

Maryland State Delegate Al Carr
March 3, 2020

Dear Delegate Carr,

At the winter meeting of the Parkwood Residents Association (PRA) on February 24, 2020, resident Liz Brennan presented a plan for the association to request Montgomery County to repurpose the building that currently houses offices of the Housing Opportunity Commission (HOC) into a community center for Kensington. Montgomery County plans to move the HOC offices located at Summit near the corner of Knowles in three years, providing an opportunity for residents to weigh in with community preferences for possible uses. We understand that the former Kensington Elementary school is on a short list of possibilities for a new elementary school for the Walter Johnson cluster (and possibly shared with the Bethesda Chevy Chase cluster). We are closely following the news regarding this building and outdoor space. Parkwood residents are eager to have a facility that supports our community members of all ages.

As a community center, the HOC building could have multiple uses such as a venue for basketball and other sports, meeting space for neighborhood groups, space for pre-k initiative endeavors, and senior activities (noting its proximity to planned senior living facilities).

Kensington is the only down-County community that does not have a community center. Over recent decades the Montgomery County Council has approved funding for new centers in up-County communities, and refurbished down-County centers, but continues to overlook Kensington.

A vote for the PRA to petition the County to convert the HOC building to a community center was passed unanimously by the residents at the meeting. PRA represents over 900 homes located less than a mile from the HOC building, so we see such future use as a benefit to a large number of County residents.

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MD State Senator Jeff Waldstreicher
MD State Delegates Emily Shetty, Jared Solomon
Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich
Montgomery County Councilmembers Andrew Friedson, Hans Riemer, Evan Glass, Will Jawando, Gabe Albornoz