of 60%. HCCA supports affordable housing in Downtown Columbia, and the Board agreed to submit its support in writing to the County.

7. Stu Kohn reported his testimony before passage of Council Bill 6. This Bill confirms that all parties will have a two-week period to evaluate whenever a Technical Staff Report, TSR is issued regardless of venue; County Council, Zoning Board, Planning Board, Hearing Examiner, or Board of Appeals. The bill was introduced by Mary Kay Sigaty because HCCA brought to the attention of the County Council a contrary opinion by the Howard County Office of Law regarding the applicability of CB58-2006, which was passed about 9 years ago. Special thanks to Mary Kay Sigaty.

8. Discussion ensued regarding connecting on common interests with others supporting community interests. For example, further clarification would be discussed regarding Facebook links with Lisa Markovitz of The Peoples' Voice.

9. A representative of the League of Women Voters was unable to attend. Discussion ensued regarding support of Senate Bill 695. HCCA will submit support.

10. Chapelgate project. HCCA was contacted by residents of Albeth Community regarding a proposed new Community Enhancement Floating Zone, located near Turf Valley. HCCA is acting as consultants and went before the Zoning Board on 3 Feb asking for dismissal on issues that the CER criteria were not followed. One was that the Design Advisory Panel recommendations were not attached to the TSR and any comments of concerns by the community were not attached to the TSR. Any action was postponed. The Chairperson of the Zoning Board, Calvin Ball was to send a letter to DPZ to explain why the criteria were not met. The next Zoning Board hearing is supposed to be March 17th.

11. The "Standing" issue was discussed by Brian England who stated that citizens have insufficient standing to raise issues of community interest. For example, the proposed access to Snowden River Parkway conflicts with highway designs standards and the public interest regarding traffic delays.

12. The Fuel Task Force Report was discussed. HCCA will support the Report including the one mile separation for gas stations in New Town and will send out solicitation to other community civic groups.

13. Stu Kohn reported that the Industrial Mulching Task Force had completed 24 meetings and was in the process of completing majority and minority reports. HCCA will support the minority report that is being authored by the Dayton folks and work with them in constructing the report.

14. Discussion ensued regarding website links to the 45 County Boards and current minutes of all meetings and activities. There is a continuing lack of current information. Stu Kohn is pursuing the matter and will send an email to the County Executive.

The next Board meeting is April 7th. The first Tuesday of each month is more convenient for Board members.

The meeting adjourned at 9.15 PM.