

September 15, 2011

Matt Zaborsky

President
NORBECK MEADOWS

Jodi Finkelstein

Executive Vice President
HALLOWELL

Lori Wilen

First Vice President
CHERRYWOOD

Theresa Robinson

Second Vice President
OLNEY OAKS

Lori Goodwin

Recording Secretary
HALLOWELL

Kathy Curtis

Corresponding Secretary
LAKE HALLOWELL

Ruth Laughner

Treasurer
WILLIAMSBURG VILLAGE

Ms. Françoise Carrier, Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board
Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Md. 20910-3760

RE: Preliminary Plan 120110120 and Site Plan 820110050 Bowie Mill Property

Dear Chairman Carrier:

In the spirit of our long established tradition as the watchdog for the Olney community, we would like to voice our concerns regarding these plans. This property has already received a lot of attention when the 2005 Olney Master Plan was updated and additionally we gave testimony before Montgomery County Hearing Examiner Martin Grossman in May of 2010. Our requests were mostly ignored, however we would like to thank The Elm Street group for the modifications they have made - based on our objections.

We along with several homeowners and their associations still have a major concern with the clustering of the affordable units, specifically in the upper corner across from Brightwood Rd. We certainly understand the financial and physical constraints that are present. We do realize to have compatibility with adjacent lots, the market rate detached houses ring the perimeter. Therefore, the plan calls for the middle and upper corner to have 64 affordable units and only 20 market rate units. We're sure your experience has proven that no one wants to live along or near power lines - this corner space is extremely close to some major power lines and most likely could not have a public road without sacrificing some units. This plan, therefore calls for a private road to access this corner with all these attached *affordable* units.

The Olney community is frustrated with the county because it mandated a 60% affordable requirement with no basis for the number. When we raised issues in a public meeting - we were simply told they chose 60% because it seemed like a good number. When we asked for examples of communities where this situation already exists, we were given no examples for us to examine how this combination lives. The Department of Housing and Community Affairs required 60% affordable and pushed for the maximum number of units - not the developer. As a result of the rezoning process the developer removed the two over two style units at both our request for less density and Planning Board's recommendations and the number of total units were reduced from 117 to 114.

We are not here to ask The Planning Board to overrule the county's mandate of 60% affordable unit requirement as we know you cannot. However, we firmly believe the Planning Board has the responsibility to approve plans and layouts that result in a successful community. Olney already has communities where the affordable units are clustered (in particular the rental units owned by HOC or MHP) and we have experienced continuous problems - i. e. vandalism, rowdiness, and robberies. GOCA has heard from many residents that trying to talk with HOC and/or MHP is a very time consuming and frustrating experience. It appears to our community that concentrating or clustering affordable units is the root of the problem.

Page 2, Letter to Ms. Francoise Carrier, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board

We are imploring you not to approve this plan with the proposed "clustering" and very simply we do not want to see this design flaw repeated. In the communities in Olney where the MPDUs are dispersed throughout the community (usually as single family detached houses) we have not experienced these problems. We do feel Elm Street did an excellent job with their design to make the best community they could given the county requirements. Without the county pushing them - Elm Street would have much greater flexibility in the mixture of units, unit types, and the market and affordable units could be truly integrated. No doubt you have seen many communities that have successfully integrated many housing types and they truly are sustainable communities.

The Olney community understands that a preliminary plan and a site plan are before you today and not a zoning issue. We know The Planning Board is required to determine if this plan meets the requirements of the zone. We feel that technically it does. However, in Olney as many communities - just because the zoning allows a maximum number of units does not mean that it is the number that should be built. We feel that having fewer units would allow better integration and less future problems.

We implore you to consider this design of the plan and simply not just if the plan meets a check list of items in your deliberations.

Thank you for consideration of our thoughts.

Sincerely Yours,

Matt Zaborsky

Matt Zaborsky
President