



September 1, 2011

To: Planning and Strategy Committee Members

From: Phil Nelson

CC: Members of the Columbia Association Board of Directors  
Chick Rhodehamel

Subject: Funding and Operating Framework for Public Services in Columbia

As was reported to me by my team from the August 18 budget work session, I understand that the Board had a robust discussion about the idea of a “funding and operating framework for public services in Columbia,” as the supporting documentation was entitled. Certainly, Howard County government and CA both provide services and programs that benefit and are funded by Columbia residents. It is my understanding that, overall, the consensus at the work session seemed to be that the most effective way to address the question as to which services should be the responsibility of CA versus the County is to look at each new initiative or request from the community as it arises, and answer at least the following questions:

1. Does this service/program/facility help to achieve the Board-approved strategic goals of the Columbia Association?
2. Are we already providing a similar service/program/facility that could be adjusted to meet the perceived need rather than to create something else?
3. Evaluate the cost versus benefit of the service, and whether or not CA could stop providing some other service in return.
4. Does the service/program add to the quality of life of Columbia residents or does it add to the property values of the community.
5. If, after the above analyses and discussion, the CA Board decides that the new initiative or request meets these criteria, then the question is what entity should CA partner with for a cost-effective and perhaps more comprehensive implementation?

I agree with what was presented to me by my team that it is not possible to establish a policy that would deal with these issues in the abstract; they really need to be addressed in the concrete or practical to be truly effective.

To that end, I have been working very hard to broaden and improve CA's reputation and relationship with Howard County government and other organizations of influence in our community. These stakeholders include entities such as Howard Community College, Howard County, Howard Hospital and others. I feel that by meeting with the key executives and

decision-makers on a regular basis that they get a better understanding of what CA can do for them and with them. In my extensive experience in community building and city management, I feel that this approach will result in the largest, most sustainable return to the Columbia community.