

Wilde Lake Village Board Statement Regarding the Proposed Wilde Lake Village Center Redevelopment Plan

1. Introduction

Kimco Realty Corporation aka Wilde Lake Business Trust (“Kimco”) presented the Wilde Lake Village Center redevelopment plan (the “Plan” - Attachment #1) at its first Pre-Submission Meeting on July 22, 2010 at Slayton House. All Wilde Lake Village Board (the “Board”) members attended, hearing both Kimco’s presentation and community reaction.

The Board acknowledges that Kimco has been responsive to community and Board requests, for instance to preserve the Courtyard, provide parking for non-retail users, retain a balanced mix of uses and has been forthcoming with information. With the modifications discussed below, the Board would like the redevelopment to proceed as soon as possible as it believes this is in the best interests of the community.

Following Kimco’s July 22 presentation, the Board held three listening sessions on July 27 and 31, received and summarized written input from the community on a questionnaire, requested and received a Project Summary from Kimco on August 5 (Attachment #2), requested and received written community input sent to Kimco and heard input from community members at its twice monthly meetings. The Board has also been informed by consideration of this issue over the past few years, one result of which was the Wilde Lake Village Center Community Plan (“Community Plan” - Attachment #3), which was issued on Dec. 11, 2009 with a minor revision on July 19, 2010.

At a regular meeting on, June 7, 2010, the Board requested its Architectural Advisory Panel (“AAP”) to review the Plan and provide its recommendations. The AAP is a committee of the Board and is populated by individuals either employed or retired in the planning and architectural professions. The entire AAP attended the July 22nd Pre-Submission meeting as individuals. In the days following the meeting, the panel reviewed the materials presented by Kimco and submitted a report to the Board on August 10, 2010 (Attachment #4).

The Board reviewed the panel report and discussed at length the issues raised by the AAP. While it is understood that Kimco may change this plan prior to submitting a petition to Department of Planning and Zoning (“DPZ”) to amend the New Town Preliminary Development Plan, the Board believes it will be informative for it to provide its feedback on the preliminary plan. This feedback is intended to inform Kimco, the community, Wilde Lake Community Association (“WLCA”) members (generally, property owners & residents in Wilde Lake), the County Design Advisory Panel (“DAP”), DPZ Staff and elected officials.

The recommendations and positions in this statement also apply to Kimco's submissions to the Design Advisory Panel on October 7 and 13 since Kimco has not materially changed its concept since the July 22 Pre-submission meeting.

When Kimco files its petition, the Board fully expects to submit a Community Response Document to the County as the Zoning Regulation provides this opportunity. At that time, the Board will provide additional comments on many aspects of how the proposed redevelopment meets the requirements for a Village Center and the other needs of the community. Some, but not all of these criteria are referred to in this Statement. The results of the Board discussion and its positions are described below.

2. Recommendations

2.1. Areas of Agreement with the Wilde Lake Village Center Redevelopment Plan

The Board agrees with the size and general layout of the residential component in the Plan. The approximately 200 units proposed are a reasonable number of units and their location, split between two structures on the southern end of Kimco's property, is aligned with earlier discussions of the Board.

The Board agrees with the proposed internal road network. (However, see below for additional information required about non-vehicular circulation.) The preservation of Lynx Lane and Cross Fox Lane are welcomed. In addition, the proposed new road connecting Twin Rivers Road to Cross Fox Lane and parallel to Lynx Lane enhances vehicular circulation through the property.

The Board also agrees with the following aspects of the Plan:

- Village Center Boundary;
- preservation of the green space in the existing village green;
- quantity of residential units;
- building heights;
- quantity and mix of uses;

In addition to the items above, the Board is greatly encouraged by the statements of environmental features the project will include and it hopes to see these brought to fruition in the eventual detailed plans, construction techniques and facility operation.

2.2. Areas of Conditional Agreement with the Wilde Lake Village Center Redevelopment Plan

2.2.1. Building Location and Retail Synergies

The Board is in general agreement with the following¹, conditional on the recommendations below being adopted and additional information identified above being provided:

- the quantity of retail space;
- the inclusion of a bank;
- the approximate size of the food store shown, provided that (a) the building design has all the necessary elements of a grocery store (b) is adjacent to a drug store and (c) that at least one merchant offers for sale an economical average-priced range of household goods, paper products/soft goods, frozen, refrigerated, dairy; canned, and packaged food, baked goods, home remedies, medical supplies, etc.² See other requirements in the Community Plan, in particular section 3. a. to d; and
- the acceptability of no gas station being included in the plan, if that is necessary to achieve the mix of other retail merchants to serve community needs;

The Board has concerns that Village Center patrons will be discouraged from utilizing more than one tenant in the retail portion of the center due to the distance (through a parking lot) between the proposed food store building location and the existing retail buildings preserved in the Plan. The Board believes that the best retail environment is one where there is continuous retail frontage along a pedestrian walkway, even better if the walkway is lighted and arcaded - protected from sun, rain and snow.

