

Montgomery County ZTA 20-01 Farm Solar Stakeholder Workgroup Joint Recommendations

Introduction:

In response to the Montgomery County Council's recommendation for additional stakeholder input, a Farm Solar Workgroup was formed. Councilmembers Katz and Reimer appointed to the workgroup two representatives from each of four stakeholder groups: the agricultural industry, preservation and conservation groups, environmental groups, and solar industry organizations involved in the state's Community Solar Pilot Program.

The workgroup was asked to complete the following task:

"Discuss any amendments to ZTA 20-01 and identify whether there are amendments that are agreeable to all participants."

Purpose: Joint Stakeholders Report

The Farm Solar Stakeholder Group unanimously passed 5 amendments and one additional amendment.

Members:

- Agricultural Industry
 - Doug Lechliger, co-Chair
*Owner & President, Laytonsville Landscaping Inc. Turf Farm
Chairman, Montgomery County Agricultural Advisory Committee*
 - Randy Stabler
*Managing Partner, Pleasant Valley Farm
Board member, Montgomery Agricultural Producers*
- Preservation/ Conservation
 - Caroline Taylor
Executive Director, Montgomery Countryside Alliance
 - Lauren Greenberger
President, Sugarloaf Citizens' Association
- Environmentalists
 - Al Bartlett
*Sierra Club, Maryland Chapter
Board Member, Chesapeake Physicians for Social Responsibility
Member, Public Services Commission Net Metering Working Group*
 - Douglas Boucher
*Board Member, Poolesville Green, retired Director of Climate Research and
Analysis, Union of Concerned Scientists*
- Solar Industry
 - Frances Yuhas
*Managing Director for Development, Turning Point Energy
Board Member, Maryland-DC-Virginia Solar Energy Industries Association*

Member, Public Services Commission Net Metering Working Group

- Leslie Elder, co-Chair

Mid-Atlantic Regional Director, Coalition for Community Solar Access

Recommendations:

- UNANIMOUSLY PASSED Add [COMAR 20.62](#) to line 12 in the ZTA
- UNANIMOUSLY PASSED Make a strong recommendation to ensure the PSC language is removed.
- UNANIMOUSLY PASSED Strongly recommend to add language that Montgomery County will not allow facilities larger than 2 MW in the Agricultural Reserve.
- UNANIMOUSLY PASSED Solar Developers will be required to report all acres to be used for the solar facility including any acres to adhere to the provisions required in the ZTA for setbacks, etc in the site development plan required for permitting projects. This shall not include only the acres under the photovoltaic panels but shall also include all acres within the fenced or shrubbed area.
- UNANIMOUSLY PASSED Recommend to the Council that the Office of Agriculture be involved in reviewing and making recommendations on the approval of solar projects in the AR. This holds whether the ZTA is designated as Conditional or Limited use.
- PASSED 5 to 3 (*We understand that the following 3-part recommendation will require Council legislation separate from zoning.*)
 - A. Tax resources/revenue from Community Solar and Aggregate Net Metered solar projects developed under the ZTA should be earmarked to support farming-related services in the county; examples are:
 - Rent relief
 - Land preservation
 - Support for young farmers
 - Promotion of table crops
 - Other agriculture related support
 - Preference will be given to Black and Hispanic farmers in allocating these tax resources.
 - B. The Council will identify best farm-related use of these resources through consultation with the farming community and the Office of Agriculture.

- C. As needed, a portion of tax resources/revenue from Community Solar and Aggregate Net Metered solar projects should be earmarked for the Office of Agriculture, the Montgomery County Farm Bureau, and/or other entities designated by the Montgomery County Council for program implementation.