



**Howard County Citizens Association**

*Since 1961...*

*The Voice Of The People of Howard County*

Date: 22 January 2019

**Subject: Council Bill 3 -2019 Removal of the exclusion of the New Development section from the Historic Preservation Commission COA requirement.**

Good evening Council chair and members. Tonight, I am testifying on behalf of the Howard County Citizens Association, HCCA in favor of CB3-2019.

HCCA finds this bill to remove the exclusion of Certificate of Approval (COA) for proposed new development and subdivisions in county established historic and preservation districts is a very positive step in the right direction to secure the historic districts.

The Historic Preservation Commission, HPC currently can only provide comment and explanation to the parties presenting a new development or subdivision plan before them. Comments presented by the HPC can be considered by these parties and by the Planning Board as a subdivision plan moves through the process to completion. Unfortunately there is no teeth to the recommendations or consequences if the recommendations or comments are not followed. A COA is the tool the HPC needs to have influence over such plans.

With the exclusion of the “New Development “ clause removed from section 16.603 of the code the HPC will have the appropriate oversight of new development, requested changes to streets, storm water management, trees, and forest management. This is important because an historic district is not only buildings, but also the environment which has been created and part of the charter of that district.

Recent development plans in historic districts have threatened these areas with tract type housing to maximize the dollar per foot. These are the Districts where the land under foot has been preserved by others for years to carve out a place where the planned development and urbanization of Howard County cannot and should be allowed because it might make cents. We simply request our decision makers to make sense.

The Historic Preservation Commission is the County gate keeper for historic properties. We must give the HPC the tools to do properly perform their jobs for the benefit of preservation at its finest. CB3 is definitely a major step forward. The HCCA requests the Council pass CB3-2019 to amend the code to further safeguard land and properties which should be preserved to protect our County.

Howard Johnson  
HCCA Board of Directors