

HCCA Board of Directors

Meeting Minutes– December 6, 2017

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

1. Treasurer’s Report was reviewed and approved. Membership is increasing.
2. The Minutes of the November 7, 2017 Board meeting were approved with revisions.
3. **The Settlement at Savage Mill.**

The Planning Board approved the proposed development. Further review is limited. Planning Board gave little, if any, weight to citizen testimony that the proposed location of the housing development should be denied on any one following considerations;

- a. Historic Area preservation,
- b. environmental protection of the Patuxent River from stormwater runoff,
- c. erosion and sediment control,
- d. removal of forestland protecting the river against damaging runoff,
- e. recognition of the designation of the area as a Targeted Ecological Area by the Department of Natural Resources,
- f. the identified endangered species in this area, an unfair swap of county land benefiting the developer, and
- g. the lack of benefits to the community and to Howard County.

The Planning Board’s oral decision at the conclusion of the hearing gave little, if any, weight to citizen testimony or experts. Criteria for the Planning Board’s decision are limited to three items. The criteria are not fully described. The word “environment” is included in the criteria, but is not defined.

Protection of the environment is included in Howard County’s General Plan. However, consideration of General Plan promised protections were dismissed on the grounds that the “specific” criteria override General Rules in PlanHoward.

The Planning Board apparently gave great weight to the developer. For example the developer’s landscaper testified that the project met environmental criteria for approval because the project met DPZ’s stormwater bio retention regulations. One environmental expert testifying was Riverkeeper Fred Tutman. He testified in detail and gave specific examples of how the proposed development would irreparably damage the forest cover, would damage ground cover slowing storm water runoff, would irreparably damage Patuxent River and Chesapeake Bay, and was contrary to protecting Targeted Ecological Areas.

In essence, the Planning Board accepted the criteria as defined by the developer, instead of exercising any independent judgment and considering overall health and safety, protection of the community, and the costs of environmental damage.

In Howard County the cost of environmental damage is born by citizens and not by developers. One example is the Ellicott City Flood which caused monumental damage to Howard County's economy, local businesses, and surrounding communities.

Motion was made and unanimously passed for HCCA testimony at all further stages.

4. **Chapelgate.** Filing an action for a zoning violation is possible.
5. **Aircraft Noise.** Attorney General Brian Frosh hired the law firm that won the Phoenix Case. Details are on the HCCA web site. Meetings are continuing. FAA requested more information.
6. **The Film: Preserving the Vision of New Town Columbia—the last 50 years and the next 50 years.** Plans for the next showings were discussed. High approval ratings continue to be received. YouTube views are very high. Film will be shown on Dec. 7 at Vantage House. Arrangements are being made for additional showings.
7. **Report on the Meeting with Chinese American Parent Association.** HCCA was warmly welcomed on October 29. HCCA's presentation on the need for Comprehensive Planning was well received as informative and helpful.
8. **HCCA Testimony** on upcoming Howard County Council and Planning Board meetings. Howard Johnson will testify on CB80. Testimony is reviewed in advance by the Board.
9. **Clarion Group Presentation on November 28.** Clarion provided a range of options. Will this study adequately address issues raised by citizens? Jervis Dorton discussed the importance of factors which appear to be missing.
10. **HCCA Candidate Forum.** HCCA has sponsored candidate forums in previous elections. Sponsorship is one way to provide voters of important issues and candidate responses.
11. **Upcoming Meetings with Department of Planning and Zoning.** Past meetings with DPZ have been helpful and informative. Communication of community issues is important. The next meeting is scheduled for Dec. 13.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.