

Lutherville Community Association
General Meeting – Minutes
June 29, 2021
St. Paul's Church

The LCA held a general meeting on the parking lot and grounds of St. Paul's Church due to the preference of outdoor meetings as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The primary purpose of this meeting was to review proposed plans by the purchaser and developer of Lutherville Station, gain community feedback, and answer questions by the community.

The meeting was attended by approximately 100 community members, some members of the LCA board, a few local politicians, a small group from Schwaber Properties and a representative of Kinsley Properties.

Marcia Hettinger, LCA president, welcomed everyone present, and noted that we would conduct brief elections, followed by the presentation by Schwaber Properties and community input. Marcia introduced Debby Miran, the LCA's nominating chairperson, who reviewed names of the newly elected board members.

Marsha McLaughlin, LCA zoning chair, mentioned the other LCA board members on the Lutherville Station sub-committee, including Jeff Dier, Marie Frederick, Marcia Hettinger, Allen Hicks, Rita Nabhan, and non-board members on the committee including David Frederick, Sharon and Steve Plano, and John Alexander.

Marsha introduced Mark Renbaum from Schwaber Properties, noting that Schwaber Properties, purchased the Lutherville Station property and has proposed plans for redevelopment.

Mark Renbaum introduced himself and provided some background – he is CEO of Schwaber Holdings, one of the partners in Lutherville Station. Schwaber owns and operates the Yorkridge Shopping Center, the property adjacent to Lutherville Station, which it developed in the 1960s. At one point, they also owned the land underneath Lutherville Station.

Mark explained that they are troubled by the decaying of Lutherville Station, as its condition has been deteriorating for years. They partnered with Kinsley Properties to purchase the property in December 2020. Mark noted their appreciation of working with the LCA board and sub-committee.

Mark reviewed the history of Schwaber Properties, a Baltimore-based company, invested in the Baltimore area, and its communities. Their strategy is to own properties for long-term, for example they have owned Yorkridge Shopping Center for over 60 years. They believe in doing developments the “right way”, and making longer-term investments.

Steve Kinsley, CEO of Kinsley properties, provided some background of Kinsley – a Pennsylvania-based company but they are heavily invested in Maryland and have an office on Greenspring Drive. They also believe in long-term ownership of properties, as they are a family company and believe in generational ownership.

Mark introduced the design team present, including Josh Sharon, Morris & Ritchie Associates and Gordon Godat, JP2 Architects.

Renbaum then reviewed some of the details of the proposed development:

- Today they will share a rendering of the property. They have proposed a development including 450 apartment units, 100,000 square footage of office space, a parking garage, and green space, which they believe is the largest of its kind in Baltimore County.
- Mark noted number 4 in the document distributed at the meeting, “Why is a restrictive covenant beneficial?”. They would like to put all of the issues brought forth by the board in the restrictive covenant.
- Mark reviewed the issue of stormwater management, saying there was no stormwater management when the property was developed in the 1960s. They believe that the changes they’ll be making are “light years” ahead of what is there today. They plan to document all of their promises in the restrictive covenant, as part of the PUD. The current property does not have the zoning required for apartments. They elected not to submit a zoning change for the property to the County but instead use the PUD approach to work with the community.
- Schwaber plans to redevelop the Shell station on the corner of Ridgely/York Road; move Old Navy to the parking lot of Kohl’s, and bring in new tenants to Yorkridge Shopping Center, as older tenants move on.

Poster boards of the development plans were erected on easels at the meeting for community members to review. Paper copies of the site plan were distributed.

Community members were asked to share their feedback. Jeff Dier noted that many of the factors of this project are under negotiation with the developer, and we are here today to gain the community’s feedback and input, and to answer questions.

Community members’ feedback, concerns, and questions included the following, as well as other items noted by various LCA board members present and representatives from Schwaber.

- Concerns were expressed about potential zoning changes and traffic issues.
- Community member expressed concerns with traffic, and questioned what the community will gain from the development except for problems.
- What is the alternative for this project? How high will the building be? Renbaum replied that it would be a 4 story building. It would be about 15 feet higher than the preschool building across the church parking lot. Concern was expressed with the number of units and particularly rental units, as this is mainly a home ownership area, and so many rental units in our community is concerning.
- It was noted that the councilman for the district (Wade Kach) basically controls the decisions and understands the community’s concerns.
- Another member asked about the community benefit and whether it would be required with a PUD. Jeff Dier explained the PUD process, what is required and that it is approved by the councilman. A community benefit can be negotiated to provide additional open space, school improvements, or other enhancements.
- Community member: What we can possibly gain from the apartments, besides the open space, which would be shared by hundreds of people? He likes the small, quiet community feel of this

area. He does not believe the traffic study conducted so far, thinks that house values will be devalued, and that there is no benefit to the community. He does not agree with any apartment units being developed on the site, and noted that Schwaber Properties only cares about money.

