

**Testimony of Patrick Byrne**

**ZTA 21-02**

**July 20, 2021**

Members of the Montgomery County Council, good afternoon:

My name is Pat Byrne and I am speaking today on behalf of Community Housing Initiative, a developer of Affordable housing in support of Zoning Text Amendment 21-02.

CHI has contracted to purchase land at two different locations in the county for development of Senior Affordable housing. The ZTA is essential to allow both projects to proceed as current development standards create development constraints that make projects like this not viable.

The Shady Grove area site is proposed for entirely Independent Living Age Restricted Senior Housing, consisting of two housing types; for sale and for rent products. The plan includes approximately 58 age-restricted market-rate for sale townhome/patio homes, and approximately 154 age-restricted Independent Living apartments, of which approximately 77 of the 154 apartments will be affordable, rent-controlled units [essentially one-half of the apartments will be LIHTC units, similar to Willows at East County Rec. Center].

The Derwood site will consist of 150 ± Age-restricted units with half the units targeting affordable, 60% of Area Medium Income.

Both projects are filling an affordability gap in their respective areas of the county. Both projects will have top-of-the-line interior features that include fitness center, great room, game rooms, movie room, salon, doctor exam room and more. The exterior will include walking paths, dog walk, dog wash, raised gardens for wheelchair access, landscaped gardens, seating areas, and more. The exterior materials will be stone and siding with extensive landscaping to screen adjacent properties.

**As for why Senior Affordable Housing at these locations now:**

The current 70% open space requirement hinders development of Senior Living. The proposed Zoning Text Amendment addresses this issue. As we move into 21<sup>st</sup> century land use, and considering the dwindling space for new development, for Montgomery County to create more Affordable Housing, the county must make smart development a priority. Since Affordable Housing is unable to pay the same land value as market rate housing, smart development means doing more with less.

Senior Independent Housing communities have minimal impact on the surrounding communities in terms of traffic, schools, and fire and rescue services. Senior residential communities typically include a variety of self-contained common space uses that are tailored to the lifestyle of the residents. Such uses and space requirements include interior gyms, wellness centers with yoga and activity/project rooms, medical exam room, salon and barber shops, and dog wash rooms. As for exterior space, raised garden boxes providing wheelchair access, dog

play areas with benches and clean-up station, paved walkways with lights and benches, barbecue space with tables and chairs, as well as firepits with surround seating and outside screens.

In summary, our projects provide amenity space that actively engages residents and is much more tailored to their lifestyle than large areas of unimproved open space.

We look forward to working with Council and staff on the Zoning Text Amendment and I am happy to answer any questions