
From: Cindy LaFollette <cindy72577@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 7, 2026 10:42 AM
To: planning; CouncilMail
Subject: ZRA 224: Why is it ALWAYS District 1?

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Hello, again,

I am planning to attend the ZRA 224 information webinar this afternoon, but this just came to my attention.

While I know this is propaganda (trust but verify), the map is not and it is STARTLING to me. I have to ask, "Why is it always District 1?" It has some of the most vulnerable environment in the county and contains so much of our history.

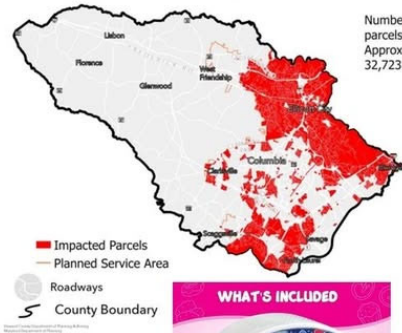
Yet we continue to flood our neighbors, overtax our infrastructure, expand roads when that does nothing to help, and put these projects into effect where safe walking and biking access to resources do not exist. Why?

I stated in a previous email that I am not necessarily opposed to the concept of cottage clusters but we must have guardrails.

- Senior housing should not be exempt from APFO and school service fees. No development should.
- We need limits on this.
- We need to sure we aren't tearing down existing homes to put these in place
- Oh gosh, I have a ton of other things I'm concerned about but I'll attend the information session today and show up for the public hearing when that becomes available.

Yours in Advocacy,
Cindy LaFollette

ZRA-224 Impacted Parcels



The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) recognizes **cottage clusters**—also known as **cottage housing**, **bungalow courts**, or **pocket neighborhoods**—as a key “missing middle” housing strategy to increase density, improve affordability, and meet demand for smaller, sustainable homes.

- **Layout:** Houses are clustered around a shared, common open space or courtyard.
- **Amenities:** These developments often feature shared, centralized parking, landscaping, and community-focused amenities like a clubhouse, community kitchen, or gardening spaces.
- **Target Market:** Popular for downsizing baby boomers, young professionals, and singles seeking a low-maintenance, community-oriented lifestyle.

NAHB Research and Advocacy

- **Missing Middle Housing:** NAHB has identified cottage courts as a crucial component of “missing middle” housing, which bridges the gap between single-family homes and high-density apartments.
- **Research & Design:** NAHB partnered with *Opticos Design*—who coined the term “Missing Middle Housing”—to analyze hundreds of codes and ordinances across the U.S. that enable cottage courts and similar innovative housing types.
- **Advocacy for Zoning Reform:** NAHB supports reducing restrictive zoning requirements that hinder cottage development, such as strict density limits or high minimum lot sizes.
- **Zoning Tracker:** NAHB developed a “zoning reform tracker” to monitor state and local initiatives that allow for denser, smaller housing types like cottage cluster.

From: Cindy LaFollette <cindy72577@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 9, 2026 12:45 PM
To: planning; CouncilMail
Cc: Brent Loveless, Legislative; Anthony DeBella, Vice President Advocacy
Subject: Final Thoughts on ZRA224

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Dear Planning Board and Council,

I attended the information session on 4/7 and was disheartening that the example in my question about parking was left out. Please answer how we plan to address my concern:

- With one parking space per unit, how will this affect neighborhood street parking when a cluster of homes might have car ownership beyond one vehicle per home? *For example, eight homes with sixteen cars where eight of them are parked on the street in a neighborhood where children walk to school with no sidewalks. And sidewalks are hard to come by around here ...*

After hearing more about this proposed regulation, I have the following recommended guardrails that I would like to put in for consideration:

Identified parcels only: If the county has already identified parcels into which these cottage clusters would fit, then the bill should start with JUST those identified parcels. Otherwise, we are going to find ourselves in a land grab for tear down and build with a target on the back of district 1, which contains some of the oldest homes with larger lots in the county, many without sidewalks or readily accessible resources and amenities.

Homeownership, please? WITH THAT, I express concern that these cottage clusters do not seem to be leaning in anyway toward creating homeownership. It sounded to me like this is mostly landlord-owned, senior rented. Given that ZRA-218 went into effect yesterday, which requires owner-occupancy, you'd think we'd like to continue moving in that direction. This petition, honestly, isn't all that different. Otherwise, it's another increase in the rental market for developers and investors, or a strip down of owner-occupancy in the future. What a mess.

