



HCCA

Howard County Citizens Association

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

Subject: HCCA Testimony in Favor of CB11-2026

Date: Feb 17, 2026

Good Evening Council Members,

My name is Ryan Powers from Glenwood. I am testifying on behalf of the Howard County Citizens Association in support of CB11-2026.

We ask that the Council approve CB11-2026. However, as taxpayers investing \$4.6 million over ten years we believe that Howard County should include additional accountability measures to reinforce good governance and transparency. For example, the multiyear agreement should include a "Fair and Open Competition Agreement" that requires the grantee to 1) Meet common standards for publicly advertising an open tenant position and 2) Publicly post criteria explaining why and how nonprofit organizations are selected.

Through discussion with Collaborative manager Cheri Auger we understand tenant selection is open to most nonprofits in good standing. We think Howard County government should formally commit to working with the Collaborative to publicize the availability of subsidized rental space widely and in a manner consistent with fairness to all organizations that might qualify. The Nonprofit Collaborative does a good job of advertising available space with its newsletter and by word of mouth, but this may leave smaller or newer nonprofits unaware of its existence or benefits.

It is clear that people at the Nonprofit Collaborative are open and passionate about what they do. In addition to 13 tenants, the Collaborative has conference rooms to rent for a reasonable price and 19 mailboxes. Since a business address is a barrier to many nonprofits, we think the Council should consider stipulating that the Nonprofit Collaborative expand the number of mailboxes to serve more nonprofits.

CB11-2026 allows HCCA to specifically testify in favor of the Nonprofit Collaborative expansion, but part of our mission is also good governance and transparency as a foundational principle. We believe that all grants like this should be widely advertised in a way that describes the criteria and scoring rubric. Formalizing this in writing creates a pathway forward for qualified organizations to apply.

Thank you,

Ryan Powers, HCCA Board member