¹ Section 125.J.3.b of the Zoning Regulations states that the County's Department of Planning and Zoning "shall request that the Village Board submit a Community Response Statement outlining its comments on the redevelopment proposal" within two days of acceptance of a Major Village Center Redevelopment. The Board fully expects to provide additional comments on the redevelopment proposal at that time including whether the proposed design enhances the development surrounding the Village Center Redevelopment.

² The Zoning Regulations provide opportunity for the Board to comment on the amount of commercial business floor area proposed and whether the stores, shops, offices or other commercial entities/uses provide opportunities to fulfill day to day needs of village residents such as food stores, specialty stores, service agencies, personal services, medical services and restaurants.

In addition to these concerns about retail synergies, the Board has others about the layout's ability to create pedestrian-friendly public and meet the other purposes of a Village Center such as community gathering. For instance, the Zoning regulations provides opportunity for the Board to comment on whether the Redevelopment provides accessible, usable landscaped areas such as courtyards, plaza's and or squares.

The Board takes the position that the food store and drug store can be better located for the purpose of achieving the essential functions of the Village Center and encourages Kimco to orient the building locations to better facilitate retail synergies and the other purposes of a Village Center.

2.2.2. Treatment of Existing Retail Buildings

The Board agrees that the Lynx Lane buildings and former Giant Food building may be removed to enable the layout shown in the Plan. The Board supports maintaining the north and south buildings as depicted in the Plan. The Board supports upgrading the building west of the courtyard. This upgrade should include opening up the view and access onto the Courtyard without demolishing the building.

2.2.3. Bank Location

Given the opportunity to move the food store and pharmacy, the Board believes that an alternate location for the bank be considered. The Board suggests locating the bank west of Lynx Lane.

2.2.4. 1st Floor Retail in Residential Building

The Board recommends that the amount of retail within the residential building be increased by converting to retail part or all of the ground level of the north side of the building north of the Wilde Lake Tennis Courts. For example, the space designated as "Amenity" on the proposed Village Center redevelopment plan can be converted to retail, and the "Amenity" space be located elsewhere in the building.

Lastly, more information is required about the following aspects of the Plan before the Board can provide an opinion:

- the internal network of pedestrian and bicycle transportation and how it will connect to pathways, current and future³ outside the Village Center and public transit;
- the mix of in-line merchants;
- the inclusion of a critical mass⁴ of prepared food merchants, including restaurants, coffee shops, takeout food, pub, etc.

2.3. Conclusion

The Board commends Kimco for the effort that it and its consultants have put into the proposed Plan and for the detailed presentation to the community. The Board endorses the residential and road network portions of the plan. The Board also believes the retail portion has merit, but requires revision as outlined above. In general, the Board finds much to like in the plan and, with modifications, would like to see the redevelopment proceed as soon as possible as it believes this is in the best interests of the community.

The final Wilde Lake Village Center design should reflect that this is a unique site in Columbia and Howard County. It should incorporate stimulating and distinguished architectural design elements. The Board asks Kimco to improve the placement and interrelation among buildings, parking, gathering places and other amenities and better incorporate areas of activity. The Boards further asks Kimco, in the detailed design that is expected to follow, to include elements of distinction that would announce that Wilde Lake Village Center is a dynamic, vibrant and integral part of the community and region. The Board supports boldness in design and place-making elements that are well-grounded in high architectural design principles.

Approved by WLVB Oct. 18, 2010

³ This includes, for instance, the Circulator and multi-use pathways that will be built as part of the downtown redevelopment plan, pathways to Howard Community College.

⁴ In addition to the criteria in the Plan, the Board believes that at least three significant restaurants, a frozen desert merchant, a bagel / bakery / coffee shop and specialty food merchants such as a fish store are needed to create the minimal level of vibrancy in the Village Center. At least one and preferably two establishments should be middle or up-scale locales with late night hours serving coffee and/or alcoholic beverages to meet the needs of community residents and college students.