APFO: Just my rant that I know DPZ can't do anything about but these laws need to change. Plain and simple. Everyone should have to pay school service fees.

Senior Housing Only ... for now?: Questions came up about why can't we do this for young families. And I say "Because our schools." Until we can better stabilize capacity in HCPSS, which hopefully we will see over the next five years as those of us in advocacy are working to help central office and the BOE

effectively carry that out, we cannot create build clusters of homes that would cause influx of students. Sorry, developers, but you brought this upon yourselves.

I'll be listening in on work sessions and continuing to communicate my concerns as we move forward in this effort.

Yours in Advocacy,
Cindy LaFollette
District 1 Resident

FW: HOLD - Cottage Clusters Barry Mehta- VIRTUAL

From Williams, China <ccwilliams@howardcountymd.gov>

Date Tue 6/2/2026 4:19 PM

To Anderson, Isaiah <ianderson@howardcountymd.gov>

Testimony

From: Barry Mehta <elkridgedevelopers@gmail.com>

Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2026 11:24 AM

To: Eisenberg, Lynda <leisenberg@howardcountymd.gov>

Cc: Sauer, Julia <jsauer@howardcountymd.gov>; Paul Cavanaugh <paulc@fcc-eng.com>; cbm@cmehta.com; Davis, Daniel <ddavis@howardcountymd.gov>; Kebede, Yosef <ykebede@howardcountymd.gov>; Jung, Debra <djung@howardcountymd.gov>; lwalsh@howardcountymd.gov; Cimino, Kelly <kcimino@howardcountymd.gov>; Angela Cabellon <ange.cabellon@gmail.com>

Subject: Re: HOLD - Cottage Clusters Barry Mehta- VIRTUAL

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Lynda,

For better time utilization of our 2 PM virtual meeting tomorrow, I would like to document the status and our requests.

Before I go into the details, please let me congratulate you all, including the council, for having come up with the ZRA 224 concept to help the 55+ community to get appropriate, decent, and affordable housing, and I would like to request your help to build at least 75 such units and be the first Howard developer to do that. I am personally very excited to pursue this concept.

1) We understand that a 2-story, 22' tall (average roofline) detached cluster home will be permitted. The height is too restrictive for no logical reason.

2) We plan to focus on a 16' x 30' or 32', 2-story plan and wish to build those in large quantities, about 75 cluster units, at the following locations:

A) 6460 Elibank Drive, which is a 6.644-acre parcel, R-ED zone, and in the metropolitan district. It does have public water but no public sewer. It is a crying shame that in spite of being in the metropolitan area, the county has not yet provided the public sewer that we have been asking for the last seven years. At the meeting, I will request the county to designate this parcel (and 6450 Elibank) as a planned service area. Then my engineer can submit an ECP for the 6460 parcel, including public sewer. We plan to put up to 50 cluster cottages on this parcel.

B) 5192-5196 Talbot's Landing, Ellicott City 21043: We plan to revise our SDP drawings for 12 cluster units in place of 3 half-acre lots.

C) 5037 Durham Road East, Columbia, 21044. We plan to revise our approved ECP of 3 lots to 12 cluster units.

Two problems we are facing are

- 1) 50' side setback. This contradicts the specified densities in the ZRA and seems an unnecessary waste of useful land. We request this to be a 10' setback, the same as the setback between adjacent units.
- 2) Since the first-floor elevation needs to be at least 2' above the ground, the 20' height is unreasonable and undoable for a 2-story structure. It needs to be at least 24' instead of the current 20'.

I request the council members copied here to please correct these two items before passing the ZRA 224.

I am working with Elon Musk's BOXABL for them to manufacture our 16 x 30, 2-story design in bulk so that all ZRA-224 developers can buy ready-made units from them and just install them on a foundation with or without a basement.

I will request that the county designate a person to work on this concept with me such that we can finally resolve the county's long-standing affordable housing problem totally once and for all.

Thanks,
Barry Mehta

On Mon, Apr 27, 2026 at 10:15 AM Kenney, Lisa <lkenney@howardcountymd.gov> wrote:

Ms. Lynda,

Need some clarifications about this new and exciting program.

- 1) You stated a 20' structure height. Does that mean it can be a 2-story structure with roof height as additional, or does the 20' include roof height also with the living space on one floor only?
- 2) To achieve the permitted density in this ZRA, attached units are the only way to achieve the permitted density. Are attached units with a condominium type regime allowed?
- 3) Is the ZRA 224 now approved, and can we submit plans per the ZRA?
- 4) Still waiting for the meeting invite for this subject.

