

Sayers, Margery

From: Priscila Boyle <priscila.boyle@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, December 5, 2021 2:58 PM
To: CouncilMail
Cc: Ball, Calvin
Subject: NEED YOUR URGENT SUPPORT THIS MONDAY PLEASE - Council Bill 87 - 2021 (ZRA - 198)

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Dear Council Member,

I am writing to urge your support for Council Bill 87 - 2021 (ZRA - 198). Howard County needs a greater variety of appropriate and affordable living options for seniors who want to age-in-place.

The bill amends the zoning regulations for age-restricted housing developments by:

- Reducing the maximum number of homes allowed per net acre in R-ED & R-20 districts by 1.
- Requiring at least 25% of the homes to be smaller, single story homes (1,600 sq. ft. maximum of living space above grade) for empty-nesters who want to downsize to smaller, more affordable homes, seniors who want to age in place, and seniors with disabilities.
- Increasing the minimum size of community buildings from 20 to 30 sq. ft. of net floor area per home.

Home buyers age 55 and older who are planning to stay in their homes do not want a home with stairs. They want all their living spaces on a single-level. This bill will ensure that this type of home is available to seniors who want to live in age-restricted housing developments.

Age-restricted housing developments are typically dense rows of large townhouses that are 3,500 sq. ft. They are not compatible with established neighborhoods of single-family detached homes in R-ED and R-20 districts. The bill will make the developments fit in with the surrounding communities in these districts.

Under the current zoning regulations, community buildings can safely accommodate less than half the residents of age-restricted housing developments. The bill will increase the maximum occupancy of the buildings to accommodate an average of 2 residents per home at largely attended events like community game nights and parties.

The bill will benefit seniors who want to live in age-restricted housing developments and make them a better addition to existing neighborhoods.

Please vote "Yes" for the bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael and Priscila Boyle
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November 23, 2021

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

RE: CB 87-2021, ZRA-198

On behalf of the Howard County Association of REALTORS® (HCAR), an organization of over 2,100 real estate professionals, we write to offer the following comments on CB 87-2021, ZRA 198.

While HCAR agrees that a wide variety of senior housing is needed, both in size and price-point, we believe that CB 87 will accomplish only one of those goals at the expense of the other. By reducing the number of the units per acre and increasing the size of the required community facilities, this guarantees that any new units produced under this amendment will be less affordable to area seniors. Further, these changes will not just impact new developments but also those in existence today. Senior housing already in the R-ED and R-20 would become a non-conforming use. That impacts the ability of current unit owners to obtain mortgages and properly insure their properties against losses.

It also comes at a time where there is a severe shortage of housing units, including those for seniors. Our members have noted that only 182 age-restricted housing units have sold this year, which represents just 4% of residential sales in Howard County. Over the past 3 years, on average only 5% of sales have been age-restricted homes. As the technical staff report notes, this amendment could "remove as many as 49 of the remaining 136 properties" eligible for age-restricted developments. This would appear to run counter to Howard County's goals for increasing housing options, both under PlanHoward 2030 and proposed under HoCo by Design.

For these reasons, HCAR must respectfully ask the Council to vote against CB 87.

Sincerely,

Sarah Anderson, GREEN, CMRS
President
Howard County Association of REALTORS®