

April 23, 2010

Matt Zaborsky
President
NORBECK MEADOWS

Mr. Martin L. Grossman, Hearing Examiner
Office of Zoning and Administrative Hearings for Montgomery County
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Md. 20850

Jim Haddow
Executive Vice President
HALLOWELL

RE: Application G-885, 32 Acre "Bowie Mill Road" Property

Ellen Bogage
First Vice President
VICTORIA SPRINGS

Dear Mr. Grossman:

Lori Wilen
Second Vice President
CHERRYWOOD

I am here on behalf of the Greater Olney Civic Association which represents over 40,000 people in Olney. After much debate and deliberation, we unanimously voted to oppose the rezoning on the following grounds:

**Theresa Kyne
Robinson**
Recording Secretary
OLNEY OAKS

Compatibility – density – and housing types used
Environmental Impact
Inadequate Public Transportation
Potential school overcrowding

Ruth Laughner
Corresponding Secretary
WILLIAMSBURG VILLAGE

Roy Peck
Treasurer
NORBECK MEADOWS

We strongly feel that the definition of "compatibility" is extremely subjective and there is no legal definition or standard defining compatibility when it comes to housing and proposed developments such as this one. The 2005 Olney Master Plan does indicate "...the actual yield (for Pd-3) may be limited due to compatibility....constraints on the site". The Plan goes to further state that the "full yield by the PD-3 zone is only appropriate if.....the lot sizes and mix of housing types (single family, detached duplexes, and townhouses) and the density are compatible with adjacent properties. For the record, all the homes bordering on this proposed development are single family detached units and none of the surrounding neighborhoods (Olney Acres, Olney Square, Olney Oaks and Briars Acres) have townhomes within their communities. The proposed development works hard to be compatible with the immediately adjacent properties, but the overall project does not fit this location. Olney is a satellite community which means the highest density is located in the town center with concentric rings of decreasing density surrounding it. The Bowie Mill property is several rings away from the town center and is surrounded by R200 development with RE1 and RE2 developments a little west of it. With the required 30% open space, this project becomes 117 homes on less than 22 acres. On the ground, this produces 5 units per acre and this is clearly not compatible with the present adjacent neighborhoods. The Olney Master Plan is very specific in listing the housing types that would be compatible with adjacent properties. The Master Plan does not list two over two units as a housing type allowed. They are classified as a dwelling unit, one family attached in the zoning code. This is different from a townhouse (dwelling unit, townhouse) which is listed. We feel this request should be denied because it **does not** meet the intent of the Master Plan. We feel the 24 two over two need to be removed from this plan.

Second, this proposed plan calls for development on the last piece of undeveloped property, the Williamsburg Run sub-watershed of the larger Upper Rock Creek watershed. Downstream from this area, Norbeck Country Club, is a special protection area with an 8% impervious cap. A housing development with parking for 117 units produces more impervious surface. The community feels this higher density development further degrades this watershed. In the long term, preservation would be far more economical and environmentally friendly than restoration.

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Third, the Master Plan calls for this development to occur on “a major road”. We believe Bowie Mill is an arterial road that is already failing by current traffic measurement standards. In reviewing the staff comments on peak-hour generation based on LATR/PAMR guidelines, we strongly feel these calculations may be incorrect. Furthermore, this policy is under severe scrutiny now as possibly being obsolete and the effectiveness of this tool has been questioned by many people including several members of the Montgomery County Council. As someone who drives this road, it is very common for traffic to be severely backed up along Bowie Mill at the Cashell Road intersection both in the morning and evening peak travel times. Based on the projected number of new homes, 83 additional peak hour trips does not seem logical. 117 homes, with 70 being a combination of MPDU's and workforce housing, would seemingly generate more than what the staff report suggests. As in a typical community, people are going to and from work, taking children to day care, taking children to school, going shopping and every other daily occurrence one can think of! The staff report also makes mention of the fact that this proposed development is served by Ride-On Bus # 53. As we are all aware, the current fiscal state of Montgomery County is very poor and the prognosis over the next few years is not very bright. We cannot assume that this bus service will be continued as it has been targeted for elimination during the past two budget sessions. We all know, in many families housing cost is the largest expenditure followed by transportation. Without public transit nearby, this proposed development could quickly become unaffordable to the very families it is looking to serve.

Fourth, in reviewing the staff report and the report from the Montgomery County Public Schools we take exception to the facts stating they are”projected to stay within capacity.” Many families are reporting that the school their children attend is overcrowded, particularly Rosa Parks Middle School and Sherwood High School. We feel the current economy is forcing many families to realize they can no longer continue to afford to have their children in private schools. Obviously, faced with a gap in the family budget – public school becomes a great solution! A further burden to our schools would be an additional serious concern for all of us in Olney.

In closing, we feel that to maintain the R-200 zone, which would allow for approximately 78 units is a more acceptable solution for the community. This R-200 zoning is the only compatible zone with the adjacent surroundings. Secondly, this is the last undeveloped property within a watershed and it is imperative we are good stewards of this land. The lesser density would greatly limit the amount of impervious surface such as parking lots. Thirdly, we feel the statement that this property is on a bus route may be quickly made obsolete by the state of affairs in Montgomery County. Lack of bus service would strongly affect the desirability of this development. Fourth, again based on the current economic climate, the potential for school overcrowding is made more realistic with many families being unable to afford private school for their children.

Thank-you very much for the opportunity to speak before you.

Sincerely,

Matt Zaborsky

Matt Zaborsky
President