Thanks,
Barry Mehta

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join: <https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/22256041464041?p=Y2obPJRKks5QS13QKi>

Meeting ID: 222 560 414 640 41

Passcode: Ax7Q6JC7

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FW: ZRA 224, cluster cottages bill

From Williams, China <ccwilliams@howardcountymd.gov>
Date Tue 6/2/2026 4:20 PM
To Anderson, Isaiah <ianderson@howardcountymd.gov>

testimony

From: Barry Mehta <elkridgedevelopers@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 13, 2026 2:29 PM
To: Jung, Debra <djung@howardcountymd.gov>; Paul Cavanaugh <PaulC@fcc-eng.com>; Eisenberg, Lynda <leisenberg@howardcountymd.gov>; .Chetan M <cbm@cmehta.com>
Subject: ZRA 224, cluster cottages bill

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Hon. Ms. Deb Jung,
I know that you are an advocate of affordable housing in our county, and that is why I am writing this to you about ZRA 224.

While this is an excellent idea and I am very eager to implement it in my Howard projects, I have a few important concerns about the bill as written.

1) It appears that DPZ is looking at this as primarily a single-story project based on the presented drawings.
However, I contend that a single story structure is an inefficient use of land. I think the optimum cottage structure should be a narrow 16' x 32' = 512 sq ft footprint.

As a 2-story structure, it would be 1,024 total sq ft plus a possible basement.

The 20' max height to the middle of the roofline stated in the bill is a bit too tight. It would force an architect to use a cheaper-looking, flatter roof of a 4 in 12 pitch.

I request
A) 22' height to the middle of the roofline. or B) 20' height excluding the roof.

2) The most important concern is the ZRA requiring a DAP presentation. In my experience, a DAP presentation is a long, drawn-out, and expensive process. It wastes time and money. If a property owner has a half-acre lot and wants to do the four-cottage minimum as required, the DAP requirement would add about \$10,000 unnecessary cost per lot.

Also, there is absolutely no neighborhood that will willingly allow/accept low-cost \$250,000 cluster cottages in a neighborhood of half-million-dollar-plus homes.

The NIMBY concept will prevail, and every DAP hearing will become a battleground of neighbors vs. developer. To say that the developer should plan low-cost cluster homes as a fill-in and be compatible with the neighborhood is a fallacy and a pipe dream. It is self-contradictory.

If the council seriously wants to pursue this ZRA to provide affordable housing, please

- A) Remove DAP hearings. A planning board hearing and neighborhood meeting should be more than sufficient
- B) Add a provision that ZRA 224 supersedes all neighborhood and all HOA restrictions.

I urge you to have your staff and DPZ analyze this and modify the ZRA accordingly. I will be happy to meet with you to further explain my position.

Thanks,
Barry Mehta
443-285-9563

CB-25-2026 testimony

From Larry Carson <karasov1@hotmail.com>
Date Sun 5/17/2026 3:14 PM
To CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

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Hi, I'm Larry Carson, 7168 Winter Rose Path, Col. Md. 21045. 410-381-6506. I want to urge the entire county council to approve CB-25 to include Cottage Clusters in the zoning rules for housing. I was a volunteer on the Age Friendly task force and we wholeheartedly support increasing the variety of housing available, especially for seniors on limited incomes. This bill is another step in that direction and will benefit both the county and seniors. We should not use zoning to shut people out of housing, we should encourage a variety of housing types on smaller parcels. Please vote to approve this bill. Thanks.

Bill No. 25-2026 (ZRA 224) Age Restricted Adult Housing Cottage Clusters

From Marlene Durholz <mdurholz@gmail.com>

Date Mon 5/18/2026 8:57 AM

To CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

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Greeting County Council Members:

I am writing in support of Bill Number 25-2026 (ZRA 224) - Age Restricted Adult Housing Cottage Clusters. Providing additional adult housing choices will allow adults to stay in Howard County when downsizing. I am a senior citizen but not yet ready to move from my four bedroom single family home. When I am ready to downsize I would like the option of a smaller home but not a senior apartment style home. The cluster style home would be a great alternative.

Please consider flexibility in the 900 square foot cottage cluster dwelling unit footprint. Perhaps adding the flexibility of an average 900 square foot want more square footage, perhaps 1200 square feet while a single occupant may prefer less square footage such as 600 square feet. An average of 900 square feet of all units in the cluster would provide flexibility to meet the needs of the adult community.

