

CB21-2021

Sayers, Margery

From: Noggle, Amy K. <anoggle@towson.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, March 9, 2021 10:23 AM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Letter of Support: ZRA 196 (CB21)
Attachments: ZRA Support Noggle.pdf

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Good Morning,

I am writing in support of Kimberly Kepnes' and Nathan Sowers' application to add a Personal Service Establishment, Specialty Store and Country Inn business uses at Mt. Ida. Please see my letter of support (attached).

I truly hope that the Council will consider my point of view. If you have any questions whatsoever, please feel free to reach out to me.

Thanks so much for your consideration,
Amy Noggle
(Resident: Lower Church Road)



Amy K. Noggle, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, ECSE Coordinator |
Special Education

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Support for ZRA196 (CB21)

Amy K. Noggle

3757 Church Road
Ellicott City, MD 21043
March 9, 2021

Howard County Council
c/o George Howard Building
3430 Courthouse Avenue
Ellicott City, MD 21043

Letter of Support for ZRA196 (CB21)

Sent via email: councilmail@howardcountymd.gov on March 9, 2021

Dear Council Members Walsh, Jones, Rigby, Jung and Yungmann:

My husband and I have owned our home in Old Ellicott City since 2006. High up on the hill between the castle and the old yellow church, you will find our ca. 1910 home, still very much a work in progress. Though I dare not suggest that we were affected by the flood as were residents on lower elevations, our three children watched in 2018 as store owners climbed up our backyard hill to escape flood waters and listened as we talked to these store owners about what they had just witnessed.

We purchased our wedding cake at one of Ellicott City's old mainstays, Fischer's Bakery. Since Fischer's closure, we have watched as operations such as Subway, E.C. Pops and several other clothing stores were ushered in through the space.

Our roots go a bit deeper. My husband grew up in Columbia and attended Howard County Public Schools. His father worked for Rouse Company until his retirement; thus, my husband witnessed quite a bit of development over the past four decades, some of which has stood the test of time. Yet in other instances, he and I both often lament the fact that certain buildings in our county are no longer standing and/or no longer in use. Why is it that progress is often operationally defined as building anew when pre-existing buildings can be preserved and repurposed? I realize that this is a bit of an aside.

Flash forward to March of 2020. Covid had just become a household word. For the first time, words like 'hybrid learning' and 'asynchronous' Wednesdays became common vocabulary for parents of children in the school system. As parents to a preschooler, elementary school-age child and a middle schooler, our children were not able to socialize. As alluded to above, our backyard presents with a steep elevation, offering little to no opportunities for outdoor play. Our front door is 10 feet from the street, thus ruling out that possibility.

So you are likely wondering where I am going with all of these somewhat tangential thoughts. During Covid, my children's playground was Mt. Ida. Kimberly Kepnes and Nathan Sowers graciously offered their land for my children to play kickball, to practice baseball, and to engage in simple yet therapeutic activities such as climbing trees and building forts. We were grateful for this vast space to play. We also watched as Kimberly and Nathan worked tirelessly to clean up debris and trash on the grounds, followed by planting several new shrubs and trees. I'm sure

you would agree that cultivating their land in this way lends itself to both improved air quality and land retention.

Currently, many office spaces on Main Street and in the Upper Court area are vacant. I would love to see Mt. Ida come alive again in a way that supports and exemplifies a vibrant community. When I tell people that I live in Old Ellicott City, I often field questions about whether or not our town is 'run down' and 'still in turmoil.' I do see houses and stores that present as somewhat dilapidated; I only hope that we can continue to recover and restore. I see Kimberly and Nathan's proposal as a way to extend the breadth of the type of usage of Mt. Ida. How is their proposal at all harmful to our little historic town?

I am writing **in support** of ZRA196 (CB21) to add Personal Service Establishment, Specialty Store and Country Inn business uses to those currently available by right in the upper court house district, HO. With such additional uses permitted, the upper court house commercial district properties can better support the urgently needed business and economic recovery in our town.

I wholeheartedly believe that ZRA196 is an opportunity to expand the Main Street venue and start attracting people to town again. I ask that you please consider the views of stakeholders such as my husband and me, who not only have a real estate investment at stake, but perhaps most significantly, the livelihood of the neighborhood in which our children live. I urge you to approve ZRA196.

Sincerely,



Amy K. Noggle
Mother to Bryce, Grant & Hope
Associate Professor, College of Education, Towson University

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March 1, 2021

Howard County Council
George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21043

RE: In support of Council Bill 21-2021

Dear Members of the Howard County Council:

I write to you in support of the Council Bill 21-2021, which would amend the Howard County Zoning Regulations (ZRA-196) to permit Country Inns, Personal Service Establishments, and Specialty Stores to be included among the business uses allowable by right for commercial properties in the HO (Historic: Office) zoning district.

In particular, this would aid such commercial properties in the Upper Court House zoning district, which for decades have been able to support their use as offices for lawyers, title researchers, insurance and bonding companies, and for other businesses ancillary to the courts and the judicial system. However, with the decision to build the new Circuit Court on Bendix Road, it is unlikely that many of these businesses will retain their location. In fact, some businesses have already moved in anticipation of the new Circuit Court opening in July of this year.

The Council is well aware of the devastation which the two recent floods have caused to Old Ellicott City, and this past year's COVID-19 pandemic has severely hurt businesses as well. The relocation of the Circuit Court later this year may be the 'last straw' for commercial properties in the Upper Court House zoning district, unless new opportunities allow for different types of business use and growth.

As a long-time legal practitioner here in Ellicott City, I urge you to help revitalize the HO zoning districts in general, and the Upper Court House district in particular, by passing Council Bill 21-2021 (ZRA-196), and thereby amending the zoning regulations to allow these important uses.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Very truly yours,


John Willis

JW/me

2021 MAR -5 PM 12:00
HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
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