



Howard County Citizens Association

Since 1961...

The Voice Of The People of Howard County

Date: 18 November 2019

Subject: **HCCA Testimony – CB65-2019**

Members of the County Council,

I am testifying on behalf of the Howard County Citizens Association to raise concerns about the transparency and accountability issues surrounding this legislation.

First, after reviewing the Planning Board proceedings and the affidavit filed by Councilman Yungmann, who sponsored the legislation, it is abundantly clear that the provisions are on behalf of a single beneficiary. But it is not clear why the individual did not file the petition instead of utilizing the advantage of a county council member that would have the effect of short-circuiting a process not made available to everyone.

Furthermore, while it is abundantly clear that the ZRA is for a single beneficiary, it is not clear from the proceedings and the petition who that it. This further undermines the public process.

Second, several sections of the affidavit including the section relating to political contributions are incomplete. At a time when the issue of special interest influence has reached a crisis point, an elected official should be sensitive to even the appearance of the impropriety.

Lastly, who pays the fee of \$695 and additional fees related to the \$40 per 200 words of text as required by the ZRA petition? Was the fee waived? If so why? If not, who wrote the check?

We think the public is better served if these transparency and accountability issues are resolved before taking action on this legislation.

Hiruy Hadgu
HCCA Board of Director