



HCCA

Howard County Citizens Association

Since 1961...

The Voice Of The People of Howard County

Date: 21 January 2020

Subject: **HCCA FAVORS the Passage of CB1-2020**

Good Evening. My name is Stu Kohn and I am the President of the Howard County Citizens Association, HCCA testifying on their behalf. We are by all means in favor of CB1-2020 just as we were for CB17-2019 when we testified in April. You can review our testimony in the attachment. We want to once again give Councilwoman Liz Walsh all the credit in an attempt to do something positive to ensure the future of our County is sound by introducing sensible measurements. We also want to continually thank Councilwoman Jung for her full support and voting in favor of CB17.

Clarence Darrow stated, "History repeats itself and that's one of the things that's wrong in history." We are hoping that Councilpersons Jones, Mercer, and Yungman fully realize our County cannot continue to do business as usual. When CB17-2019 was heard there was testimony from the Affordable Housing advocates that the Bill if passed would be extremely harmful. We, by all means want to see as much Affordable Housing as is warranted, but how does the passage of CB1 or CB17 endanger the goal. The Affordable Housing – Howard County Housing Affordability Coalition testified on CB17 and stated, "This proposed legislation also presents the potential unintended consequence of curtailing development of Moderate Income Housing Units (MIHUs). This program is the primary vehicle for ensuring equitable distribution of affordable units throughout the county." The real impediment is that the County permits the developers to pay their way out by the fee-in-lieu method to override the ability to really promote Affordable Housing. Perhaps when the fee-in-lieu process is ever eliminated those who were against CB17-2019 might be more optimistic about CB1-2020 and redistricting would not be a consequence.

You also heard from the Builders Association which stated, "That extending the schools test would further lower the County's budget and its ability to provide public services, strain the existing tax structure, require cuts to public and private work forces, lower the County's bond rating, decrease availability of affordable housing, and destroy the County's previous reputation for business friendliness." They also stated CB17 proposes to extend the length of time during which projects must wait for school capacity in Howard County, which flies in the face of the Report and is a direct contradiction to the County's best interests." Can this be unequivocally proven?

You heard from the School Board that "given the many factors that influence population and student growth, as well as the many factors that impact Howard County revenues, we recommend continued collaborative discussions on CB17-2019, taking into account APFO, school facilities surcharges, and the overall educational needs of our county." They further stated, "Through a review of other APFO regulations throughout Maryland, HCPSS staff indicates Anne Arundel and Calvert Counties both have wait periods of six years - two years beyond the current four years in Howard County. Other options, where a county does not specify a wait time, include placeholders within a Capital Improvement Program, or the option for a developer to present mitigation strategies that are approved by the Board. All one has to do is look at the proposed school budget for FY2021 where the total request will be 964.1 million dollars which is 62.7 million more than last year's approved budget. Are we going to

continuously see such a monumental increase in the future? Just look at CR98-2019 the proposed housing unit allocation chart which has been tabled. The question is quite apparent why do we see in 2022 thru 2024 a substantial increase in the number of housing unit allocations? Can we afford this?

We currently are faced with having 234 trailers and who knows how many more? Now we are in a major redistricting situation. With this situation CB1 should be unanimously passed if we really care about the best education and environment for our children, the future leaders of America. The School Board further testified by “thanking Councilwoman Liz Walsh for her introduction of legislation that would have the anticipated effect of slowing student growth until, hopefully, a time of increased financial stability for the County. “

The Marquis de Lafayette is quoted as stating, “I read, I study, I examine, I listen, I think, and out of all that I try to form an idea into which I put as much common sense as I can.” Yes – the passage of CB1-2020 is exactly this – the personification of Common Sense!

Thank You.

Stu Kohn
HCCA President



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Date: 22 April 2019

Subject: **HCCA Testimony Regarding CB17-2019 the Increase School Wait Time**

Good Evening. My name is Stu Kohn and I am the President of the Howard County Citizens Association, HCCA testifying on their behalf.

We are in favor of CB17 and support the testimony you heard from the Savage Community Association and the Peoples Voice. We want to commend Councilwoman Liz Walsh for her attempt to do something positive about the current APFO criteria especially when it comes to the category of our schools. HCCA was a representative on the APFO Task Force. We have never been enthralled with the measurements of APFO. When we testified to the Council in July 2017 we said, "Something is drastically wrong to the point where the acronym of APFO should be changed to ALPO – A Lousy Protective Ordinance and that no one in the County should be proud."

The education of our children should undoubtedly be the priority for our future. It is the best investment we could ever make. If APFO was really working we wouldn't see any redistricting or 234 plus portables. CB17 is suggesting the wait time be for 7 years. The one good thing is the Task Force was able to extend the wait time to 5 years. What guarantee do we have this will work? We simply need to ensure that overdevelopment does not override our children's education because of poor strategic planning. The longer the school system has to prepare to increased enrollment because of overdevelopment, the less likely they are to need further portable capacity.

Let's do something worthwhile to once and for all ensure that APFO stands for not "Adequate" but an "Awesome" Protective Facilities Ordinance! How about making the appropriate revisions to APFO as the community would appreciate your efforts to also include Quality of Life measurements such as the Hospital, EMS Police, and Fire? While you are looking into refinements to APFO we need to do something about the Roads test. If the test was really working then why do we see signs which read, "Stay Alert Congested Area Next 3 Miles?"

The real question to be answered is our infrastructure keeping pace with development. The answer is NO. We all need to be smarter and realistic if we care about the future welfare of Howard County.