

TO: The Hickory Ridge Village Board

This is to certify that I am opposed to the KIMCO plan to redevelop the Hickory Ridge Village Center and ask that the HRVB not modify or alter the HRVB Community Response Statement submitted to the Howard County Planning and Zoning Boards in 2017. My detailed reasons are set forth in the attached Statement of Opposition to KIMCO HRVC Redevelopment Plan.

12/1/18
Date

By: Rhona Schwartz
(Signature)

Rhona Schwartz
(Printed Name)

6421 Cardinal Ln.
Columbia, Md 21044
(Address)

Zoning Case 1119-M HRVC

Applicant/Protestant Schwartz

Exhibit # 3 Date 2/5/20

STATEMENT OF OPPOSITION TO KIMCO HRVC REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

As certified on the attached signature statement, I object to the KIMCO plan to redevelop the Hickory Ridge Village Center ("HRVC") as submitted to the Howard County Zoning Board (ZB case 1119M). I specifically object to the proposal to add 230 apartments to the site. I do not believe any apartments should be built on this site since it is not compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, as required by law. Clemens Crossing neighborhood, which includes the HRVC, consists entirely of single family homes (excluding Sunrise). This was the original design of the New Town plan as conceived by Columbia's developer and it formed the basis upon which I purchased my home. The neighborhood has visited this issue on prior occasions and a comprehensive report was prepared in December 2011 after approximately two years of study by the entire community (including experts). That study (the Hickory Ridge Village Center Community Plan) recommended only incidental ("secondary") and limited residential uses be permitted in only a portion of the Village Center. This position is consistent with the Community Response Statement submitted by the HRVB in 2017 after KIMCO submitted its petition to change the uses at the Village Center to allow apartments. It is also consistent with the opinions of the vast majority of residents as reflected in the 2016 HRVB survey.

There are many justifications for the consensus of the community in its opposition including: (1) increased traffic on Clemens Crossing streets that were never intended to tolerate high volumes and specifically the safety issues associated therewith (e.g., to homes on Cardinal Lane and on Quarterstaff near the Clemens Crossing Elementary School where increased traffic would be a hazard); (2) the effect of adding 230 apartments to our local schools (possible redistricting?); (3) the non-conforming visual impact of a massive structure on a now existing parking area; (4) the fact that changing the current use of the site will adversely affect the value of nearby homes; (5) street design safety issues for pedestrians; (6) the possible effect of 14,000 square feet of more impervious surfaces

that could impact drainage issues, including from the Village Center to Brass Knob and Cardinal Lane; (7) the possible effect on area wildlife arising from substantially more residents and traffic nearby; and (8) the simple fact that the only justification for the KIMCO petition is to both increase the revenues to KIMCO and increase the value of their land, both of which are not the concern of area residents and should not be the concern of the HRVB. Indeed, the HRVC has been an economically viable village center historically since its original construction in 1992. (In fact, local demographic changes in recent years near the Village Center have created a greater economic base than originally existed in 1992.) Although the HRVB has expressed concern about the recent vacancies at the Center, the only reason for that loss of tenants has been the deliberate efforts of KIMCO to cause tenants to leave in order to implement its plan. This by itself shows KIMCO's utter disregard for the surrounding community both by causing a decline at the Center and by recklessly proposing to add high density apartments in an otherwise low density neighborhood. Clearly, considering the adverse impact of the KIMCO proposal, it is the obligation of the HRVB to protect the surrounding Clemens Crossing community from KIMCO's behavior. Even among many HRVC merchants, KIMCO has been seen as merciless in its conduct and objectives. In that regard, I urge you to actively criticize KIMCO for its thinly disguised damaging behavior and selfish goals.

I note that none of the current HRVB members ran for election this past spring on a platform to modify or revoke the 2017 Community Response Statement of the prior HRVB. There has been no factual basis to change that prior position (other than the fact that KIMCO has caused more merchants to leave - - - a deliberate tactic that only it should bear the consequences of); and therefore this newly elected Village Board should not change its position, or at least not do so before replicating the extensive study process completed for the 2011 Community Plan and the original 2017 Community Response Statement.

Finally, I note that once our all single family neighborhood is altered to allow 230 apartments, or any other apartment complex, the neighborhood will be forever changed. And these changes will become the basis for KIMCO, or other land owners, to seek more such changes in the future causing further damage to the quiet low density community this was intended to be. There are certainly other places that apartments can be constructed without adversely impacting the surrounding community. The HRVC is not one of those places. I urge you to not ignore all of these concerns and not modify the prior Community Response Statement.