

HCCA Board of Directors Meeting– December 6, 2016

Board Attendees: Stu Kohn, President, Lisa Markovitz, Vice President, Alan Schneider, Secretary, JD Smith, Treasurer, Brian England, Paul Verchinski, Amran Pasha, and Howard Johnson.

Guests: Richard Krantz of Pilot Productions, and Cyril Paumier.

Preliminary comments: Regarding the video transmission of the County Council meetings, Stu Kohn noted that the issue he brought to the attention of the County Council has been successful resolved. Good resolution of a technical issue.

New Town Columbia: The outstanding report by Board Members JD Smith and Brian England, “New Town Columbia – Preserving the Vision” has been receiving attention. Follow-up has been recommended in connection with New Town’s 50th anniversary this summer. Proposed is production of a video documenting “the plan”; a documentary of where we started, where we are, and where we are going in the next 50 years. Release of the video would be timed to coincide with the 50th anniversary activities. A proposal was made by Pilot Productions which made a documentary in 1987 for the 20th Anniversary Columbia Forum. The 1987 video was based on the many details, including interviews with James Rouse, and others, who worked for many years on planning and implementation of the nationally recognized plan.

Board members authorized an initial expenditure to start the video project. Full commencement depends upon funding. Substantial funding is needed. Brian England and JD Smith will coordinate activities to proceed.

The Single Most Important Space in All Columbia. It’s Symphony Woods. Cy Paumier, Urban Design Consultant, has studied center city parks around the world. City center parks have fundamental core concepts. Briefly, he described an overview of the application of fundamental principles to Symphony Woods. He lives in Columbia and knows the vision for Symphony Woods. He is familiar with plan changes since the initial 2008 Symphony Woods Park Plan. He was invited to make a full presentation at our next Board meeting on January 11th. Cy Paumier made available a copy of his publicized work on Urban Planning in Washington DC.

Compliance and modernizing Covenants was discussed. HCCA will request to be included with Columbia Association, Villages and commercial interests in the discussion and planning for any changes in the covenants.

Chapelgate zoning update. HCCA continues to stand with the Albeth community to articulate compliance with zoning criteria. Mediation was suggested in the past. Mediation seems to be inappropriate in certain cases in which development proposals do not comply with zoning regulations. The public deserves adherence to existing procedures, meeting criteria, and zoning regulations. Although mediation does not make sense in this case, HCCA will in good faith participate in a mediation hearing scheduled for December 30th.

Citizens are blocked from enforcing zoning regulations. Discussion included questioning why elected officials are not proposing revised rules to permit enforcement of promised protections. A legal interpretation of the “Standing” requirement blocks citizens appealing non-compliant and wrongful development. The “Standing” requirement is a barrier so that concerned citizens cannot raise issues of public concern to protect property rights of citizens in Howard County.

Senior Citizen Action Item. Free Use for Howard County Transit was proposed. Promoting ridership for income limited senior citizens would have minimal impact on transit revenues and would greatly benefit Howard County. Seniors on limited incomes need incentives to remain in Howard County.

Merriweather Post Pavilion Noise. Discussion included a review of the large amount of factual information regarding the increased noise, the lack of compliance, and the inability or unwillingness of elected officials to resolve the issue. Howard County delegation will meet to directly listen to citizen complaints.

Solar energy. Briefly reviewed was the conflict between Agricultural Preservation covenants and support of solar energy. HCCA will continue to monitor this issue.

Status of Attorney Grievance Commission action against two experienced, highly qualified land use, referendum and civil rights attorneys. The 16 day circuit court trial against Susan Gray and Allen Dyer was concluded with the issuance by Judge Silkworth of an extensive 100+ page detailed opinion finding that there were no ethical violations. A final decision will be issued by the Maryland Court of Appeals.

Appreciation was expressed again for the Department of Planning and Zoning meetings with HCCA to discuss issues and questions of concern to enable better understanding and avoidance of future problems.

A proposed **2017 wish list of potential improvements for Howard County** was circulated for discussion and further review.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Next Board Meeting is January 10, 2017.