



January 2016

Volume XIII, Issue I

Membership Meeting
Thursday, January 14, 2016 at 7:00 PM
St. Marks Church

President's Message

Update BRX Zoning (Business Rural Crossroads Zoning):

I am happy to report that on November 24, 2015 your County Council Representatives, Greg Fox and Mary Kay Sigaty, filed the attached legislation, Bill No. 55, regarding BRX AND BR floating zones. Their fellow council members, Dr. Calvin Ball, Jen Terrasa and Jon Weinstein are also involved with this legislation process. The Bill is for the **Interim Development Act** that, if passed, would not allow for the application of BRX Floating Zones or BR Floating Zones in the BRX Designated Crossroads for a period of 12 months from the effective day of the bill.

Greg Fox writes, "During that time, the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) will review both BRX and BR Floating zones as they apply to the designated crossroads and determine if the zones should be modified or changed as well as if they should be removed, added or kept at the various crossroads. There could also be other solutions all together.

DPZ will be engaging the various Crossroad Communities, both residents and business, just like they did prior to the implementation of the general plan and where Highland was a part of that working group. They will then put in a Zoning Regulation Amendment that will again receive public input as it moves through the planning board. After that, it will then come forward to the County Council as a bill where the public will again be able to provide input.

Our goal in proceeding in this way was to make sure that we went through a balanced evaluation that included all stakeholders from each of the various crossroads. At the same time, we are aware (with your

help) of some of the unintended drafting of the original zones that, even if kept in some or all of the areas, could be problematic. Also, if we had just removed the BRX zone right now, there is nothing that would prevent a BR application from being applied for in the Highland (or other) Crossroads. Therefore, we added the provision of also not allowing those applications either as we go through and open and transparent process to reevaluate alternatives.

The drafting of the existing BRX legislation is never what was intended and we also realize that you still have issues with BRX whether fixed or not. However, it is important to note for the last couple of decades that BR zoning could have been applied for as well. The intention of the BRX was to make things more planned, to have them develop methodically over time and to limit or add uses that were more logical than those allowed in BR or even B-1.

We are truly trying to look out for the best in the various crossroad communities and the county as a whole. Karen Knight will forward you the bill later this afternoon or tomorrow morning.

We appreciate your involvement and commitment to your community along with your patience. Please let me or any other council member know if you have any questions. "

Best Regards,
Greg Fox

Bill 55 states, " **WHEREAS**, The County Council strongly supports that this BRX/BR Interim Development Act is an appropriate temporary measure to protect rural crossroads communities and to ensure that future commercial development approved in these areas be carefully planned and designed to sustain and enhance the unique character of each rural crossroads community."

County Council's Bill 55 is Highland's opportunity to protect the character of our historic, rural commercial crossroads community. This is an opportunity to study and create specific plans and design guidelines to protect and enhance Highland at this dynamic changing time in history. Our shopping habits are changing. We are shopping more and more on line. Highland is surrounded by significant relatively new established commercial development in Clarksville, Fulton, Maple Lawn, and Ashton. After years without a real drug store near by, we have a Walgreens in Clarksville, a CVS in Maple Lawn and a CVS coming to Ashton. Presently, there is additional commercial development being planned for Fulton, Ashton and Clarksville. Unfortunately, many older road side commercial developments are too often both unattractive commercial properties and vacant commercial properties. Support Bill 55 to protect and enhance Highland's commercial crossroads.

The public hearing date for the Interim BRX/BR Development Act, Bill 55, is **Tuesday, January 19, 2016 at the George Howard Building, 3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21043.** The Howard County Council, our Howard County Zoning Board, will be hearing testimony on Bill 55 from the citizens, residential and business. **We ALL need to attend and stand up for Highland**

Welcome Dave Liker, Highland's Organic Farmer, and his family

Dave Liker, an established Howard County organic farmer, is moving to Highland with his wife and three children, 6,4 and 3 years old. They purchased Lansdale Pue's Farm on the corner of Hall Shop Road and Route 216. **Dave has agreed to be the initial speaker at our next GHCA Community Meeting, Thursday, January 14th and will talk about his plans for the farm.** Lans left his farmland to 4-H with the request that 4'H apply to preserve his farmland in the Howard County Farm Preservation Program. In 2015 the County Council accepting the Pue Property into the Howard County Preservation Program - FARMLAND FOREVER.

Welcome Lauren Fowler, Echelon Interior Design & Boutique

Lauren comes with 20 years experience in the design field. She offers a full range of interior design services from a simple color consultation, custom window services, to kitchens, baths and a full turn key design project. Her office is now open in the white 'Ranny' House behind Boarman's with Oaklawn Landscaping. Lauren invites you to come browse the boutique and discuss your design needs however small or big. Hours are Wednesday-Saturday 10 am to 5 pm and Sunday 12 pm-3pm.

The GHCA Annual Meeting is Thursday, March 10, 2016 - Election of Board

Members

This is an especially important and exciting time to be involved in protecting and planning your community's future. Please nominate a representative from your community area of Highland, to join the GHCA Board of Directors. Call or e-mail GHCA Nominating Committee Chairman, Susan Scheidt, 301-854-2439 or psscheidt@verizon.net. and get involved.

efforts of GHCA to preserve our Highland way of life.

If you paid a \$25 membership fee on Highland Day, your membership is paid for 2016. Please check with Hilda Mathieu, membership chairman.

Name: _____

Email: _____

Address (only if not on your check)

Make Your Check Payable to GHCA

Mail to GHCA, PO Box 235, Highland, Maryland 20777

Membership: The GHCA Board has set the annual membership fee at \$25 for this calendar year, 2016. Mail your membership today and become a contributing, voting participant. Community membership is needed to support the continued