



October, 2014

The Oakland Mills Community Association Task Force Housing Committee has constructed a list of questions concerning housing issues in the county that have significant impact on Oakland Mills. The questions were sent to the Howard County candidates for County Executive and the candidates for Howard County Council District 2.

Below are the questions asked of the candidates and each candidate's responses are included in separate documents.

Housing Questions for Political Candidates

1. As you know, Jim Rouse developed Columbia to be a City in which all would live in harmony. He envisioned that there would be an economic and racial mix that would lead the way in showing that all can live together harmoniously. In recent years, reports have shown that there has been a clustering by income levels in certain parts of Columbia. One example of this clustering is shown by the fact that approximately 62% of the children attending Stevens Forest Elementary School receive assistance under the FARM program. Do you think such clustering is consistent with Rouse's dream? Is it appropriate in your view? If not, what would you do to correct it?
2. The "Fee In Lieu" policy which allows funds to be paid for the development of subsidized housing in areas other than the immediate area under development, and the "Alternative Compliance" policy which allows the subsidized housing requirement to be fulfilled off site allow for the clustering of subsidized housing in certain areas of the county such as Oakland Mills. Do you support these policies? Do you feel these are consistent with the dream of Jim Rouse? If not, what would you do to change it.
3. Many houses in Columbia, particularly in Oakland Mills, are in foreclosure. Not only is this very unfortunate for the affected homebuyers, but it also affects the neighborhood in which these properties are located. The problem is exacerbated by "zombie foreclosures" where the banks are unable or unwilling to take ownership of the properties and then resell them. Thus, they stay unoccupied and unmaintained and serve as a blight on the surrounding properties. What would you do to hold banks accountable for proper property maintenance once they start the foreclosure process?
4. In part due to the impact of the policies and issues mentioned above, Oakland Mills has one of the highest amounts of subsidized and low rent housing in the county. Not only is this absolutely inconsistent with the dream of Jim Rouse, it also tears at the very fabric of Columbia since it creates the same type of socio/economic segregation that Columbia was designed to eliminate. What specifically would you do to change this pattern? What would you do to revitalize Oakland Mills to make it consistent with the dream of Jim Rouse?