

Date: 18 September 2017

Subject: The Howard County Citizens Association (HCCA) supports CB74-2017

Good Evening. My name is Stu Kohn. I reside at 8709 Yellow Bird Court Laurel, Maryland, 20723. I am the President of the Howard County Citizens Association, HCCA and our Board has unanimously voted to support CB74-2017. We were against the TIF when we testified in July. The asking of the repeal is more than justified being that the terms have changed and especially being the citizens should have been informed as to the major revision to the original Bill. We continue to commend Councilwoman Jen Terrasa for having the fortitude to just say "NO" to a deal that should not have occurred in the first place. Now that Councilman Ball is a co-sponsor of this Bill, HCCA appreciates the effort. It is very unfortunate that at this time there are four corporations who are involved in a lawsuit regarding the entire premise of the Downtown TIF. They are Corporate Office Properties, Merritt Properties, St. John Properties, and Greenbaum and Rose. If these corporations were to ask for a TIF would the County oblige? Where and when does it end? Their complaint they are claiming is an improper use of public funds for a private facility. This may well be justified as it is not in the best interest of other developers. In this regard the proposed Laurel Park TIF is in the same category. What this all boils down to is can someone please tell us what is the real vision of our County?

I can tell you that last week, HCCA was proud to conduct a premier film we produced which was held at the Howard County Community College. There were about 350 people in attendance. The film was titled, "Columbia at 50 – a Bridge to the Future." There were many people who were interviewed that participated in the film. In the film there was a segment discussing the relevance of the Downtown Columbia TIF. When the camera focused on Councilwoman Terrasa she articulated her views on the TIF. The audience gave her a rousing applause. Oh, and by the way – Howard Hughes declined as well as Kimco to be interviewed for our film. Is this any way to be communicable with the community? It leaves a bad impression. If your constituents had the opportunity to vote on whether a TIF for Downtown Columbia is justified the answer would probably be "NO."

I refer you to the proposed Bill, Lines 12 thru 14. It states, "The decision raises numerous questions about the financial data presented to the Council during its consideration of CB56-2016 and significantly alters the potential public benefit to be realized through the proposed investment of public funds." This is why transparency should be the word of the day and at all times. The public has a vested right to be involved in knowing exactly how much is designated where and what are the benefits to the citizens not necessarily Howard Hughes. Where precisely is the majority of the money from the designated parking garage going? Is it going strictly to the roads or anywhere else and how much? Why not have some of the money go to further the expansion of the Hospital? This is necessitated to ensure the additional 900 units plus 160 units at the Flier building which is much greater than the designated 5500 units stated in Plan Howard

2030 because of the passing of the original TIF legislation. This by all means needs to be considered in the overall equation regarding proper infrastructure. Perhaps the Council will see fit to take the necessary initiative to include major amendments to APFO. I think it is safe to say that based on the applause we heard at our HCCA film premiere and what we have heard from many others, the citizens have a right to be heard concerning this major revision from the intent of CB56-2016. We recommend a public hearing to be an essential part of the conversation; to obtain a better understanding and to perhaps even get better educated to know what the impact is to all concerned parties.

Let's simply do it right for the betterment of the County we all call home.

Sincerely,

Stu Kohn
HCCA, President