



6240 Old Dobbin Lane ■ Suite 110 ■ Columbia, MD 21045

July 8, 2019

Christiana Rigby
Chairperson, Howard County Council
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21043

RE: Robinson Overlook - Council Resolution 97-2019

Dear Councilwoman Rigby:

For the last couple of years, the Howard County Chamber watched intently as the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) debate took place. We participated in the public input process and expressed our concern as the final policy was adopted. One area of concern was the impact the new ordinance would have on housing affordability. Howard County is extremely fortunate to be a place where many desire to live but with this desirability also comes challenges particularly for those whose professions pay low wages, live on fixed incomes or who are beset by developmental disabilities.

Our APFO concerns aside, the legislation did allow for developments to take place through the Special Affordable Housing Opportunities Provision if the development met five specific criteria. Before the council body is the Robinson Overlook project (CR 97-2019), a 43-unit affordable housing development of which nine are for persons with disabilities. This project meets four of the five criteria. The fifth criteria involved several other circumstances that are triggered by payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) and ultimately involve the developments impact on local elementary schools.

In reviewing the project memorandum from the Department of Planning & Zoning (DPZ), this project's PILOT Agreement shows that there are three adjacent elementary schools with a capacity utilization rate of less than 100 percent (Clarksville, 73.1%; Swansfield, 83.4%; Dayton Oaks, 86.4%). Moreover, this project will yield just a projected 28 students (12 elementary school, 7 middle school, 9 high school). At the present time, the Howard County Public School System is undergoing a Boundary Review process which provides three options for redistricting elementary schools in the "southwestern" area of Howard County. All three options move the Robinson Overlook development to Clarksville Elementary School, and in all three options, the capacity utilization of Clarksville Elementary School remains at less than 100 percent.

It is widely known that Howard County has a housing affordability problem as noted in the 2018 Howard County Rental Survey, which estimates that an affordable housing gap of over 5,500 units exists countywide. A failure to address housing affordability will ultimately impact both employee

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attraction and retention. The Howard County Chamber understands that many are concerned about development and its impact on schools and infrastructure. Equally important is access to housing as the inability to have affordable housing also bears impact on our infrastructure as people travel greater distances to employment centers. For the reasons noted above, we ask that you support CR97-2019. Should you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to reach out.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leonardo McClarty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Leonardo McClarty, CCE
President/CEO, Howard County Chamber

CC: Howard County Council
 Dr. Calvin Ball, Howard County Executive
 Howard County Chamber Board of Directors
 Howard County Legislative Affairs Committee