



December 2013

Volume X, Issue IX

Petition Rejected!

President's Message

Last month I asked: "Why should you, a **Highland or Fulton** registered voter, sign the petition?" I responded by giving you a short list of the Sins of Omission and Commission by The County Council in approving the **Comprehensive Rezoning Bill**.

The citizens of Highland, Fulton, and nearby Clarksville answered the call to active citizenry in great numbers by taking the time to sign the petition. Through the direct efforts of **GHCA** members some 750 - 900 voters from our area signed. Special thanks to **Hilda Mathieu, Liz Davis, and Charlotte Lutton**. **GHCA** organized its own direct mail/signing effort, and contributed \$500 to a follow-up mailing by **Fix HoCo**.

The results: 6928 voters signed countywide, exceeding the minimum 5390 signatures which were accepted by the **Howard County Board of Elections**. However, Director **Guy Mickley** said the petition did not provide "a fair and accurate summary of the substantive provisions of the proposal." This action followed the Board's previous written refusal to judge the legal sufficiency of the summary, saying that decision was up to the courts. The **Board** has now decided it is within their purview to reject it upon the opinion of one legal advisor hired by them. It is worthy of note that the **Howard County Times** reported that on the morning before the decision by the Board was announced CE, **Ken Ulman** said he continued to "support the citizens' right to democracy, but," he added, "it also has to be done in a way that is fair and accurate." Is it a coincidence that the precise phrase "fair and accurate" echoed through halls of County government?

What next? It is worthy of note that about 100 people were moved to participate in the movement to gather signatures. The leaders of the movement have already pledged to carry the fight to the courts to redress this rejection of the will of almost 7000 citizens, from a relatively small portion of the County, both area-wise and population-wise. The strategy and the venue will be announced shortly. More important is the powerful groundswell of support behind this movement to wrest control of the future of our communities from an unresponsive **Executive and Council**. Remember, it took the executive branch to propose this law and the council to refuse to amend it substantively while voting on proposed map amendments as a package in a midnight session.

We Pledged to Take it to referendum and win. Please let me know how you think GHCA should respond to this action by the Board of Elections. Are you moved to do something about it? Let us hear from you. Success in this first step might be the beginning of a sea change in the way "business is done in Howard County."

Highland Day: was another unqualified success. We apologize for the sometimes-foamy beer, but it was tasty. Thanks to all the 80 or so volunteers who made it possible and the **Steering Committee** who work throughout the year. Please patronize the **Sponsors** listed below; they are essential to its success.

Special announcement: **GHCA** conducted a free drawing for dinner for two at the soon-to-be-opened **Highland Inn**, and **Vickie Robinson**, who lives just across Highland Road won! Congratulations to **Vickie and Dave**. Sometimes things just work out for the best.

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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

Membership Special Appeal: Please join or rejoin **GHCA**. The Membership is **\$50 for the calendar year**. Join now to secure membership through 2013 and 2014. **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: _____
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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!**

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