- Jeff Dier provided some history of the Lutherville Station property, the multiple stores and offices located there over the years, its deterioration, that it was listed for sale, ultimately purchased. It is a valuable piece of property and could be developed into a number of things.
- Community member: expressed concerns with potential traffic with retail and additional apartments

Mark Renbaum discussed traffic concerns, saying there will be a traffic study. The community member continued to express concerns about traffic, and asked why we cannot put in a park instead. Mark replied that it's a mixed-use project. He expressed that Lutherville Station has been a failed retail area, and that the mixed-use sites are a trend in property development and their success. He reiterated their investment in the community, and wanting to see its success.

Mark said they want to work with the community through the PUD process, and instead could have filed a zoning request, without any community input. A community member voiced that it does not mean that the zoning would have been approved, his statement is misleading, and community members should not be persuaded by his comment.

- Community member: asked about stormwater runoff and the environment impacts of the development. Mark replied that they believe the new development would have less runoff than what is there currently.
- Community member: raised the question of the potential for low-income housing, such as Section 8, and if there are any such plans included. They also expressed concern with not enough low income or homeless housing in this area, and if it would be considered. Additional concern was shared regarding 1 and 2 bedroom apartments attracting large families.

Mark replied that their plan is for market rate rental units.

If market-rate rental units do not work out, concerns were expressed about potential for low-income housing.

- Community member: asked if it would be possible to have late-night bars or 24 hour gyms, which would produce late night traffic. They are concerned about the retail spaces remaining open and thriving.

Mark replied that they will be announcing a new tenant for the Glaubers space soon.

- Community member: expressed the concern with an apartment development, and related it to the changes Cockeysville has experienced over the years, including an increase in crime. Mark agreed that they do not want crime in the area, and have a vested interest in keeping the area safe. To support this, they could make investments in security measures, such as security personnel, lighting, or police officers. Renbaum explained that they have security already in place at Yorkridge Shopping Center.
- Community member: she has written notes that she would like to share, and asked how they can be shared and recorded. Board members replied that meeting minutes are being recorded and to share her feedback via the LCA e-mail noted on the Fact Sheet.

She is pro-development and is not satisfied with what is currently on the property. She lives in Country Club Park, on the street on the other side of the woods/light rail tracks. Sewage management is a huge issue on their street, as it is already an existing problem and concern, and work has already been done to try and address it. They would like transparency and details regarding sewage.

She also voiced potential uses for the community benefit money, including Lutherville Laboratory elementary school, Ridgely Middle School, and West Lutherville Park and so that the money stays within the community and the county cannot redistribute those funds.

- Community member: would like to see the community benefit funds allocated to community green space, including West Lutherville Park. Also very concerned about traffic in the entire area, especially along the light rail tracks.
- There were some questions and discussion about the PUD and whether its contents/covenant/use be changed if another company purchases the property. Would the # of units in the PUD transfer to the new owner? Renbaum said that the PUD governs, and once you have that, it's definite even for future property purchases, unless it is amended by the future buyers and the LCA (including the number of units).
- Community member: expressed concerns with the numbers of apartment units
- Community member asked who will vote on the restrictive covenant – LCA board members or LCA members? There was no answer to this question.
- Community member: very concerned with security. The police substation at the light rail station used to be employed by police, but has been vacant for years.
- Community member: expressed opinion on the community benefit — would like to see some allocated to playgrounds in particular, for example to improve West Lutherville Park. She also has concerns with the overcrowding with schools.

Renbaum replied that although they are proposing 1 and 2 bedroom units, they do not envision large families, but more 55+ or younger, and envision a mixture of ages.

The member noted there is no way to limit the type of families who move in the apartments, as large families can still live in small apartments. Others at the meeting agreed.

- Community member: expressed concerns that there has not been community input so far on this project. One of her main concerns is crime in this area, particularly Country Club Park. She expressed concern that Country Club Park's concerns are not being heard, and that Country Club Park will be the most affected from this development.

Debbie Darr and Allen Hicks both noted that they, and the board, do represent Country Club park, and we have been reaching out to the community asking for feedback (through the past 2 newsletters and the last general meeting), but have not received much feedback at all. Debbie said that we are very open to the entire community's feedback and discussion and that's why we are here today – to make sure all voices and community feedback is heard, and reiterated that no decisions or agreements have been made with the developer. She encouraged community members to get involved, by joining the board, attending more meetings, and providing written feedback.

