

Susan Garber, 9100 Gorman Road, Laurel here to testify against CB36-2015

After reviewing this ZRA application and the Technical Staff Report on it, I gained a new appreciation for just how difficult your job is. If you haven't reviewed the actual proposed development plan which has prompted this request, as busy people you would rely on the application and the TSR. However, to appreciate the consequences of what you are being asked to approve, you really need a firm grasp on the specifics of that submitted development plan. One simply could not determine those consequences based on the information provided and I'll be submitting a listing of erroneous and non-answers.

- It appears the applicant is asking you to abandon any limit on building length due a problem which they actually created through the choices they made. There is nothing in R-APT zoning that dictates constructing just a single building OR that demands a structured parking facility. This was their choice, yet they use it as justification for limitless length.
- The application states this ZRA will allow an apartment building with slightly less than 25 units per acre. In fact, the submitted plans call for a density bonus of 66 units, yielding more than 32 units per acre. Is it in fact this grab for even greater density that is prompting the request to allow a building of this magnitude? This was their choice, yet they use it as justification for limitless length.
- Are people really clamoring to live in a single 283 unit apartment building along Route 29? Do they yearn to be warehoused in a single structure whose footprint occupies 2.98 acres? Can you actually picture a residential building over 600 feet long? (That's the length of 2 football fields, or visualized a different way-- a 60 story building lying on its side!) No amount of architectural articulation can disguise or mitigate the image of people crammed in a big box store. To call this "transitional" ... "between more intense uses and lower density residential areas" is to insult one's intelligence.

- Why is length, rather than height, or a combination change not being considered? This too was their choice.
- Why have they proceeded with submission of all the required detailed plans for this development AS IF they already have the length restriction lifted? Who told them the change was a sure thing? Who said once the momentum is behind the project no one will dare stop it? Did anyone caution “proceed at your own risk”? This risk was their choice and shouldn’t be used as justification.
- I understand the previous administration left us with a budget deficit; we’re running out of land, and Plan Howard 2030 encourages greater density and more multifamily units. But does this mean we have to accept every maximum-density scheme and approve piecemeal zoning changes to allow them?
- **Shouldn’t Howard County maintain the highest standards and expectations for the remaining developable land? Shouldn’t our land development process be transparent and regulated in a manner that makes it fair—and predictable—for ALL developers, regardless of the builder, architect or land use attorney involved?**
- Surely we are not so desperate for development that we just discard regulations AND common sense, to the detriment of residents--both existing and future.

I respectfully recommend the County Council reject this ZRA and monitor any requests to further decrease required parking spaces in this development.