

Date: 5 Dec 2015

Subject: HCCA Concern about Planning Board Decision

The Howard County Citizens Association (HCCA) testified at the Planning Board (PB) meeting on December 3, 2015 against the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) Technical Staff Report (TSR) amendments to the Zoning Regulation Amendment (ZRA) -159 Fueling Station Task Force (TF). DPZ recommended approval of the ZRA with substantial revisions. Some individual HCCA Board Members also testified that the proposed DPZ's revisions were not warranted and completely undermined the six months the TF worked on their recommendations.

We are extremely disappointed by the PB actions. How could they vote negatively on the TF recommended 2500 feet between stations, and 500 feet from environmentally sensitive areas? The DPZ recommended no distance requirement between stations, and 150-300 foot setbacks for environmentally sensitive areas and places (schools, assisted living), etc. The PB basically told the TF that your 6 months of work was a waste of time and effort. It looks like the PB is satisfied that the environment and potential safety is low priority and should not be part of the formula in Howard County. It looks like they have no problem with areas in our County to look like Routes 1 and 40 and then perhaps having the County Council establish yet another TF in the future because of this decision by the PB.

There were 19 Civic Groups that supported the TF recommendations including the Columbia Association and 7 Columbia Village Boards.

We only hope when this ZRA is heard by the County Council that they will reverse the decision of the PB by unanimously approving all of the original TF recommendations and not in any way consider DPZ's alteration.

The DPZ's TSR can be found by going to http://www.howardcountymd.gov/Planning_Board.htm, and scrolling down to "Upcoming Meetings" and going to the link "ZRA 159 – Howard County Fueling Station Task Force."

Sincerely,

Stu Kohn
President, HCCA