- Jeff Dier reviewed that a lot of work and discussions have been taking place already on many of the concerns being voiced today, regarding sewage, stormwater, traffic, etc. and the vetting that is being done through numerous meetings thus far.
- Community member: interested in the compromise of number of apartment units. He asked who owns the property between Lutherville Station area and the stream. Board member answered that it is county owned land, and is not in the development plans.
- Allen Hicks remarked that he is from Country Club Park and is very much invested in the neighborhood. He noted the issues with Roland Run stream restoration and the investment in that project. He reviewed all of the issues that the board has been concerned about thus far including sewage, stormwater, schools, traffic – and does not think that 450 units will be approved. Allen encourages and welcomes all volunteers from Country Club Park to join the discussion on this project.
- Community member: from Orchard Hills – very concerned with the sewage issue. He also raised concerns about the area not being more walkable and bikeable, etc and asked for the plan to be revised to make it more bike-friendly.
- Community member: President of Orchard Hills association — asked if there is a reason they are not considering condominiums instead of apartments.

Renbaum replied that condos do not seem to do well in this area. However, some residents present did not agree with this statement.

The community member also noted that restrictive covenants expire, and recommends putting the covenant in infinity.

- Community member: familiar with the PUD process, a community member reviewed the timeline involved with the PUD process, with ultimately a resolution being introduced to the County Council. Community members can have a say, and a voice, etc — all concerns need to be expressed to Wade Kach. A hearing then takes place, followed by another meeting and eventually an approval or not.
- Community member: concerned about the local schools and overcrowding. What is the back-up plan if schools become too overcrowded? She also asked if additional through-streets would be installed?

Renbaum asked if she's inferring that Old Lutherville would be cut-off from Ridgely? The crowd seemed to agree with this comment.

About the schools, Renbaum said they have to meet a county code, and if they don't meet it, they have to mitigate the impact.

- Questions were asked about the PUD and its future. Does the PUD prevent Schwaber from selling the property? No. Would the new owner be able to change the property with the current PUD? No. Both parties would have to agree to changes to the PUD (the board, and the new owner/developer). He asked about Big Lots and Best Buy Outlet and whether they would remain. Renbaum replied that based on the current plans, it does not allow for Big Lots and Best Buy to be included.

- The community member also asked if Mark Renbaum would like a new development of 450 apartment units 1/4 mile from his own house.

Renbaum replied that what is there now is not appealing, and reiterated that they want to work with the community, build trust, etc.

- Community member: very concerned about Lutherville Lab and overcrowding. Thinks that the number of units should be based on the allowance of children at Lutherville Lab. She also expressed that condominiums ARE in demand in our area, and that it should be considered versus rental apartments. Lastly, she asked that senior housing / event center be considered and included in the plans.

Eric Rockel, President of GTCC, and a resident of Country Club Park made some comments. If the Councilman introduces a PUD, there's a documented site plan, and neither Schwaber or a future developer can deviate from the site plan.

Eric reviewed that a "community benefit" can have four potential uses:

1. Improvement to county or state owned property (schools, roads, etc)
2. The building would have to include a higher quality design
3. Environmental benefit, such as construction of the building, as judged by the green building council
4. Money - to be used toward county or state property and other purposes (limitations need to be determined).

Eric commented that this is just the beginning of the many stages to go in this long process.

- Community member: requested that the next time we have a meeting, we invite Wade Kach as he needed to hear this conversation tonight. She respects Wade and his work and advocacy. She read in the BBJ about the purchase of this property. There is demand for condominiums, senior housing, and the need for green space and wants that noted.

Marcia Hettinger: Wade is scheduled to be present at our next community meeting, along with our attorney, either in September or October.

Marsha McLaughlin encouraged attendees to send their comments, feedback, concerns, etc. to us at luthervillecommunity@gmail.com.

Betty Gonzalez (LCA communications chair) mentioned that envelopes were placed on doorsteps this week, and asked people to please pay their dues to support the LCA and the community. Jeff Dier reiterated the need for funds to help pay for attorneys, experts, etc to work with and represent us on this issue.

Chris West, Shelly Hettleman, a representative from Michelle Guyton's office were present at the meeting. Chris West briefly provided some comments, including that as President of the Ruxton community association years ago, they had a lot of community input on the possible installation of a light rail station in Ruxton. They created and had residents complete a survey, and eventually the proposal was rejected based on community feedback.

8:33 meeting adjourned