

Date: 18 June 2018

Subject: Howard County Citizens Association, HCCA Testimony on CB40-2018

Good evening. My name is Stu Kohn and I am the President of the Howard County Citizens Association, HCCA testifying on their behalf. We first and foremost want to thank Councilwoman, Jen Terrasa for her continued efforts to try and ensure “transparency” is not just a word, but has meaning which is the case of CB40-2018. We are in favor of the proposed Bill. Had this Bill been in vogue prior to the Planning Board hearing regarding the Settlement of Savage Mills case the public would have been much better off? The public would have had an opportunity to get educated and perhaps have their questions answered at a given Pre-submission Meeting as defined in this Bill.

Another case in point is the proposed 4-story storage unit on Guilford Road which is in the M1 district. We learned at a recent meeting organized by the Administration, because the residents within the area were quite concerned and irate about the prospects. Unfortunately there is currently no requirement for the public to formally discuss the issue with the petitioners, because there are no requirements to conduct a Pre-submission Meeting in either the M1 or M2 districts. This needs to be changed immediately. We recommend you consider an Amendment to this Bill simply stating that Pre-submission Meetings shall be conducted in the M1 and M2 districts.

One last suggested amendment is as follows: Whenever a Pre-submission Meeting is revised from the original heard Pre-submission Meeting on the same property because DPZ considers the revised plans to be substantial then the notification signs around the property shall have the word “NEW” or “REVISED” attached to the top of the original signs. This would ensure the public is fully aware of the change and perhaps would eliminate thinking that the sign is in place because it is old news. This amendment is a direct result of the Milk Producers property on Leisure and Gorman Road. The original meeting was held on 10 April and now the Petitioner has revised his plans and is conducting a scheduled Pre-submission Meeting this Thursday, 20 June. I have spoken to the Applicant’s lawyer, Bill Erskine and he has no problem with the suggestion as he told me to tell you this is a good idea. He did go one step further by placing yellow tape around the signs to try and distinguish for the public that something has changed.

Your attention in this matter would be appreciated. Let the passing of this Bill be a part of your legacy as it would benefit your constituents. Again Councilwoman, Terrasa thank you for attempting to do something positive by providing a little more transparency to the Pre-submission process.

Thank You,

Stu Kohn
HCCA, President