

The A. J. Advisor



Summer 2011

Volume 17, Issue 2

Odenton Town Center and Anne Arundel County

On Odenton



I'm sure that some folks in the Anne Arundel County administration will scoff at my latest rant that they are not doing enough to insure Odenton Town Center (OTC) development. I took the position that a land-use style "affirmative action" plan was necessary. I still believe a more assertive approach is warranted. As I've heard so many times before, I am only looking at the glass "half-empty" instead of "half full".

The County likes to remind everyone that this administration at least, has moved things along faster and accomplished so much. To be fair, the Planning & Zoning and other departments of the County have been much more focused on processing projects in OTC (see Stuart's article). It is true they have addressed more than ever before. But then, there wasn't BRAC pressure before. In the end, the public private "partnerships" created to solve many issues the County had previously ignored, still come down to the private sector actually doing and/or paying for the work. Instead of the County's job being done, it should just be getting started.

Amongst many other possible initiatives, the County should address the unrealistic commercial density requirement for mixed use in the Town Center Plan instead of waiting another four years to amend the Plan. Stop dismissing innovative ideas for speeding up the improvements to the infrastructure to serve the Town Center. Don't wait two years to take up legislation to insure impact fees generated in the OTC region of west county stay in the same area. Don't approve projects in areas sur-

Half Empty



Half Full

In the past, I have been critical of the Planning and Zoning Department at Anne Arundel County. However to be fair, I also want to give them credit when credit is due. Larry Tom, Planning & Zoning Officer and Chris Soldano, Assistant Planning & Zoning Officer, recently assisted in making sure a simple pad site renovation was not caught up in a myriad of guidelines that just didn't make sense being applied to this particular property. A quick, specified review time and comments that were "promised" by the County and relied upon by the applicant were met.

Additional assistance was offered by Planning & Zoning (P&Z) when the State Highway Administration (SHA) had comments that were becoming both a timing and economic hardship on the project, threatening its viability. The County's Planning & Zoning Department's support of the project conveyed to SHA was instrumental (approvals pending). This cooperation and predictability between the County and developer in finding ways to say YES, instead of NO to viable projects within the spirit of the County Development Plan is paramount.

It's paramount in increasing County revenue and tax base from new development sooner not later (or never); it's paramount to give developers predictable response times and approvals reducing further unnecessary development costs ultimately passed onto the user; it's paramount for tenants and residents to plan for and know exactly when their buildings are ready to be occupied; it's paramount in building a reputation as a partner in development rather than an adversary; it's paramount to take advantage of the opportunities BRAC has delivered and Cyber Command is sure to require in Anne Arundel County.

We certainly welcome this more as a rule than exception. Imagine the possibilities!

Kudos's again to Larry, Chris and involved staff!



Stuart Title

DID YOU KNOW?

We are joining the world of e-news. *The A. J. Advisor* will begin arriving via your Inbox to those addresses in our address book. To ensure your continued subscription, please visit our website's News page and provide your email address in the sign up box.

rounding OTC so readily when these projects are likely to develop sooner than OTC can now, decreasing demand for space in OTC. Avoid adopting consultant recommendations for road and pedestrian upgrades and then not require developments to adhere to them. Don't cut critical funding to the Community College that supplies job training for BRAC and Cyber security, promising to "give it back later".

In Odenton Town Center, be more creative, incentivize the private sector to develop sooner and bring the resulting tax revenues to the county that much sooner. Otherwise the dire predictions about next year's budget will certainly come to pass.

The true metaphorical problem is that the County is not able to address how to get the glass completely full. Half-full in Odenton's case isn't good enough after all this time. Until that glass is brimming over with the tax revenues to the County that will also really benefit Odenton area businesses and residents thirsting for needed services and amenities, we will continue to raise the level of awareness to the issue.

Forty plus years should be enough time to fill even a really tall glass. (See, I really *am* an optimist!)

Jay Recognized for Long Leadership



At the West County Chamber's Annual Meeting on June 6th, Jay Winer was acknowledged for his leadership of the Eco-

nomic Development Committee. Claire Louder, President & CEO of the Chamber announced the transition of Chairs and presented Jay with a ball cap inscribed 'Odenton Town Center or Bust' and a plaque citing the strength of his commitment and his ability to "see the need, envision the plan and empower the team for action."

Jay has served as Chair since 2002 and over the years the Committee has worked on a variety of issues such as area development; wetlands permit; Route 175 road alignment; north Odenton task force, the development of Odenton Town Center & revisions to the Master Plan; Fort Meade's Enhanced Use Lease, sewer infrastructure; slots; Town Center Boulevard funding; transportation issues; pertinent legislation; BRAC zone; expedited permit processing; impact fee zone; business improvement district and more.

There has been progress and we look forward to working with the new committee leadership as they continue to move forward on issues relevant to western Anne Arundel County.

We have joined the blogging community; read & comment at www.ajprop.net. We are also featured in News/Local Voices on OdentonPatch.com

8373 Piney Orchard Parkway
Odenton, MD 21113
410-551-9116
www.ajprop.net
info@ajprop.net