The minimum distance between principal structures is only 8 feet. I am assuming principal structures are the dwelling units. My thought is the units are too close together and perhaps 10 feet of distance between the units would allow more natural light between the units.

Thank you for your consideration.

Marlene Durholz
6329 Hanover Crossing Way
Hanover, MD 21076
Howard County Citizen

Re: 5/18 Howard County Council Public Hearing - WebEx Link

From Lisa Yanguas <dacentennis@gmail.com>

Date Tue 5/19/2026 1:00 PM

To Anderson, Isaiah <ianderson@howardcountymd.gov>

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Mr. Anderson,

Thank you for ensuring I had the WebEx link for last night's meeting. When the agenda got rearranged so that the issue I was interested in was going to be discussed much later, I was a little concerned. I was on the webinar starting at 7pm but when the meeting leader gave an update on timing and recommended people take a break if they were there for issues to be discussed later, I realized I would not be able to stay on long enough to testify on the Cottage Clusters amendment. I was pleased, however, that he also announced people were welcome to email you with their input.

I am in support of the amendment that would allow for Cottage Clusters. Howard County has nothing that allows for this type of housing to be built and people who are seeking a home with a small footprint and square footage are continually out of luck. Based on the initial meeting I attended on this topic, the housing will be age restricted. I would like to point out that we have a number of age restricted communities throughout the county. The issue with these continues to be that there is no upper bound on age nor an assessment of capability. Tiny houses and cottage clusters were designed to function as a community. Each owner is considered a member of the community based on what and how they can and will contribute. I would like to see this as part of how ZRA 224 gets implemented in the county. If it is done as merely an age restricted community there will be an issue of emergency vehicles needing regular access to small spaces, as well as the entitlement issues resulting in disharmony and neglect of property and upkeep that currently plague age restricted developments. I encourage County decision makers to approve ZRA 224 and make at least piloting it a priority in keeping with the intent of cottage clusters; that is, that they are run as a community of capable adults contributing to the overall well-being of the community as a whole.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lisa Yanguas

On Mon, May 18, 2026 at 9:04 PM Anderson, Isaiah <ianderson@howardcountymd.gov> wrote:

Good Evening Lisa,

Here is the WebEx link if you did not receive!

Webinar topic:

Legislative Public Hearing - 05/18

Date and time:

Monday, May 18, 2026 7:00 PM | (UTC-04:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)

Join link:

<https://howardcountymd.webex.com/howardcountymd/j.php?MTID=m1c66adf39ce070db913707b80218e1b2>

Webinar number:

2311 051 9872

Webinar password:

654321 (654321 when dialing from a phone or video system)

Join by phone

1-650-479-3207 Call-in toll number (US/Canada)

Access code: 231 105 19872

Thank you,

Isaiah Anderson

Executive Assistant to the Council Administrator

Howard County Council

3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21043

ianderson@howardcountymd.gov


410-313-0832 (office)

CB25-2026 Zoning Regulation Amendment 224 – Age Restricted Adult Housing Cottage Clusters

From joel hurewitz <joelhurewitz@gmail.com>

Date Sun 5/31/2026 9:19 PM

To CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

 1 attachment (80 KB)

Gemini AI CB 25-2026 ZRA 224 MIHU Requirements for Cottage Clusters_.pdf;

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Dear Councilmembers,

I believe that Liz Walsh's MIHU amendments to ZRA 224 are counterproductive. As DPZ says, the cottage clusters are designed to be missing middle affordable housing. Having amenities, especially a pool or clubhouse or an MIHU Requirement will drive up the cost for each cottage unit.

Is it strictly an affordable housing option or will high end options also be encouraged (or discouraged)?

The legislation is aimed to provide missing middle affordable housing options.

Page 41 of DPZ Presentation

A 20% MIHU Requirement will be imposed if a development will contain any constructed amenity areas including gyms, pools, sports courts, clubhouses or other constructed outdoor recreation facilities. The minimum size of a constructed amenity area shall be at least 500 square feet

Page 31 of DPZ Presentation <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/planning-zoning/resource/zra-224-cottage-clusters-presentation>

A Gemini AI analysis is attached which addresses the issues of the MIHU Requirement; it seems accurate.

Also, as I testified, there should be a limit on the number of units per courtyard and not be left to best practices or design guidelines.

