

From: Rob Lever [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, October 07, 2014 3:21 PM
To: Howerton, Leslye
Subject: Bethesda Downtown plan (Sacks Association)

As a homeowner in the Sacks subdivision of downtown Bethesda, I was surprised and shocked to hear about the latest recommendation for our neighborhood, which appeared to come out of the blue without any such input from the residents.

This has been a residential area for many years, and in our view should remain as such, whether it be single- or multi-family (which is a separate debate). This is one of the best locations in the area with convenient access to shopping transportation and many other things, offering an unparalleled quality of life.

It's particularly dismaying to hear that some individuals (if I were to be unkind I would say bureaucrats) sitting in a planning office think they know better how our neighborhood should be designed.

While everyone likes green space, the need and demand for residential in this area is overwhelming and it would be a shame to sacrifice a prime residential area. We do have a fair amount of park space in the vicinity, although maybe not enough to satisfy some metric which some planner thought up. (Frankly, if I were looking for open space, I would examine some things that appear out of place in the new Bethesda landscape, such as car dealerships, which really would be better placed outside the downtown area.)

Finally, you understand that this kind of a decision would have important financial implications for the owners, who are for the most part long-time residents, not real estate speculators. We all know that this land has value in the current environment and a rezoning would diminish that, unfairly in our view, and penalize us in comparison with other property owners. While we have been told that homeowners would be compensated, I don't think most of us have confidence that the county would remunerate us adequately under any such scheme.

I hope you will take some of these viewpoints into consideration when making your final recommendations.

Best regards

Rob Lever
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