



HCCA

Howard County Citizens Association

Since 1961... The Voice of the People of Howard County

Date: 19 October 2020

Subject: **HCCA Testimony for CB57-2020**

We, the Howard County Citizens Association, HCCA want to express our sincere gratitude to both Councilmembers David Yungmann and Deb Jung for introducing and co-sponsoring CB57-2020 to eliminate the “Recommendation” section in the Technical Staff Report, TSR prepared by the Department of Planning and Zoning, DPZ. You not only listened to our suggestion, but acted on it! This is deeply appreciated as it should assist in attempting to better balance the scales of justice.

This Bill should be unanimously passed especially since Amy Gowan; the Director of DPZ is very much in Favor of eliminating the “Recommendation” section. DPZ’s role should be as a Regulator not a Facilitator! The adoption of this legislation should bring impartiality to any cases when TSR’s are applicable and should enforce independent thinking. This certainly is needed as Planning Board members have stated they use the “Recommendation” section as their major guide. Currently anyone in opposition of a given petition is at a tremendous disadvantage because over the years how many times has DPZ disapproved a Petition. The passage of this Bill will be advantageous because as you know we cannot ask questions to DPZ at Planning Board Hearings, but we can at Zoning Board Hearings. This contradiction needs to be revisited by you and reconsidered by the three who voted against it in CB32-2019.

One thing we don’t want to see is that anyone acting as decision makers such as the Planning or Zoning Board should not be permitted to ask anyone testifying for DPZ whether they approve or for that matter Disapprove the Petition before them.

Because of the allotted testimony time we have suggested changes since this Bill addresses areas of the Planning and Zoning Boards as well as questioning DPZ at Hearings, etc. We would like the opportunity to meet with interested Councilpersons to try and bring some needed reform to lead to adopted legislation for needed improvements.

Your vote in FAVOR of CB57-2020 will show your constituents that you believe in a much fairer and independent system of justice for all.

Thank you,
Stu Kohn
HCCA President