

January 6, 2024

Dear Councilmembers:

I object 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. The proposal is not consistent with the purpose of the Ag Reserve. If this ZTA is enacted, it would authorize the construction of up to 10 luxury resort lodging structures on farm properties in the Ag Reserve. These structures would:

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

The proposed ZTA does not meet any of the fundamental purposes of the Ag Reserve 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.

Sincerely,

Robert N. Goldberg

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