

CG 61-2020

Sayers, Margery

From: grace kubofcik <gracek8@verizon.net>
Sent: Sunday, November 29, 2020 9:47 AM
To: CouncilMail
Cc: james kubofcik; Gowan, Amy; Ball, Calvin
Subject: Testimony Council Bill 61-20 Ellicott City Watershed MasterPlan

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November 29, 2020

Chairperson Jung and members of the County Council;

On November 16, 2020, the County Council's Public hearing, I was given 2 minutes to comment on the Ellicott City Watershed Master Plan, Council Bill 61, a Plan that took 4 years to be completed. It was a frustrating and actually insulting moment given the work and community involvement that spanned 2 devastating floods, economic impacts endured by no other area of the County, strong community recovery and engagement, supportive governmental involvement at all three levels, and numerous acts of generosity and compassion.

The Ellicott City Watershed Master Plan is not the typical addition to a Howard County General Plan. It is unique in that it is a water shed plan specific to the Tiber- Hudson. The Tiber- Hudson watershed defines and shapes, preserves and changes the physical structures and infrastructure of the West End and the Ellicott City Historic District. It has done that for years and is doing it as I compose this testimony. The watershed is surrounded by seven hills and the Patapsco River. It is totally within the State's Patapsco Heritage Area, the only Heritage Area in both Howard and Baltimore Counties. The Plan is also unique in that it sets forth guiding principles and states the need for options while retaining " character and placemaking" as a cornerstone of decision making.

The Planning Department, Director Gowan, Deputy Directors Conrad and O'Connor and Kate Bolinger along with other staff have spent considerable time and effort to bring this document to you with the full support of County Executive Calvin Ball. They have listened well to the community comments over the years, incorporated the foundations of the Safe and Sound Plan and made modifications as the Plan has been presented to the Howard County Preservation Commission and the Planning Board.

The Watershed Master Plan can strengthen the Tiber-Hudson Watershed. Critical is the implementation of flood mitigation projects. The County has moved forward and has strong partners in channel maintenance and debris management. Major channel structures still need to be restored or built. Water retention facilities within the watershed have been waiting for more than 7 years to be designed and constructed. They are specifically identified as H-7, H-4, T-1, NC-3 and the Quaker Mill Pond. We can not wait much longer.

All water retention facilities have to be started and completed within the next 5 years. Stream restoration will not be successful without these facilities. The investment and safety of residents, tourist and business will not be assured without these facilities.

Key to the future is the on going roll of the Howard County Preservation Commission and the County's commitment to the Historic Preservation of this very unique area.

The Preservation Commission and its supporting staff including the Office of Law have been central to rebuilding and providing guidance to residential and commercial interests. The Preservation Commission and the Department of

Planning need to have updated tools. New Ellicott City Historic District Guidelines and Demolition by Neglect ordinances and other resources to prevent same.

There is a lot to get one excited and energized in this Plan. A Green Cultural Trail, stream restoration and tree cover, design amenities, public art and connectivity. The Ellicott Mills Gateway Area incorporates many of the items I just mentioned. The Riverfront park and pedestrian /bike bridge and connectivity to Oella in Baltimore County with its proximate heritage and existing Wilkins Rogers Mill, an opportunity for public parking for Ellicott City, close supportive residential development and a vital link of connectivity for the Regional Greenway Plan.

There is also a lot to be concerned and diligent about. The Court House area and the courthouse building must be integrated as it has been to the vitality and scale of Main street. The Maryland Culvert project which comes with a tremendous cost to the streetscape and demolition of historic structures. The Section 106 process should produce strong mitigation efforts and should change the current depiction of the lower Main Street Area. These area will test another fundamental principle of this plan that it is adaptive and provides guidance for change .

Appreciate your attention to my comments and I urge a favorable vote on CB61–2020.

Grace Kubofcik
Ellicott City, Maryland