



Howard County
Internal Memorandum

Subject: TESTIMONY

To: Lonnie R. Robbins, Chief Administrative Officer

From: Joshua Feldmark,
Administrator, Office of Environmental Sustainability

Date: September 10, 2013

SUBJECT: Testimony for:

Resolution No. 121-2013

A RESOLUTION adopting alternative standards that must be met in order to receive a Green Neighborhood Allocation, Building Permit, and Use and Occupancy Permit.

TESTIMONY

The Green Neighborhood checklists, as developed by County staff, created a unique approach to certifying green homes, tailored to the Howard County development process. Originally the incentive for developing under the Green Neighborhood system was allocations and tax credits, established in 2011, to be awarded to developments that completed the green neighborhood program.

The program consists of two separate checklists, one for site development and one for home building. Once the developer gets the green site points, permanent allocations are assigned. The builder then has to get the green home points for the permit. DILP will enforce green homes at the building permit stage in the same way that plat / Site Development Plan notes about universal design bind the builder at building permit stage. If a residential permit application doesn't comply with the conditions for green neighborhood, DILP can deny the builder a permit. The developer has to sell the lots to someone who is willing to build green homes. In sum: DPZ decides eligibility for the allocations; DILP decides eligibility for the building permit.

When this program was developed in 2007 the standards for green residential building in other national standards (i.e. LEED and American National Standards Institute/Home Innovation Research Labs) were only in pilot or draft stages and did not meet the needs for Howard County.

After both in-house and out-sourced analysis on LEED for Homes and the National Green Building Standard, we have made two determinations. First, the Green Neighborhoods Site Checklist continues to emphasize elements unique to Howard County and no external system is equivalent. Second, while not exact, both LEED for Homes and the National Green Building Standard present standards equivalent to the Homes portion of the Green Neighborhood Checklist and acceptance of those standards will in no way weaken our overall approach to creating environmentally sustainable residential development.

This resolution, in response to these findings, maintains the requirement that developments seeking Green Neighborhood allocations must fulfill the Green Neighborhood Site checklist. However, once receiving approval under the Site section of the program, developments may opt for either the Green Neighborhood Homes checklist, no less than Silver certification in the LEED for Homes checklist, or no less than Silver certification on the National Green Building Standard.

cc: Ken Ulman, Howard County Executive
Jennifer Sager, Legislative Coordinator