Happy to discuss further.

Thanks for your consideration of these issues.

Joel Hurewitz
Columbia, MD

MIHU Requirements for Cottage Clusters

 gemini.google.com/app/a8331bb792bbd10a

○

Conversation with Gemini

You said

How does the MIHU requirement apply to an amenity other than a gym, pool, sports courts, or clubhouse? Does it apply to exercise equipment, bocce, shuffleboard or horse shoes and does it need to be 500 sq feet? Is there an

MIHU requirement if there are no amenities? How do the amenity rule apply if the

development includes townhomes and single family in addition to cottage clusters? A 20% MIHU REQUIREMENT WILL BE IMPOSED IF A DEVELOPMENT WILL CONTAIN ANY CONSTRUCTED AMENITY AREAS INCLUDING GYMS, POOLS, SPORTS COURTS, CLUBHOUSES OR OTHER CONSTRUCTED OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES. THE MINIMUM SIZE OF A CONSTRUCTED AMENITY AREA SHALL BE AT LEAST 500 SQUARE FEET. THE CUMULATIVE AREA FOR ALL RECREATIONAL AMENITIES SHALL NOT EXCEED 3,500 SQUARE FEET

Gemini said

The language you quoted from the **ZRA-224 (Cottage Cluster Age-Restricted Adult Housing)** text outlines exact thresholds for how physical amenities trigger a Moderate Income Housing Unit (MIHU) requirement.

The application of this specific text to your exact scenarios works as follows:

1. Does it apply to bocce, shuffleboard, horse shoes, or exercise equipment?

Yes. The text explicitly includes "**or other constructed outdoor recreation facilities.**"

- **Bocce, shuffleboard, or horseshoe pits** require active grading, surfacing, and borders, which legally classifies them as *constructed* outdoor recreation facilities.
- **Exercise equipment** (like an outdoor fitness circuit or a concrete pad with stationary machines) is also a constructed amenity area.

2. Does a bocce court or horseshoe pit need to be 500 square feet?

No, but with a major catch. The rule states: *"The minimum size of a constructed amenity area shall be at least 500 square feet."*

If you design an amenity that falls below 500 square feet (for instance, a standard single horseshoe pit layout is typically under 300 square feet), it **violates the minimum size criteria** for a constructed amenity area under this regulation. If you build a constructed outdoor amenity, you must design it to meet or exceed that 500-square-foot minimum threshold, up to the cumulative maximum of 3,500 square feet.

Planning Board Clarification: During the Planning Board sessions for ZRA-224, Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) staff clarified that standard shared courtyards, walking paths, community gardens, or a simple community tool shed are permitted and are generally *not* intended to trigger this penalty. The 500-square-foot minimum was specifically tailored for larger structural or recreational footprints (like clubhouses or formal sports facilities) to prevent minor communal elements from accidentally triggering the housing mandate.

3. Is there an MIHU requirement if there are no amenities?

No. The provision is written as a conditional trigger: *"A 20% MIHU requirement will be imposed if a development will contain any constructed amenity areas..."*

If your cottage cluster development completely omits constructed gyms, pools, sports courts, clubhouses, or constructed outdoor recreation facilities, the **0% MIHU** standard remains. The neighborhood would rely purely on its natural unconstructed shared courtyard (which requires a minimum of 250 square feet per dwelling unit) without incurring the 20% affordable housing allocation.

4. How does the rule apply if the development mixes Cottage Clusters, Townhomes, and Single-Family Homes?

Under Howard County's zoning framework, this specific 20% MIHU trigger belongs exclusively to the **Supplemental Regulations for Cottage Cluster ARAH developments** (under the Optional Design Project section).

- **The Cottage Cluster Portion:** The 20% MIHU rule applies strictly to the cottage cluster section if *that section* contains the constructed amenity, or if the mixed development shares a newly constructed amenity designated for the cluster.

- **The Townhome and Single-Family Portion:** Traditional townhomes and single-family detached homes in an Optional Design Project or mixed-use zone are governed by the **standard County MIHU regulations (Section 133.5 / Chapter 13 of the County Code)**. Those units face different triggers, percentages, or fee-in-lieu options based on the underlying zoning district, completely independent of the strict "amenity penalty" created for cottage clusters.

If a master plan includes multiple housing types, the DPZ evaluates the cottage clusters under their specific supplemental text while applying general county housing mandates to the conventional single-family and townhome phases.

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