


Date: 19 April 2017

Subject: Council Testimony CB31-2017

My name is Stu Kohn and I am the President of the Howard County Citizens Association, HCCA. We are against this Bill and seek denial as recommended by the DPZ and the Planning Board. For both the DPZ and the Planning Board to deny this request or for that matter any request seems to be a rare moment and says a lot that these two bodies agreed that this ZRA should be denied. The real question in this proposal is what is the compelling need?

On 10 April, HCCA sent you a letter suggesting your consideration in declaring a temporary moratorium by sponsoring a Bill or Resolution on Zoning Regulation Amendments (ZRA's). This is based on the fact that the Department of Planning and Zoning is currently in an on-going process of assessment and review leading to a comprehensive update of the Howard County Zoning Regulations. We request that all ZRA's, except simple technical corrections, be held off until the review, amending and implementation of the new zoning regulations are complete. This would go a long way to streamline the process and to eliminate extra work by evaluating newly introduced regulations. Your feedback would be appreciated in this matter.

Thank You,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stu Kohn', written in a cursive style.

Stu Kohn  
HCCA, President

Lisa Markovitz, President, The People's Voice, LLC

3205 B Corporate Court EC 21042

CB 31- 2017 – Testimony- opposed

Whereas, the people of Howard County appreciate it when the County regulates and does not just facilitate development, and

Whereas, red-headed eskimo zoning is not legal, where zoning is done to accommodate a few or just one project, and

Whereas, spot zoning is not beneficial to the community, and

Whereas, the DPZ and Administration has begun a much needed review and overhaul of zoning regulations with an eye toward more objective and uniformly enforced rules, and

Whereas, everyone has really had enough of conditional use changes that counter good planning, we submit the following:

We oppose CB31 because R20 is a residential district. There are some home-based business uses that have been allowed over time, with a nod toward flexibility of income provision, etc. This bill does not seem to further those sorts of small, general needs that sometimes need addressing.

No, this bill seeks to change the regulations for all, to benefit a specific project that likely doesn't have the legal merit to forward a piecemeal rezoning request, or waiver, I mean alternate compliance, or desire to wait for the next comprehensive rezoning, but instead seeks to place a rather large commercial enterprise into an R20 neighborhood.

The proposed regulation language is vague and subjective, exactly something that should not be done, ever, but especially when zoning regulations are in review for reasons including weeding out just such anomalies. "Reasonable standards", "generally compatible", "demonstrated by.... renderings" ....such language affords zero safeguards to the zones into which it intercedes its desired incompatible usage.

How do I know it is not going to be a compatible use? Well, saying that it is okay because it's next to a non-residential use is a clue. Saying it "has" to be less than 5000 square feet tells us it's a pretty large building to have plopped into an established neighborhood. It doesn't seem likely it would be compatible, but maybe it would be "generally compatible", seeing as that means whatever anyone would want it to mean.

Boundary lines exist for a reason. Being next to something different, doesn't make it okay to be the same, otherwise, we'd have a domino effect of allowing anything anywhere.

So many areas of the County are in need of commercial development, and there are allowances being made to reduce those requirements, which isn't good planning for the needs of a community filling up with new residents. Now we see this Bill wanting to plop commercial into R20 at 5000 square feet? Older neighborhoods are already having issues with crowded parking needs, adding large commercial usages will only exacerbate this problem.

Please say no, as the DPZ and Planning Board have done. Thank You!