

HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
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Columbia
Association

6310 Hillside Court, Suite 100
Columbia, Maryland 21046-1070
ColumbiaAssociation.org

January 31, 2019

The Honorable Liz Walsh
Howard County Council
George Howard Building
3430 Courthouse Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21043

Re: Council Bill No. 4-2019

Dear Ms. Walsh:

The Columbia Association (CA) maintains more than 4,000 acres of Columbia's open space. This includes more than 95 miles of pathways and sidewalks for walking, biking and jogging; 165 tot lots; 284 footbridges; three man-made lakes; 41 man-made ponds; 34 miles of stream valleys; over 150 stormwater facilities; the 11-acre Symphony Woods; Wilde Lake Park; and the Lake Elkhorn Park and Pavilion. CA's open space also includes an extensive network of pedestrian underpasses and overpasses, meadows, forestland, basketball courts, public tennis courts, Town Center and village center plazas located throughout the community. Many of these existing amenities and facilities are in wetlands areas, stream valleys or are on steep slopes.

CA supports the overall intent of CB 4-2019, which will help to eliminate residential and commercial impacts in sensitive environmental areas. However, CA is concerned that as currently written, CB 4-2019 would have a significant negative impact on CA's ability to maintain and make future improvements within its open space systems. Routine maintenance costs for pathways, tot lots, and bridges would increase substantially, and in some cases, the bill would limit or completely eliminate CA's ability to move pathways and other amenities away from sensitive environmental areas such as streams. The majority of open space parcels have an SDP, and there is already significant County oversight with respect to any modifications to existing amenities that CA might seek to make.


CA regularly upgrades its existing open space facilities and amenities like pathways and tot lots for the benefit of Columbia and greater Howard County residents. Since most of our pathway network and many of our tot lots are within 100 ft. of a perennial stream, any disturbance related to widening of a pathway or modifications to a tot lot that involved grading, vegetative cover or tree removal would be prohibited by CB 4-2019. When possible, CA also prefers to move existing pathways away from stream banks to protect them from erosion. CB 4-2019 would prohibit this activity within the defined buffers.

CA also follows a Watershed Management Plan, which calls for the installation of stormwater management facilities to treat stormwater discharges and to stabilize or restore degraded stream channels. Many of CA's open space stormwater projects are not the result of development, but instead are undertaken to treat untreated discharges from both public property, i.e. schools and roads, and other private property. CA does this voluntarily to improve water quality and protect

downstream infrastructure and resources. CA tries to keep the cost of these activities under control. As currently written, CB 4-2019 would not permit the clearing and grading that is required when CA conducts a stream restoration project or constructs a stormwater facility on a parcel with an SDP. CA has voluntarily completed five stream restoration projects and eight bioretention projects to treat stormwater that could not have been completed without grading and tree removal within 25 ft. of a wetland and 100 ft. of a perennial stream, which would be prohibited by CB 4-2019.

For these reasons, CA respectfully requests that CB 4-2019 be amended to exempt any land that is zoned and designated as open space. Open space lots are held for the public good. The bill as written would severely limit or curtail maintenance and improvements to valuable public amenities, and therefore would not be in the public interest.

Respectfully submitted,


Milton W. Matthews
President/CEO

cc: Columbia Association Board of Directors

Sayers, Margery

From: Michael Kreft <mikekreft92@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 4, 2019 2:59 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Support for CB4-2019

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Howard County Council Members,

I'm writing to support CB4-2019, which will remove the "necessary disturbance" exception from Section 16.116 of the Howard County Code for protection of wetlands, streams and steep slopes.

I've been a home owner in Howard County for over 25 years. I feel CB4-2019 will further protect what remaining wetlands, streams and steep slopes still exist in the county. I just need to look out my back window to see evidence of damage to streams and steep slopes by recent residential development.

Strengthening the protections in Section 16.116 will go a long way preserve environmentally sensitive areas of Howard County in future development. This would also provide some control over devastating floods that the county has experienced in the last few years.

Michael Kreft
Ellicott City, District 1

Fisher, Karina

From: Alan Schneider <ajs333@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, February 4, 2019 4:43 PM
To: crigby@howardcountymd.com; Jung, Deb; Jones, Opel; Walsh, Elizabeth;
djungmann@aol.com
Subject: Vote for CB3 and CB4

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Historic areas need more protection. Proposed developments do not meet standards for protecting historic areas and adjacent wetlands and environmentally protected areas.

Wetlands need more protection. Wetlands were not protected when the mortality on Route 108 was approved as a conditional use. Wetlands existed. Testimony by the environmental expert said "there are no wetlands". The approval of the site development plan was inconsistent with the approved conditional use. My appeal was within the 30 day period set by the DPZ. The hearing examiner accepted Sang Oh's argument that the appeal period began earlier, and dismissed my appeal. Opponent's experts were denied access to the site by "no trespassing signs" and i was threatened with a criminal trespass action against me.

Alan Schneider
12598 Clarksville Pike
Clarksville, Md.21029