



HCCA

Howard County Citizens Association

Since 1961...

The Voice Of The People of Howard County

Date: 17 June 2019

Subject: **HCCA Testimony CB33 – The Right to Have Standing**

The HCCA Board is very pleased that the issue of “standing” is now being addressed by this bill. We thank councilor Deb Jung for introducing this bill.

Having experienced being told that I don’t have “standing” and that I’m not “sufficiently aggrieved” by attorneys and having this enforced by both the “Hearing Examiner” and the “Howard County Board of Appeals” is extremely frustrating.

Not being able to address the issue at hand is wrong, very wrong! It denies my right to be heard.

On top of this it’s expensive, very expensive! This is a burden on those who seek to be heard on an issue that affects them.

What aggravates the process is when there a dysfunctional board such as the Howard County Planning Board. In recent testimony against the proposed gas station on the corner of Snowden River Parkway and Minstrel Way. Over two hours of testimony from both sides was ignored! I gave 14 reasons why this project should not go ahead and documents backing up my opinion only to have the Planning Board make a decision in 20 minutes and completely ignoring my testimony and everyone else’s. I know they ignored my testimony because what I gave them would take at least 45 minutes to review.

On top of this they didn’t follow their own rules of procedure.

So the next step is the Hearing Examiner and the Board of Appeals who go with this very restrictive interpretation of standing.

Their interpretation is so restrictive that even the adjoining property didn’t have standing!

This restrictive interpretation has cost especially small businesses in Columbia hundreds of thousands of dollars in attorney fees. This is a burden that should be eliminated by you passing this Bill.

In carefully reviewing the bill we feel on Page 2 line 3 that says “or any Civic Association” should be removed and be replaced with “located in the same “Final Development Plan”.

Over the past 14 years the restrictive interpretation of standing has been used many times, it’s used because attorneys know they do not often have a case so they resort to this tactic!

We urge you to pass this bill with just that one modification.

We want to Thank Councilwoman Jung for having the fortitude to make a wrong a right.

Brian England
HCCA Board of Director