



Greater Highland Crossroads Association

September 2013

Volume X, Issue V

Special Membership Meeting
September 19 at 7:00 PM
St. Marks Church

Petition for Referendum Rally
Help to right the Council Wrong

President's Message

Last month I published our plea to the Council to adopt the following resolution:

“Resolved: Comprehensive Rezoning must be fully deliberated and debated without regard to legislative rules and calendars.”

I deeply regret to report that we were ignored. The **Council** continuously tried to make a case they had spent tremendous amount of time devoted to the effort. The fact is they could not have carefully reviewed over 500 pages of zoning regulations, over 150 map amendments, over 150 text amendments plus late changes to both. They assigned themselves an impossible task. I estimate I personally spent roughly 400 hours over two years studying and revising less than 100 pages of the regulations and only 10 of the text amendments. I bet that not one of them spent this amount of time, yet they passed two massive pieces of legislation affecting the County for at least the next decade, likely longer.

I have to characterize my reaction and I am sure yours – once you know the facts -- as one of extreme disappointment in the final result of a process that we thought would be a productive cooperative effort between involved citizens and the **DPZ**, followed by a fine tuning or corrective phase by the **Council**.

In the end, the **Administration/DPZ and the Council** adopted only the easiest changes and restrictions to the zoning regulations and conditional uses recommended by **GHCA**, the Concerned Citizens of Western Howard County, (**CCWHC**), the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on the West, and other citizen groups.

A Short List of the Sins of Omission and Commission:

- Failed to amend/limit the **BRX** -- a commercial floating zone -- in the face of community opposition, in fact they increased the potential sprawl of commercial expansion while simultaneously expanding the B-1,CCT zone increasing the potential **BRX: A double whammy blow to the historic Highland Crossroads.**
- Granted zoning for a huge nursing home on a tiny lot, overturning a **Board of Appeals** decision to deny the very use opposed by the community in 3 venues over years of effort.
- Failed to reinstate the more restrictive funeral home provisions originally proposed by **GHCA** and supported by **DPZ**.
- Failed to rollback the **PSA** -- sewer and water --from the Clarksville and Fulton areas.
- Restored larger nursing homes as a conditional use in RR and RC while failing to adopt recommended restrictions.
- Failed to revisit and consider the detailed recommendations made in previous written and oral testimony regarding: the conditional use process, conditional use restrictions, the cluster provisions, and dumping Density Exchange (**DEO**) exclusively in our **RR** (Rural Residential) district.

What are we going to do about it?
Take it to referendum and win!

To that end **GHCA** is organizing a drive to help obtain a minimum 6000 signatures in the next thirty days. The petition drive was begun by **Citizens Working to Fix Howard County**, <http://www.fixhoco.com/> Visit the website for more details, but mark your calendars to join us at **St Marks** to learn more, sign the petition, join our effort to collect signatures and take some decisions back from the County government. We will be educating and organizing signing efforts at specific locations. We need suggestions backed by a desire to volunteer. The rules governing these petitions are very precise, and any violation could (and has) cause whole sheets of signatures to be rejected. So, we need trained volunteers and your presence on the 19th. is necessary.

**Highland alone has 2700 registered voters in just 1130 households.
Our goal: a minimum of 550 signatures.
Let's get busy!**

As usual, please arrive about 6:50 to sign in and get settled so we may begin at 7:00.

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GHCA Website

Chuck Gait, our Webmaster, whose column appears in the **Howard County Times**, continues to make improvements. Visit the site, <http://www.highlandmd.org/> and send your comments or suggestions to **Chuck** at: Chuck.Gait@gmail.com

Highland Day, October 5, 2013

GHCA's main task is to provide volunteers before, during and after the event. It's crunch time and we still need volunteers; please got to the website <http://www.highlandmd.org/Volunteer/Volunteer.html/> to sign up and/or contact **Georgianna Meagher**, gdmegher@gmail.com.

Please download the attached flyer for more information

Membership Special Appeal: Please join or rejoin GHCA. The Membership is **\$50 for the calendar year**. **Now more than ever your participation and membership is needed to support the continued efforts of GHCA to represent your interests before Maryland/Howard County government, development interests, and community events.**

Name: _____

Email: _____ (very important! Save postage, and keep informed)

Address (only if not on your check)

Make Your Check Payable to GHCA
Mail to GHCA, PO Box 235, Highland, Maryland 20777

**THE GHCA CANNOT SUCCEED WITHOUT MEMBERS AND WITHOUT THE
GHCA WE'RE ALL ON OUR OWN!!!!**