

Preservation Howard County

P.O. Box 6512
Ellicott City, MD 21142-6512

September 1, 2005

Matthew D'Amico
Design Collectives, Inc
100 East Pratt Street
14th Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Dear Mr. D'Amico,

The Monday, August 29th community meeting to discuss HCC's master plan for Belmont lacked specificity and left us with far more questions than answers. This concerns us not only from the perspective of creating a sensitive adaptive use for this historic resource, but also from the perspective of making sure that public funds are spent in reasonable ways to ensure the future success of HCC.

We expected the master plan to be built on a strong foundation of impact studies, needs assessments and a clear understanding of the legal constraints of the property. Our expectations were not met. We believe that individuals in attendance raised many good questions and comments and we attach them here for your review. It is our hope and our expectation that you will work together with HCC to provide direct answers via a clear and transparent process. It is incumbent upon HCC, as a public body, to be forthcoming and to work cooperatively with state and local interests.

Yours truly,



for Mary Catherine Cochran
President
Preservation Howard County, Inc

cc: Dr. Mary Ellen Duncan
James Truby
Richard Brandt

Master Plan Draft:

- No specific mission statement for the use of Belmont, except relating to the three part legacy
- Inadequate data/detail to support the many proposals for new construction and use
- No specific time line for each area of proposed new construction within the 8-10 year plan
- No discussion of what other locations of the proposed new construction were considered and rejected
- No information about how this master plan for a public facility will be funded

Inn:

Proposed location encroaches on the Main House and entrance view

- No information as to the size, square footage, rooms and facilities*
- Consider relocating Inn near the Carriage House/Culinary building

Wellness Center:

- Unable to define intended use and facilities to be provided*
- Explanation of the Wellness Center appeared to resemble a "spa" for conference attendees
- No information as to size, square footage, rooms and facilities*
- Consider relocating Wellness Center near the Carriage House/Culinary building

Conservatory:

- No definition of its intended use*
- No information as to size, square footage, rooms and facilities*

Parking:

- No detail on the amount and location of additional parking required for Inn, Wellness Center, Conservatory, Culinary addition to the Carriage House and Green Tech Building*
- Few specifics on materials to be used for parking areas*

Culinary addition to the Carriage House:

- No detail regarding size, square footage, facilities, classrooms, faculty offices*
- No information on projected student enrollment for this program*

Green Tech Building:

- No definition of use and facilities*
- No information regarding the size, square footage, facilities, classrooms, faculty offices*
- No projected student enrollment for program*
- Existing garden does not appear to be large or diverse enough to support a program or building

Barn:

No information on what renovations/restorations would be made

Traffic Study:

- No time line offered for conducting a traffic study to determine impact on Belmont Woods Road.
- No study to support the need for a new road off of Landing Road
- Missed opportunity to do a traffic study during recent concerts and weekend events
- No consideration given to possible improvement of Belmont Woods Road
- No discussion of environmental impact and potential mitigation of a second road

Public Water/Sewer:

- No data or studies that support the need to consider public water/sewer vs. continued use of existing well/septic *
- Would continued use of a well/septic systems meet the needs of the proposed construction, increased conference attendance, student/faculty enrollment, conservatory use and have the capacity for sprinkler systems?
- Would there be a need to construct water holding tanks? (type, size and location?)
- Would there be a need to construct additional septic fields and where would they be located?

Lighting:

- No information of the need for additional lighting or improvement of existing lighting of facilities (type, size or location)*

Building Materials:

- No information on the type of building materials to be for proposed buildings that would be in keeping with the existing historic buildings*
- No information on the type of materials to used for pathways in keeping with the existing historic buildings*

Dobbin House and Property:

- No information regarding sale and or development of this historic property

Existing houses:

- No information provided regarding the potential use of the existing houses
- The house nearest the Carriage House was suggested to be used for additional Conference Center sleeping rooms

Environment:

- No information on how the water run off from proposed buildings, pathways, "road ways" would be handled
- No indication that HCC received input from DNR regarding a potential second road

Additional Campus Use:

- No information as to the "possible" use of Belmont as a location for other credit and/or non-credit courses during the day and/or at night*

* denotes items that answers could be provided on a fact sheet handout