

Howard County Citizens Association

Minutes of the Board of Directors

July 24, 2019

Location

BA Auto Care, 9577 Berger Road, Columbia, Maryland 21046

Board Attendees

Stu Kohn, President, Lisa Markovitz, Vice President, Treasurer, Alan Schneider, Secretary, Brian England, Susan Garber, Jervis Dorton, Paul Verchinski, Hiruy Hadgu, and Howard Johnson. Absent: JD Smith

Treasurer's Report

And the minutes of the last meeting were approved.

Speak Out Guest

Meagan Braganca presented information regarding life threatening consequences by Howard County's application of pesticides and weed killers. Neonicotinoids, Chlorpyrifos, and Glyphosate pesticides are used on County owned property. Alternatives are available. Other jurisdictions, including Hyattsville, have banned these pesticides from being used on county recreational facilities frequently used by children and others who are susceptible to documented health diseases attributed to pesticides and weed killers, such as non-Hodgkins lymphoma. Proposed is a Howard County policy for managing weed control & working with the ecosystem, not trying to dominate or poison it. Information presented, including the "Short History", will be available on HCCA's web site. Additional answers to questions about pesticide damages and alternatives are available from Beyond Pesticides. A motion was passed to send a letter in support of banning the use of glyphosate and other carcinogens on county property.

Discussion of Annual Meeting

Stu Kohn commended County Executive Calvin Ball's presentation and commitments and positive statements regarding issues of concern raised in questions by the twelve co-sponsoring organizations. HCCA will continue to coordinate with cohost and other organizations for early implementation of smarter growth for the longterm future of Howard County. An audio record of the meeting will be available on HCCA's web site.

Tracking Positions Taken by Elected Officials in Howard County

Hiruy Hadgu suggested scoring votes by Elected Officials to inform readers of the positions taken by Elected Officials on issues of concern. The Board unanimously supported going forward with a scoring system for publicizing votes.

Planning Board Meeting on the Proposed Lawyers Hill Development

The Planning Board does not evaluate in its approval process using comments raised including the protection of the environment, historic preservation, watershed management, and community input. The Planning Board in its approval process is not measuring proposals on the goals expressed in PlanHoward 2030. The approval process should include a measurement of objectives for a better Howard County, including those published in PlanHoward2030.

Planning Board procedures fail to enable the Planning Board to fully evaluate proposals presented by attorneys and other experts who are paid to provide a “must approve” opinion. Proponents and their attorneys and experts are able to testify without time limits. Cross examination by proponents is unlimited.

On the other side, excluded by “standing” rules are those who can provide a more comprehensive analysis of the proposal in terms of sustainability and other factors. No cross examination of those who have approved the project is permitted.

The Planning Board needs to be independent as it is in other counties, such as Montgomery County and Prince George’s County.

Elected Officials Are Not Responding to E-mails

Stu Kohn reviewed unresponsiveness to emails sent to elected officials. Failure to respond is disrespectful and unacceptable. On the letter sent from HCCA to 18 officials and 12 delegates regarding the Merriweather Post Pavillion noise only Jessica Feldmark and Jen Terrassa responded.

Charter Review Commission

Stu Kohn discussed the status of the Charter Review Commission. Proposed changes must be on the ballot. The next meeting will be at the Laurel Community Center on Sept 19th.

Royal Farms and Board of Appeals Status

Brian England described the Technical Staff Report as “mind boggling”. Commercial truck parking contravenes covenants, design and zoning regulations.

Ethics: Is it a conflict of interest for Board of Appeals members to be connected to law firms representing proponents.

Next Meeting with DPZ is scheduled for August 13.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:20 PM

The next Board Meeting is September 12 at 7 PM.

Alan Schneider
Secretary