

**Greg Fox and Mary Kay Sigaty, Councilmembers,  
Petitioner**

**PLANNING BOARD OF  
HOWARD COUNTY, MARYLAND**

**ZRA-176**

\* \* \* \* \*

**MOTION:** *To recommend approval of the request to delete Section 117.0: BRX (Business Rural Crossroads) District from the Zoning Regulations.*

**ACTION:** *Recommended approval; Vote 5 to 0.*

\* \* \* \* \*

**RECOMMENDATION**

On March 2, 2017 the Planning Board of Howard County, Maryland, considered the petition of Councilmembers Greg Fox and Mary Kay Sigaty to delete Section 117.0: BRX (Business Rural Crossroads) District from the Howard County Zoning Regulations (HCZR). The proposed amendment will eliminate the BRX (Business Rural Crossroads) District from the HCZR.

The Planning Board considered the petition, the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) Technical Staff Report, and DPZ's recommendation to approve the petition.

Greg Fox and Mary Kay Sigaty testified in support of the petition. The BRX zoning district was established in the 2013 Comprehensive Zoning Plan as an alternative to the zoning map amendment process for individual properties. However, no one has applied for rezoning to the BRX District to date.

A board member asked if deficiencies could be corrected by revising the text to restrict the geographic boundaries of the BRX District. Mr. Fox noted that in addition to the district boundaries, the other three issues identified by the Department of Planning and Zoning are legitimate points that are more appropriately addressed through further studies rather than text revisions.

A board member asked if it is anticipated that each rural crossroad area will be dealt with discretely. Mr. Lazdins, DPZ Director, responded that accommodating limited commercial development when different areas have individual architectural characteristics are the types of issues to be addressed as part of the upcoming zoning and subdivision code rewrite process. Ms. Sigaty said originally the intent of the zone was to work with each separate community to recognize its unique character. However, as written, BRX has unintended consequences. Going forward, the idea is to craft a zone that functions with the individual character of each area. Mr. Fox suggested that specific design guidelines be developed for each area.

**Testimony**

Dan O'Leary, representing the Greater Highlands Crossroads Association (GHCA), testified in support of the petition to remove the BRX District. He stated that during the comprehensive zoning process, Highland chose a limited BRX District instead of individual zoning map amendments; however, BRX did not produce

the desired results and should be deleted. Mr. O'Leary also offered general remarks about the Business Rural (BR) District.

Susan Scheit, past president of GHCA, also testified in support of removing the BRX District. She noted that hair salons and restaurants do not have adequate well resources to support additional commercial development and that properties on well and septic require the scope of development to be limited.

Theodore Mariani, representing the Concerned Citizens of Western Howard County, testified that the Lisbon community meeting concluded issues were too diverse to address through the BRX District. He recommended that DPZ engage with communities and develop master plans.

Board Discussion and Recommendation

In work session, one board member commented that there are numerous flaws in the BRX District, as described in the Technical Staff Report, which warrant approval of the proposed amendment. The board generally concurred that each community needs an individualized master plan and suggested communities begin the process.

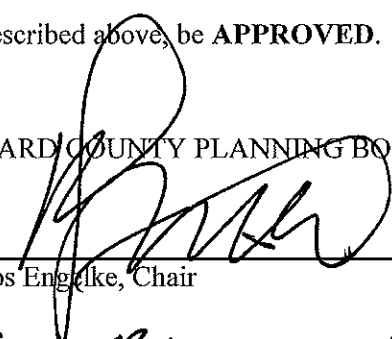
Motion and Vote

Ms. Adler made a motion to approve the petition in accordance with the recommendations of the Technical Staff Report. Ms. Easley seconded the motion.

The motion for approval of the petition in accordance with the recommendation of the DPZ Technical Staff Report to delete Section 117.0: BRX (Business Rural Crossroads) District from the Zoning Regulations. passed by a vote of 5 to 0.

For the foregoing reasons, the Planning Board of Howard County, Maryland, on this 21 day of March, 2017, recommends that ZRA-176, as described above, be **APPROVED**.

HOWARD COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phillips Engelke, Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Erica Roberts, Vice Chair

  
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Jacqueline Easley

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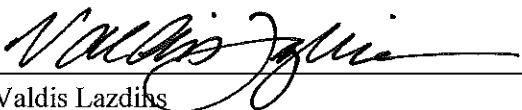
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PETITIONER: Greg Fox and Mary Kay Sigaty, Councilmembers

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Delphine Adler

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Edward Coleman

ATTEST:

  
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Valdis Lazdiņš  
Executive Secretary