

Chairman Françoise Carrier and Planning Board Members  
Montgomery County Planning Board  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20901

March 4, 2012

Dear Chairman Carrier and Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board:

We are writing to provide you with a copy of a letter that we sent to Steve Hull, editor of Bethesda Magazine, on March 2, 2012, in which we take strong exception to statements made by Rollin Stanley, the Director of Planning, that appear in the article "The Future is Looking UP" in the March/April 2012 issue. Mr. Hull has already agreed to publish our letter to the editor in its entirety in the May/June issue of his magazine.

In this letter, we ask the Board to take certain actions in light of these statements by Mr. Stanley. In the article, Mr. Stanley is clearly speaking in his capacity as the Director of Planning, and he appears to be speaking on behalf of the Planning Board itself when he characterizes us as "rich white women," who "spread fear" and "sow discord", who "stalk" him in his appearances before community groups, and who describe ourselves as members of a "coven."

Through these remarks, Mr. Stanley has impugned our integrity, attacked our credibility, and damaged our personal and professional reputations. We ask the Planning Board to publicly disavow his remarks. We also ask that the Board additionally state in open session its policy—as well as the policy it has adopted for its employees—with respect to Board and staff comments about the public and the public's participation in matters before the Board.

Further, we believe that these remarks raise a serious question as to Mr. Stanley's fitness to continue to serve as Director of Planning in this County, inasmuch as a substantial part of his job is interfacing with County residents who have concerns about their own property, or about what is going to happen to properties near them.

We believe that his printed remarks are wholly inconsistent with his responsibility to treat all citizens of Montgomery County with respect, and to recognize that in Montgomery County—unlike other places—there is a strong tradition of public participation in land use issues. Mr. Stanley's job is to foster public participation, not to work actively to discourage it by using his position to verbally abuse County residents in public simply because they have the temerity to question current efforts to "urbanize" the County.

We are very concerned that Mr. Stanley's remarks will have a chilling effect on public participation. They suggest there is a culture that is developing within the Planning Board staff in which citizen participation is neither welcome nor even tolerated. Even in a welcoming environment it is difficult for the uninitiated citizen to plunge into the world of land use, and to testify and/or write with questions and

concerns. When citizens must be concerned about personal attacks or dismissive contempt for different points of view when participating before the Planning Board, they will think twice before participating.

Finally, what message is Mr. Stanley sending to the planners who work under him in terms of how Commission employees should treat the public? What kind of training are young planners receiving in terms of answering questions from the public, providing materials to the public, and explaining to the public the processes of the Planning Board to the residents of Montgomery County?

All of these are matters of great gravity if the Planning Board is to maintain the public's trust in the integrity of Montgomery County's land use processes. We thus respectfully ask the Board to address these issues publicly, and specifically Mr. Stanley's comments in the Bethesda Magazine article, at your earliest convenience. It is critical that this matter be put behind us, so that all County residents can once again feel free to voice their views on critical land use planning issues to the Planning Board and its staff.

Sincerely,

/s/ Pat Baptiste  
/s/ Meredith Wellington  
/s/ Julie Davis  
/s/ Jenny Sue Dunner