



HCCA

Howard County Citizens Association

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

Date: 15 June 2026

Subject: **HCCA Testimony for CB44-2026**

Good evening.

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

We want to thank Council-member Liz Walsh for taking the time to incorporate the necessary action in a meaningful proposal to drastically improve the Board of Appeals. The HCCA has for some time stated the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) should be a party when applicable in Board of Appeals cases and any other entities. Your approval of CB44-2026 should end any speculation as to what DPZ meant in their findings of any given case and save all parties time and money from lawyer fees.

There is a slogan which is very appropriate which states, "When E. F. Hutton talks, people listen." Ms. Walsh, this is exactly what you did when we spoke. You not only listened but took action. Thank you! We only hope your colleagues will do the same by approving this most needed proposal as it is essential.

The approval of CB44-2026 would be a huge step to promote more transparency and a thoughtful process to hopefully produce outcomes reflecting the inputs of all parties including the ability to answer questions and share further insights. This Bill should pass unanimously without any hesitation, especially since all Council members have previously stated major revisions are necessary.

Please refer to the Bill on page 1, lines 23 thru 26. We suggest a revision for more specificity by stating, "Each Administrative Agency in particular the DPZ shall appear and partake as a witness to respond to any questions from all parties relating to cases whenever a Technical Staff Report is issued." We further suggest this edict be incorporated to include the Hearing Examiner and Zoning Board rules of procedure.

With the passage of this Bill, it would eliminate speculation and interpretation as to what DPZ might have meant saving time and money. Case in point the first day of the Go Kart case before the BoA was over 6 hours primarily debating the definition of an "athletic field." Had DPZ participated in this case which we recommended it would have been beneficial to perhaps eliminate the BoA from speculating and then overruling the findings of both DPZ and the Hearing Examiner when the BoA stated a Go Kart track is an "athletic field." This is only one example of declaring it mandatory for DPZ or any other agency to be a witness in BoA cases when applicable.

Had DPZ been present it would have also been prudent in Manor Hill, W. R. Grace and the Quarry in Jessup cases. Having DPZ as a witness would enable all parties to have the opportunity for DPZ to respond to pertinent questions. Years ago there was a TV show called Dragnet. The leading character was a Sargent Friday who would say, "Just the facts Ma'am." This is exactly what one would hope for by bringing in all relative parties for all cases.

Council-member, Walsh the HCCA, fully appreciates your fortitude in trying to promote needed communication and understanding with the BoA for potential fairness required for decision making.

Supreme Court Justice, William O. Douglas stated, "Common Sense often makes good law." This Bill is by far common sense and needs to be Approved unanimously to vastly improve the Board of Appeals and all entities. It is drastically needed! What say ye?

Thank you,

Stu Kohn
HCCA President