

January 17, 2024

Honorable Montgomery County Executives:

Thank you for your time and attention to the Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) 23-09, Farming - Incidental Outdoor Stays. I am writing to you today as a concerned community member who is not in favor of modifying (ZTA) 23-09 as currently written.

The need to modify the agricultural reserve is contradictive of the original creation of protecting the county land. The motivation behind this amendment is to introduce "luxury" stay options in the reserve. I have multiple concerns and questions as a fellow hospitality professional that works within the county.

- Please define luxury stays. Seeing "Ritz Carlton" like experience thrown around when describing this business idea, genericizes a world-renowned brand that delivers experiences/services it is known for not a business idea.
- Have the residences who will operate these luxury stays have the business and operational experience needed to run a hospitality entity?
- How does sleeping in luxury accommodations bring agricultural education to life?
- How will these buildings create a more luxury experience than the corporate operated hospitality entities currently available?
- Is funding secured with business plans outlined with a timeline plus additional business plans on additional well water and sewage usage within the area for the current residences well-being?
- Has a discussion of alternative business revenues through partnership with corporations/companies already working towards farming education?
- Why not mirror the Frederick Brew Bus that takes guests to different breweries/wineries?
- Why wouldn't a task force be created to link the amazing county run programs with fellow agricultural farmers to create the farming experience that is being advocated for this zoning amendment?

With modifying zoning amendments, the county will certainly experience a butterfly effect that will result in more zoning amendments to accommodate residence's business ideas. Once Pandora's box is opened you will not be able to dictate what is and what is not allowed based on zoning restrictions.

There is always opportunity to learn and grow but altering the state of nature will not be the resolution to additional revenue for agriculture residences. The expenditures and work force required to operate a hotel let alone a luxury experience is not easy to come by nor to develop.

With so many unanswered questions and lack of data to support this amendment I highly encourage the council to table this modification and reevaluate how we can improve upon the current programs and business opportunities already present in the county.

Sincerely,

Katelyn Currier

Wheaton Residence since 1994