

PELU TASK FORCE MEETING #3
Tuesday, January 15, 2008

Start Time: 4:10 p.m.
End Time: 6:00 p.m.

Members present: Ada Louise Bohorfoush, Brian England, Judy Fisher-George, James Howard, II, Cathy Hudson, William Lewis, Julia Mattis, Frank Mirabile, Bridget Mugane, Sang Oh, Deb Poquette, Susan Scheidt, Ronald Schimel, Andrew Stack, Katherine Taylor, Howard Weinstein, Shari Zaret.

Also present: Kimberley Flowers, Caryn Lasser, Stephanie Scott, Theodore Wimberly

Howard Weinstein opened the meeting.

Tom Ballentine, Policy Director for Home Builders introduced himself to the committee.

The Minutes for the first task force meeting (January 9, 2008) were approved. The minutes have been posted to the website.

Now available on the website is a link which directs to the blog site.
(<http://howardcountypelu.blogspot.com/>).

Also a questions and comments link has been added to the website. Questions/comments will come to Theodore Wimberly's email address. Once questions/comments are received by Wimberly, he will forward them to the entire task force. This allows for greater public involvement.

Theodore Wimberly will send an email with Mina Hilsenrath's (DPZ) power point presentation presented at the last meeting to all task force members. Also, the presentation will be posted on the task force's website.

Marsha McLaughlin, DPZ Director provided an in-depth presentation about Comprehensive Zoning. She began by passing out two hand outs.

1- Plan English Version

Summary of County Code requirements on Comprehensive Zoning August 16, 2006

2- Legalese version

Subtitle 2. Zoning

<http://library2.municode.com/default/docview/10016/1/133/135?>

After the presentation, Ms. McLaughlin opened the floor to questions and comments.

Task force's issues and comments

- Unreasonable to require people to return to multiple public hearings to testify.
- Problem with notification to the public. Concerned testimony comes too late in the process to make an impact on final decisions about rezoning.

- It is exhausting following changes/modifications/amendments in bills during the process. Appears to be a moving target.
- Notification process does not notify property owners of rezoning of their property.
- DPZ should provide a list of holes in the Comp Zoning process, so that a sub-committee can study the issues.
- The county appears to be reaching a tipping-point with growth. There does not appear to be much balance with adequate environment and adequate facilities.
- Various publications should be used to improve communication with the public (ie. Columbia Flier, Howard County Times, Laurel Leader, Gazette, etc).
- The articles should be fashioned in such a manner that they cannot be overlooked or placed in a section of a paper people read most often.
- Presubmission signs are effective.
- Frame information for advertisements so it captures the public's attention.
- Press conferences on specific topics should be given. The Comprehensive Zoning plan is too general and broad to cover.
- The web should be better utilized to broadcast notice prior to the process getting underway.
- European models of notification should be studied.
- Publicity/notice should be placed in places many people frequent, such as the Mall in Columbia.
- Does County-wide Comprehensive Zoning make sense? Pros and cons were given.
- Individual hearings should be held on text amendments only.

The task force made the following decisions:

There should be another informational meeting.

The next meeting will address the piecemeal zoning and zoning regulation amendments processes.

The members asked for someone from the Planning Board and the Department of Public Works to attend the meeting on the 29th.

Ms. McLaughlin suggested Mark DeLuca as a good candidate.

The next meetings will be held:

Thursday, January 24, 2008
4-6 p.m.

Tuesday, January 29, 2008
4-6 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Stephanie Scott
Theodore Wimberly