

September 8, 2020

Re: Support With Concern Re. CB64-20 – Glen Burnie Overlay

Dear Chairwoman Pickard and Members of the Anne Arundel County Council:

The Anne Arundel County Chapter of the Maryland Building Industry Association (MBIA) writes in general support of Council Bill 64-20, with some concerns.

This bill utilizes common regulatory tools to encourage redevelopment in the Overlay Area. It provides zoning flexibility, like a wider range of permitted uses within the Overlay Area, and it allows density bonuses in exchange for community enhancements. It also incentivizes developers by offering tax credits, exemptions from the roads and schools APF tests, and reduced application fees. The Bill also purports to offer a more streamlined review process for redevelopment projects in the Overlay Area, but we do not believe this new process goes far enough. Instead, MBIA echoes the Anne Arundel County Association of Realtor's (AACAR) suggestion that the County set a deadline from filing of the concept plan with P&Z to when the initial meeting between P&Z and the developer must be held. This should avoid unreasonable delays in the permitting process early on and will jump-start concept plan review. Additionally, one of the two community meetings could be omitted by allowing written comments from the required public notice.

We are also concerned that the standards for submission of an alternative proposal or plan are problematic in cases where a proposed redevelopment project cannot meet the open space, recreation area, and open area requirements of Section 17-6-111 or the landscaping requirements of Section 17-6-202. Establishing a clear standard that allows reasonable alternative plans and proposals to be approved would aid flexibility and facilitate desirable types of redevelopment.

Finally, we appreciate that this bill includes reasonable exemptions from the Adequate Schools Facilities (APF) test for redevelopment projects in the TC Zoning District, but it may not be enough to incentivize the type of redevelopment desired. One element of exemption requires that, if multifamily dwellings form part of the mix of projects, at least 50% of the units consist of efficiency or one-bedroom units and no dwelling units have more than two-bedrooms. At this time, it is undetermined whether a viable market for that type of mixed-use multifamily project exists. Exempting this type of development from APF testing will not be a sufficient incentive. Expanding the unit types that are eligible for this exemption will be more effective in encouraging mixed-use multifamily development in the TC Zoning District.

We appreciate the hard work that Council Chair Pickard and AACAR have put into this process. Thank you for your attention to this issue and your continued support of the local home building industry. If you have any questions about these comments or would like to discuss our position further, please do not hesitate to contact me or Chapter Chair Marilee Tortorelli at (443) 336-3500 or mtortorelli@mrakta.com.

Best regards,



Angelica Bailey, Esq.
Vice President of Government Affairs
Maryland Building Industry Association
ABailey@MarylandBuilders.org
(202) 815-4445

CC: County Executive Stuart Pittman
Anne Arundel County Council