

**Robert Nelson's Testimony to the Montgomery County Council
at the Public Hearing on Redistricting, Expedited Bill 41-21,
Elections - Council Districts - Boundaries
November 16, 2021**

I'm Robert Nelson, resident of Goshen and former Chair of the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board (UCAB). Thanks again for the opportunity earlier this year to be interviewed as a candidate for the Commission on Redistricting.

When the redistricting process began, we in the Upcounty had great expectations that the resulting districts would ensure that communities would be kept intact and that the Upcounty would receive the greater representation that it deserves. Unfortunately at both the macro and micro level, there are deficiencies. The proposed District 7 stretches from the extreme north of the county through the agriculture reserve into much more densely populated areas toward the southeast making it difficult for a potential County Council member to balance district priorities. Since the Upcounty is the fastest growing area of the county, the imbalance will soon be exacerbated.

For those of us here in Goshen there are anomalies as well. Although I'm located less than two miles from where the newly appointed UCAB representative from Goshen lives, she is in proposed District 2 while I am in proposed District 7. The co-founder of the Greater Goshen Civic Association, Rosemary Arkoian, lives in the new District 7, but the Chair of the Goshen Historical Preservation Society, Joanne Atay, (also a past UCAB member representing Goshen) is in the new District 2. Equity is keeping communities together, not splitting them apart.

Now that the major federal infrastructure bill has been signed by President Biden, the Upcounty is anxious to complete long-promised master-planned projects. One of the major infrastructure needs for the Upcounty, completing the 5.6 mile gap in the Mid-County Highway, will hopefully now become a reality. This highway with transit speeding along at 50 mph is far superior to the proposed Route 355 BRT running at 30 mph. M-83 connects Snowden Farm Parkway with the existing Mid-County Highway traversing three of the newly-proposed Council districts. M-83 is essential infrastructure for the 464,416 residents of those three council districts.

Let's adopt a Redistricting Plan that does not divide the Goshen community and gives the Upcounty its well-deserved representation.

Visit Goshen (Gaithersburg/Germantown)

One of the Most Historical Communities
in Montgomery County



Woodbourne, 1805
Designated Historical



Horse Farm



Butlers Orchard
Located in Agricultural Reserve
Designated Historical



John Davis Mill



Flood Plains and Wetlands
and Wildlife



Wightman House
Montgomery County Historical Registry



Great Seneca Creek Bridge
5,000 Federal Troops
Native American artifacts discovered
over 3,000 years old.
5,000 to 10,000 years old



Benson House
Montgomery County Historical Registry



Sarah Posey House
Montgomery County Historical Registry



Black and White Inn
Montgomery County Historical Registry



Goshen Mills, 1792



Frazier House



The Old Post Office Building
Montgomery County Historical Registry



Fertile Meadows, 1797
Montgomery County Historical
Registry



The Goshen Mennonite Church
about 1870