



HCCA

Howard County Citizens Association

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

Date: 20 January 2026

Subject: HCCA Testimony for CR24-2026

I am Stu Kohn from Scaggsville testifying on behalf of the Howard County Citizens Association, HCCA as President.

Until specified qualifications and requirements for Board of Appeals (BoA) members are defined in the Charter and/or Code, this Resolution should not be considered. We cannot support having additional Board Members without specified guidelines and job qualifications identified for positions on this Board. We cannot support unqualified Board Members! HCCA does not believe this resolution as presented will have the support of the entire council to move forward to go to a referendum? We ask will any of the additional members have anywhere near the exceptional qualifications of the previous nominee, Andrea LeWinter. This nominee was the epitome of a nominee who stood out from the rest. She had knowledge and experience as a lawyer in Zoning and Land Use. Her denial was a major disappointment!!

Why do you think the addition of two more members is necessary? Will they be qualified other than being a resident of Howard County? Under this proposal why not propose the Planning Board to have two additional members?

To consider moving this resolution forward HCCA recommends the following amendments:

- Provide the nomination and selection process to add more members to the Board of Appeals.
- Develop core qualifications for members of the BoA to be well versed or trained in the Code and zoning regulations in Howard County.
- Eliminate De Novo hearings at the BoA.
- Representation from the Department of Planning and Zoning to be witnesses at BoA hearings representing the counties position.

During this time of fiscal crisis in Maryland why should taxpayers pay as much as \$54,000 more per year for the addition of these two members based on the “About” section of the Board of Appeals. Please refer to page 2 of the Resolution, line 7. It states in the Charter \$1200 per year yet in the “About” section it states, “\$5000.”

Since you are proposing the additional two members why are you not considering the Planning Board being expanded? In addition, why are Planning Board members not getting paid for their service?

We don't understand the rationale of the expansion when the proposed revised Board of Appeals Rules of Procedure included alternate members which we testified Against. The Office of Law stated this didn't have “Legal Sufficiency.” Yet the Board of Appeals didn't believe the Office of

Law's legal advice then went to you to ask the Maryland State Attorney for their opinion. Within a day the State Attorney stated they don't rule on County Charters.

The biggest question is why has the Board of Appeals overruled the Hearing Examiner who is legally qualified as they are not during the last several cases? This doesn't make sense!

This Council should reject this Resolution and consider a new Resolution to completely change the Charter as we believe it is fruitless to continue with the Board of Appeals as it stands now. Let it go to Referendum for the voters to decide. Unless you can guarantee your constituents' immediate solutions to drastically improve the Board of Appeals should be abolished.

In conclusion the Council should not hesitate to vote Against CR24-2026. In this testimony the HCCA believes we have provided thoughtful input. We kindly request the courtesy of a response addressing our concerns for potential improvements.

Thank You.

Stu Kohn
HCCA President