

Date: 18 July 2016

Subject: Downtown Columbia Legislation

My name is Stu Kohn and I reside at 8709 Yellow Bird Court, Laurel, Md. 20723. I am the President of the Howard County Citizens Association, HCCA.

When we testified on Thursday evening our main focus was and will continue to be that any proposed development before you or you acting as the Zoning Board has to have strategic planning especially regarding our quality of life issues, the Police, Fire, EMS, and Hospital facilities as discussed in PlanHoward2030, Chapter 8. We provided you with some very concerning statistics that everyone should pause and think before any proposed development is approved.

We appreciate the Council permitting additional time to testify on the Downtown Columbia legislation. Tonight, we want to ask some questions and suggest some potential amendments to a few of the Bills as follows:

Bill 54

Refer to Page 2, Line 1 – The word “Art” needs to be defined as “Art” is only in the eye of the beholder.

Line 9 – 10 – Why do we have an escape clause with the “fee in-lieu” clause? We need to enforce that we take pride not allow the developer a buyout.

Line 17 – Who will determine the “value” of the “Art?”

Refer to Page 3, Line 15 – Why are we speaking a 40 year term? How was this established?

Lines 26 thru 31 – Why not the going 15 percent required for Affordable Housing? Why should Howard Hughes get a reduced discount when other developers do not? Councilwoman Terrasa’s proposal is the right thing to do. This is one major reason why the majority of your constituents favor her plan.

Refer to Page 5, Line 8 – Does the phrase, “reserved parking spaces” include “Handicap parking?”

Line 16 – Would like to have the opportunity for someone to fully explain Table 1 to us. As to how the numbers were established.

Bill 55

Refer to Page 2 Lines 2 thru 28 – What is the rationale for Developers to buy their way out?

Line 10 – Why is the word “Shall” being deleted and replaced with “May”? Need to be more forceful.

Bill 56

Refer to Exhibits E-1, E-2(a), and Table B – There potentially is a conflict with the “Per Unit” rates that need an explanation.

We only hope our concerns and questions are not only heard but where plausible acted on by you. Winston Churchill, stated, “Criticism may not be agreeable, but it is necessary. It fulfils the same function as pain in the human body. It calls attention to an unhealthy state of things.”

Thank You,

Stu Kohn
HCCA, President