

February 1, 2012

J Robert Lalush, Planning Supervisor
Division of Public Service and Zoning Administration
Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning
3430 Courthouse Drive
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

Re: Wilde Lake Business Trust
Zoning Board Case No. ZB 1096M

Dear Mr. Lalush,

Attached you will find the Community Response Statement from the Wilde Lake Village Board in reference to Zoning Board Case No. ZB 1096M as required by Section 125.J.3.b of the Howard County Zoning Regulations.

We are excited about the progress that has been made thus far concerning the Major Village Center Redevelopment in Wilde Lake. We look forward to the scheduling of the Zoning Board Hearing for ZB 1096M. While the attachment provides detail to address specific sections of zoning regulation 125.J, below you will see an Executive Summary that will direct you to the various parts of the Community Response Statement.

Executive Summary of Community Response Statement for Zoning Board Case No. ZB 1096M

In reviewing the submission of Wilde Lake Business Trust (aka Kimco) in regard to the Wilde Lake Village Center Redevelopment, the Wilde Lake Village Board generally **supports the petition however we would** like to bring attention to 3 (three) main issues that we ask the Zoning Board to consider in their review process. These issues are: ***Connectivity, Community Interaction and Environmental Impact.***

While we have stated that the Petition is generally in harmony with the Wilde Lake Village Center Community Plan, we would like to note that it was developed in 2009 and approved in 2010 based on preliminary drawings submitted during the pre-submission process and under different Village Board leadership and membership than those that currently serve on the Board. An Application for Exterior Alteration for the Kimco property was approved through the Village covenants architectural review process on August 30, 2011 by the Wilde Lake Architectural Committee which is comprised of those currently serving on the Board.

Connectivity

It is access between neighborhoods. It is building pathways and roads between neighborhoods so that neighborhoods have access to one another. Neighborhoods must connect and they must connect in multiple ways.

Neighborhood connectivity is a critical concept to keep Wilde Lake Village a vibrant community. When people walk, bike and drive through other neighborhoods, they understand and begin to know their neighbors. Neighborhoods must connect. Neighborhood connectivity must occur in multiple ways and in multiple locations to ensure public safety. Our children must have safe ways to get to school. Seniors must have safe access to various points in the village and families should feel safe and confident in reaching various access points.

Here are some recommendations that we have for increased connectivity:

§125.J.4.a. (8)(g): **The Village Center Redevelopment fosters pedestrian and bicycle access;**

- The Wilde Lake Village Board requests that the Order require the petitioner to prepare a pedestrian/bicycle plan that addresses pedestrian and bicycle transportation both within and through the Village Center and to nearby major hubs including Howard Community College, Howard County General Hospital and Town Center. We also ask that this plan is coordinated with the Connecting Columbia plan under development by the Columbia Association and the prospective bicycle master plan by Howard County.
- Both Lynx Lane and the new roadway adjacent to the Village Courtyard should have full sized bicycle lanes that eventually connect to a lane on Twin Rivers Road, Cross Fox Lane and connectors to Howard Community College, Town Center and the rest of Columbia Association's pathway system.

§125.J.4.a. (8)(h): **Public transit opportunities are appropriately incorporated into the Village Center Redevelopment;**

- The Wilde Lake Village Board has two concerns with respect to transit opportunities within the redeveloped Village Center: First, the structural details of the bus stop are unclear. The Wilde Lake Village Board requires at a minimum a bus shelter that will protect transit riders from wind, summer sun, and precipitation. Moreover, the Board would like to see the bus stop become the standard for quality bus shelter design.
- Secondly, even the best bus stop is only as good as the types of services that utilize it. The Wilde Lake Village Board seeks to determine, in partnership with the property owner and transit providers, an array of services to utilize the bus stop. In addition to the Howard Transit System, the Wilde Lake Village Board would like to see regular service to this bus stop from Howard Community College via their Dragon Wagon and entities in downtown Columbia via the proposed Downtown Circulator service. The Wilde Lake Village Board understands that some of this may be out of the scope of the Howard County Zoning process, but feels it is important to start the discussion here.

§125.J.4.a. (8)(i): The Village Center Redevelopment is compatible with the surrounding community

- The addition of residential units in the Village Center is an essential component to increasing vibrancy in the Village Center. Keeping and expanding various retail, restaurant and recreational facilities on-site in a pedestrian-friendly environment will mitigate the need to use automobiles as residents can easily walk to daily necessities. For these reasons, the Wilde Lake Village Board would like to see more of the residential buildings incorporate ground level retail.

§125.J.3.b. (3) (b): Planning and Design Concepts, including but not limited to how it fits into the surrounding area

- Proposed planning and design concepts do fit into the surrounding area. Connectivity within the Wilde Lake Village Center is improved by creating a more direct route from the non-signalized intersection to Cross Fox Lane. The current road does not go straight to Cross Fox Lane, but ends at the parking lot.
- Mixed-use, density and diversity is achieved in the proposed redevelopment plan by incorporated new five story apartment residential units into the Village Center.

Community Interaction

Community Interaction is vital to growth, development, and sustainability of the Wilde Lake Village Center. A place for families, seniors, college students and business owners to gather together is a critical component to revitalizing the Wilde Lake Village Redevelopment. Below are highlights of suggestions for increased community interaction:

§125.J.4.a.(8)(c): The Village Center Redevelopment will foster the purpose of a Village Center as a community focal point providing good opportunities for community interaction and communication;

- Additional proposed features within the courtyard also will increase community interactions. The property owner has proposed expanded outdoor seating capacity within the courtyard, allowing for patrons of local eateries to greater utilize this setting and lighted covered pathways. The property owner has also stated at previous public meetings the desire to extend the courtyard utilization over three seasons, rather than just the summer months.
- With respect to the balance of the proposed Village Center redevelopment, the property owner has expressed interest and stated at previous public meetings the desire to place an outdoor seating area and street furniture on the north side of the residential building. This will effectively extend the opportunities for public interactions along a second side of the Village Center. This pattern is also repeated in front of the food store building located at the west end of the Village Center.

- Taken in whole, the amount of area dedicated to allowing the community to congregate, interact and socialize exceeds that of the current Village Center design. In addition to volume, the proposed locations of the amenities allow for an archipelago of interaction throughout the Center. This is viewed as an improvement over the original remote, intimate courtyard.

Environmental Impact

As the County continues to move to more Environmental Sustainability, the Wilde Lake Village Board also believes it is vital that this Village Center Redevelopment has a positive environmental impact. Below are some additional recommendations for environmental impact:

§125.J.4.a. (8)(f): The Village Center Redevelopment is compliant with all applicable environmental policies and requirements, and provides new environmental improvements to the redevelopment area through the use of methods such as, but not limited to, green building standards, water conservation, natural drainage systems, the planting of native vegetation, the removal of existing invasive plants, the improvement of storm water deficiencies, and following low impact development practices;

- The Wilde Lake Village Board agrees the redevelopment is compliant with all environmental policies and requirements and welcomes the incorporation of elements such as bioswales, pervious pavement, and the use of native species into the proposed design. In the past, the Kimco has stated its intention for LEED certification for new buildings on the property. The Wilde Lake Village Board strongly encourages this language or meeting comparable green building criteria be incorporated into the Decision and Order at the end of this process.
- Transportation is also a major factor in sustainability and this requires keeping enough retail that serves the neighborhood with less car travel. See above comments about incorporating more retail space in the ground floor of the residential buildings and about improved bicycle and pedestrian transportation.

Sincerely,

William Santos
Chair, Wilde Lake Village Board

