

The A. J. Advisor



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Are you catching us in your email? The A. J. Advisor only publishes three times per year.

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On Odenton



WINNER

The Perils of Participation

Since the start of my professional career in development and property management forty five years ago, I've made it my business to network and participate in professional, civic, charitable and government organizations as much as possible. For the most part, I've found this very rewarding. Keeping up with trends, influencing policy direction and helping to implement goals & objectives has been helpful for me and hopefully to the organizations in which I participated. Selfishly, which is why in reality I think any of us do this, it's given me an outlet to express my many opinions on everything I feel like I can make better.

Anyone who's involved in this type of activity knows that the agreement to serve on Boards of Directors typically obligates you to also serve on the Committees that actually do the work of planning and implementation. My experience with Committees has been mixed at best. Here's what I've found:

Standing Committees are a waste. Standing committees are often required by organization by-laws. Unfortunately, many times they become stale quickly, with minimal turnover of members and stagnation of new ideas. They often lose sight of their intended purpose. A better idea has been "ad hoc" committees established for the express purpose of developing a report or finding a solution. A beginning and an end to the committee's work help focus the effort and members are more likely to do the work because they know the work and the use of their valuable time will be limited.

Committees are almost always too big. This makes them unwieldy. Too many people miss what's going on and subcommittees are even worse, difficult if not impossible to effectively coordinate. Their work almost always drags on because so many opinions must be counted. A

better idea and in my experience almost always more effective, is to keep a committee, even a standing committee, to no more than five. An odd number insures a tie breaker if any "votes" are required. It allows for faster



Odenton's Residential Engine Finally Realized

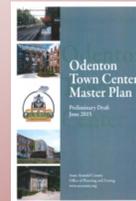


Stuart Title

Back in the early 90's as the Odenton Town Center was being conceptualized, Giant Food had targeted the area for a store. The story then was once the rooftops that are planned were here so would they be. Giant even had a site in mind at Maryland 32 and 175. Now, 22 years later with thousands of new households and a median HH income of \$112,000 Giant Food is becoming a reality. They have landed at the Odenton Shopping Center in a space that Superfresh vacated over five years ago. Finally, an "A" level food retailer serving a growing community that has been previously passed by for Arundel Mills, Waugh Chapel Village and Laurel.

DO YOU KNOW

The new date for release of changes to the Odenton Town Center Master Plan is December 17, 2015 according to County officials. We are attentively waiting.



And if that's not enough, Ruth's Chris...yes you are reading correctly... Ruth's Chris has also come to the same conclusion after watching the tremendous growth just during the past five years, and will be locating at the Village at Odenton Station adjacent to the MARC station.

These two food establishments do their due diligence and have come to the conclusion that the future is now for Odenton. Odenton insiders have known that but it is now recognized by two high quality businesses looking to serve a distinguished customer base. Directly across the street from Giant is the Odenton Health and Technology Campus, home to Johns Hopkins' #1 satellite facility seeing over 100,000 patients annually. They are joined by Kennedy Krieger Institute's Autism facility in addition to other mental health services for pediatrics. A third medical building is now preleasing for expansion of existing services as well as any interest from health and technology providers interested in this extremely strong market. 3 million people live and are accessible within 25 minutes in addition to over 100,000 people who come to Odenton daily for work!

A. J. Properties welcomes both Giant Food and Ruth's Chris to the Odenton community and we welcome you to explore opportunities for you and your clients here as well. With these two additions, we don't need a Starbucks anymore to validate Odenton as the place to be!

response & better participation.

I've saved my strongest opinion as to "Government Committees" for last. For anyone who has been "nominated" or otherwise invited to serve on a committee on behalf of local government, don't feel so honored. Having served on County Executive "transition" groups, special study committees and the like over four decades, they all have had one thing in common. The committee findings, recommendations and reports are presented at their conclusion with great fanfare. Promises are made to implement and make changes. Instead, some small parts of reports are utilized to support change, but most parts are just ignored. Which begs the question; why do it. If I've served on one committee on how to make things easier in my own neighborhood (of development), I've served on dozens over the years. New promises of new results really mean the same old thing: little action and little positive change. Government bureaucracies, no matter how well intentioned just cannot get out of their own way. So why participate? It's primarily for protection. At least knowing what difficulties we're likely to face helps us keep our collective heads down just trying to make it.

Government committees, commissions, study groups, etc. are different from business or civic group committees and present their own challenges. The honor and excitement of nomination or appointment to a group by local government can quickly be replaced by frustration and disappointment. Dedicating major amounts of time and effort along with many others on such a group has had very limited positive results. I find that the political will to implement the majority of recommendations from such groups is usually lacking. In some respects, I understand that complex problems often need measured and timely action. However, while committee findings are often publicly presented with great fanfare and the promise of full implementation, they rarely are. Instead, small parts of reports are often used to support changes that are politically expedient and the rest are ignored or shelved. This begs the question, why serve? A bit of self-preservation is a reasonable motive. More often than not, it's the optimistic view that "maybe this time", real and significant change can be effected. There's always hoping.

Stuart Title presents to the North County High School Signature Program Students

Sophomores at North County High School heard Stuart, having in-depth knowledge on the subject, speak about infrastructure and public transit for their International Trade, Transportation and Tourism (IT3) Signature Program. Stuart explained that transportation and development are symbiotic and reach every level of modern life. Infrastructure and transit systems are greatly affected by topography and differ according to where you live; suburban vs. city settings use different methods. He challenged students to be the generation that stops being reactionary and brings real change to how we commute.



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