

We would like to express our objections to the Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) 23-09 – Farming to allow “Incidental Outdoor Stays”. This ZTA would change the entire nature of the uses allowed in the Agricultural Reserve Zone (AR) and ask that you vote against it or amend it. The proposal is not consistent with the purpose of the AR. If this ZTA is enacted, it would authorize the construction of up to 10 luxury resort lodging structures on farm properties in the AR. These structures would:

- A. Not be subject to accessory structure size limits.
- B. Misleadingly called incidental outdoor stays.
- C. Would be exempt from limitations on short term rentals.

The proposed ZTA does not meet any of the fundamental purposes of the AR to preserve working farms, open space and water resources. For these reasons, it should be rejected.

The Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve has been used as a model in other states to preserve farmland and protect farmers. Montgomery County has the highest percentage of farmland under agricultural land preservation easements in the nation. This highly successful model would be at risk if ZTA 23-09 is approved.

A true agritourism experience should not include more than 5 units, there should be size restrictions on each unit given that they will be connected with septic system and such privileges should only be extended to actual farms that generate more than \$50,000/year in revenue from farming or an agreed upon standard that demonstrates proof of farming, which has not been the case with a number of breweries in the ag reserve.

Our farm that employs 5 workers year round and almost double that in the summer currently leases land and would, one day like to purchase land in the ag reserve to ensure the longevity of our operation. Our neighboring farm, Dodo Farm, could not find affordable land prices in Montgomery county and sadly is moving out of the county. We hope not to fall into that category. Measures like the one proposed will further make our goal unattainable in Montgomery county as they will, no doubt, result in higher land prices.

For that reason we are writing to express our opposition to this legislation as it is currently written.

Sincerely,

Marc Grossman

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Farmer Grossman

The Farm at Our House

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