



March 6, 2025

Delegate Mark A. Korman, Esq.
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen St.,
Annapolis, MD 21401

Sent via Email March 6, 2025

RE: Mount Airy Town Council Denies Housing for Mount Airy Crossing Development, Mt. Airy, MD

Dear Delegate Korman:

Relative to the **Housing for Jobs Act SB430/ HB503**, critical legislation to promote new housing in Maryland, we would like to bring to your attention an example of where a new housing project proposed in Mt. Airy, MD has been rejected by the local Town Council. Our team has worked very hard and in good faith throughout the over 18-month Pre-Concept Planning process, modifying our development plans after each successive phase of public input. Each subsequent submission included fewer dwelling units and greater open space for an overall **40% reduction in housing** accompanied by a **27% increase in open space**, while maintaining the highest degree of design excellence. The following is a summary of the process that was undertaken in Mt. Airy.

- October 2022 Original Plan Submission (1st Plan)
- January 2023 First Charrette - Several hours of public comment
- May 2023 Second 3-day Interactive Charrette (requested by Town Council)
- July 2023 Second Plan Submission (2nd Plan) – Response to public comments
- September 2023 Public Hearing - 2 days of public comments
- December 2023 Third Plan Submission (3rd Plan) - Response to public hearing comments
- February 2024 Joint Workshop - 120 questions/comments from Council/Planning Commission
- March 2024 Fourth Plan Submission (4th Plan) – Response to Joint Workshop comments
- April 2024 Town Council Declined Additional Joint Workshops to Discuss 4th Submission
- May 2024 Town Council Denied Plan by vote of 3-1-1

The Pre-Concept Plan ultimately denied included a total of 350 dwelling units (reduced from 582) of various types and sizes along with 135,200 Sq. Ft. of commercial space in keeping with the requirements of the Mixed Use District (MXD) Zone. The housing density proposed was 3.8 units/acre representing just 54% of the maximum allowed density in this zone (7 units/acre). The open space was 35.7% of the net developable area in excess of what is required by both the zone and the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO).

In addition, the Town Council modified several ordinances during this process that forced our team to make substantial revisions to the plan. This included lowering the density cap from 8/acre to 7/acre and increasing the open space requirement from 10% to 30% in the MXD Zone, along with modifying the open space requirement in the APFO, as well as changing the requirements related to providing a new water source for the project. These ordinance changes are all complied with despite the fact that they occurred subsequent to our initial plan submission in October 2022 and the two charrettes held in 2023.

In summary, we have repeatedly demonstrated good faith by our efforts to comply with a multistep process and a Town Code that was being modified as we progressed through the Pre-Concept Sketch Plan approval process, by our willingness to modify our plan after each successive stage of public input, and finally, by our plan being in full compliance with the purpose and every objective of the MXD Zone.

This is an example of how local governments can hinder the ability of developers and builders to provide the kind of housing that Maryland needs to meet the ever growing demand. New legislation and new policy directives should be developed at the state level that will prevent this kind of thing from happening throughout Maryland.

Sincerely,

PLEASANTS DEVELOPMENT, LLC



Clark Wagner, Vice President, Land Acquisition & Entitlement

CC: Land Use & Ethics Subcommittee
William D. Pleasants, Jr.
Jerry Connelly
Dan Fryer