

Clarksburg Homeowners Association, Inc.

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December 12, 2023

Via Electronic Mail

Marilyn Balcombe, District 2 Councilmember
Marc Elrich, Montgomery County Executive
Jason Satori, Planning Board Director
Patrick Butler, Upcounty Planning Chief
Kristin Mink, District 5 Councilmember, and Lead for Libraries
Gabe Albornoz, At-Large Councilmember
Evan Glass, At-Large Councilmember
Will Jawando, At-Large Councilmember
Laurie-Anne Sayles, At-Large Councilmember
Anita Vassallo, Director of Montgomery County Public Libraries

Re: Clarksburg Public Library

Dear Sirs and Mesdames,

The Clarksburg Homeowners Association Board of Directors is highly concerned about the possible consequences of Bill 33-22, requiring a feasibility study for affordable housing, on constructing the Clarksburg public library. We are writing to express our unequivocal support for the timely construction of this long-awaited resource.

As you are likely aware, the lot for the planned Clarksburg library is located on Clarksburg Square Road within the Clarksburg Town Center retail core. This lot was deeded to the county last year and is fully prepped and ready for immediate construction. Funding for the library has already been set aside through the Capital Improvements Program.

Recently, our Board has become aware that the implementation of Bill 33-22 has the potential to change the plans and timeline for this library radically. This is highly concerning to our Board members and would certainly be upsetting to all the residents who live within Clarksburg Town Center and the surrounding area. Sadly, there has been little to no public outreach about how and when this feasibility study will be carried out or what its effects could be. As a result, we fear many of our neighbors may not even know that the future of our Clarksburg library is under threat.

On the one hand, we understand and appreciate County Executive Marc Elrich's commitment to using all available tools to increase affordable housing. Like many jurisdictions in our region, the county is undoubtedly facing an affordable housing crisis. The problem has been persistent and difficult to solve, even with our county being at the forefront of efforts to address this shortfall of affordable housing.

On the other hand, Clarksburg Town Center is the wrong target for re-examining housing options at this late stage in its build-out. It is important to point out that Clarksburg Town Center is already an economically diverse neighborhood, more so than the rest of the county. Clarksburg Town Center also has had the misfortune of suffering years of construction delays. Ours was one of the first planned communities to break ground in Clarksburg, yet it is only now nearing completion. Because of those construction delays, this public library could be the last amenity to be built in our neighborhood. This is not the timeline any of us would have envisioned when we chose to buy our homes and raise our families here. Most of us on this Board had children after moving into this neighborhood; for several of us, that was as long as 20 years ago. Some of these kids will be in college or the workforce before they can step into their town library. It is unfair to ask residents to accept further delays to a public library at this eleventh hour.

We recognize the Council is obliged to go through a prescribed process in accordance with Bill 33-22. However, as stakeholders of this community, our Board of Directors respectfully asks to be fully included in any discussions or public hearings that may be held on the Clarksburg public library going forward. To be clear, we unequivocally support the library being built on the lot deeded to the county last year, as originally planned.

Considering all the points above, we urge the County Council to help bring the Clarksburg library to fruition as soon as possible. This library is a necessary and essential public good and one that is long overdue.

Respectfully,

Adrienne Elefantis

Adrienne Elefantis
Board of Directors, Secretary
Clarksburg Homeowners Association, Inc.

Cc: Andrew Barnes, President
Deborah D'Attilio, Vice President
Lisa Read, Treasurer
Tabatha Ialacci, At-Large Member
Pam Wise, Community Association Manager
(via e-mail)