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Issue: Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) 23-09, Farming Incidental Outdoor Stays
Hearing Date: Jan. 16, 2024

Testimony: Oppose ZTA 23-09: No Agritourism Without Working Farms

It is hard to understand why a Council member would propose a zoning change in a district she does not represent. The two Council members who do represent the Ag Reserve are listening to their constituents and oppose ZTA 23-09.

Time and again the Ag Reserve's historic status and purpose is threatened. There are a number of concerns I have with this proposal – including its vagueness and rushed treatment rather than careful thought and meaningful engagement. Small BnBs that leverage and coexist with farming are currently allowed. This ZTA proposal opens wide the door for commercial development.

Questions asked in listening sessions on this ZTA about economic impacts on farms, prohibitions on the size and placement of the proposed structures, and -notably- their impact on finite well and septic capacity, were left not only unanswered, but waved away as trivial matters.

Farmland once lost is lost forever, we rely on our public servants to be forward looking when it comes to protection of finite resources. Balanced agritourism policy that protects the very farms people want to visit is worth the care and attention to get it right. This ZTA has been the wrong approach from the start and needs to be withdrawn. Commercial lodging is not farming.

Please oppose this ZTA.

Thank you