

## **Just Bad Communications? Or Something More?**

When Costco abruptly called off the proposed grand opening of its store in Westfield Wheaton Plaza just a few weeks before the scheduled mid-October date, it tersely stated that it was only due to “construction issues.” That message was dutifully broadcast by numerous media outlets. And, since then, not one more detail from Costco – and no follow-up from the media.

Rather, all we have seen are two comments.

In Wheaton Patch, “Juan Sasquatch” commented (on October 2):

“A possible opening date is in February, The construction issue was with the floor. When the steel racks went up, the floor began to crack.”

In a posting to DC Urban Moms and Dads later in October, “anonymous” elaborated:

“The store was supposed to open up this month. Cashier at laurel md store told me today that the store was actually totally stocked with food and getting ready to open up. Then an inspector discovered a major prob w floor and had to remove everything. ( I think a portion of the Dicks spring goods store (also under construction) is supposed to be underneath the costco.). Anyway, Now not expected to open til march 2013. Oh well. Sounds like the ss transit center.”

Sounds like the transit center to us too – and the garage for the Macy’s at Wheaton Plaza that was delayed for many months for concrete issues – [and the bus garage in Bethesda?]. So, our first question is what’s up? Can’t anybody pour concrete anymore?

Our more important question is – why won’t Costco come clean? At the Kensington Heights Civic Association meeting on October 25, Costco representatives were asked repeatedly what was the problem and repeatedly refused to clarify. Why are we getting stonewalled?

If these assertions aren’t true, it’s easy enough for Costco to clarify by telling the full story. If they are true, then we all deserve the truth from Costco.

And, we deserve to know whether their refusal to deal openly with the public on this issue is a sign of how they will deal with us on issues relating to the proposed gas station. Construction or operations problems there could have extremely serious consequences. Can we trust Costco to come clean on such problems if they won’t tell us why their store can’t open?

Isn’t it time for the media -- and the County -- to hold Costco’s feet to the fire until they do tell the whole truth?

*Karen Cordry, 11 November 2012*