

Agritourism Study Advisory Committee Meeting (ASAC)

Date: Wednesday January 17, 2018

Time: 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Location: Agricultural History Farm Park (18400 Muncaster Rd, Derwood, MD 20855) in the large multipurpose room

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| I. | Welcome and Introductions | 6:00 PM – 6:30 PM |
| | a. Opening Remarks | |
| | b. Packet Distribution | |
| | c. Housekeeping Issues | |
| II. | Agritourism Challenges Discussion | 6:30 PM – 7:45 PM |
| | a. Current Levels of Service | 6:30 – 7:00 |
| | i. Stakeholder/government interaction | |
| | ii. Are stakeholders getting what they need? | |
| | iii. What would help? | |
| | b. 3.2.6.F Farming | 7:00 – 7:45 |
| | i. What is accessory? | |
| | ii. Is the definition adequate? | |
| III. | Summary & Next Steps | 7:45 PM – 8:00 PM |
| | a. Next Meeting Focus | |
| | b. Meeting Times and Locations | |
| IV. | Adjournment | 8:00 PM |

Agritourism Study

Background

Increased interest in agricultural education, tourism and farm-to-table businesses has prompted discussion about ways to enhance the economic impact of the county's award-winning Agricultural Reserve. While the Functional Master Plan for the Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space enabled preservation of farming in Montgomery County, it did not fully anticipate the growing importance of agricultural economic development to the ongoing preservation effort.

Important emerging issues in agricultural economic development—agritourism, farm-to-table activities, increased interest in small-scale wineries and breweries, and culinary tourism—have been addressed individually as initiatives were proposed. This approach risks inadvertent creation of conflicts and precludes a comprehensive approach to agricultural economic development issues.

The Agritourism Study included in the Planning Department's FY18 work program represents an effort to develop, with Executive Branch agencies, farmers, entrepreneurs and other interested stakeholders, a comprehensive, countywide approach to land use and zoning strategies for agricultural economic and cultural development.

Study Approach

Using extensive outreach, the study will articulate issues raised by farmers, entrepreneurs, planners and regulators. Work will be closely coordinated with the Office of Agriculture to assure that the study will benefit agricultural entrepreneurs, decisionmakers and other interested parties. It will look at applicable sections of the county's zoning ordinance, its subdivision regulations, and the building code to determine if modifications are needed to provide additional clarity and direction. The study can also be used to broaden understanding of the processes associated with seeking permits for activities that support farming. The study will look to the Department of Permitting Services and other Executive Branch agencies to help explain the need for and value in regulating some agriculture-related activities. Additionally, the study will draw and expand on work done some years ago in the county's Heritage Area Management Plan to look at important themes and ways to market the effort.

Tasks 1-8

Task 1 - Stakeholder Coordination and Input

The goal of the study is to cooperatively develop, with Executive Branch agencies and other stakeholders, appropriate strategies for encouraging increased economic development in support of farming and ensuring that applicable regulations and guidelines are both comprehensive and readily grasped by decision makers and prospective entrepreneurs.

Advisory Committee: An Advisory Committee composed of community stakeholders and agritourism experts will be established to review progress of the study and to provide input at key intervals and decision points. Agritourism experts and advocates

from the non-profit and private sectors, in addition to local officials, will provide a balanced discourse on the current issues and status of agritourism in the County. Advisory Committee membership includes representatives from Montgomery County Department of Agriculture, Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services, and key Montgomery County staff; in addition to civic associations and farmers with expertise in agritourism.

Technical Committee: Technical Committee will consist of key Planning and County staff. This committee will meet regularly to help guide the project's direction on more of a day-to-day basis.

Task 2 – Interviews

To get a better sense of the kinds of planning and zoning issues facing property owners and to generate ideas about how they might better address them, there will be a series of interviews/focus group discussions, organized by Planning staff. These interviews will provide Planning staff and the Committees a better sense of the kinds of issues being faced and it will further provide guidance for subsequent research on what other communities have done to address similar questions.

- Stakeholder interviews to understand issues and opportunities
 - Determine what is “actually working” in terms of agritourism
 - Identify what is threatened by current plans, policies, development patterns, and market forces

Task 3 - Comparative Review

Comparative review of agricultural tourism and economic development efforts in other jurisdictions in this region and nationally. Thurston County Washington, for example, has an extensive set of zoning and regulatory mechanisms devoted to economic development activities in its agricultural areas.

Task 4 – Zoning/Building Code Evaluation

Detailed evaluation of the county's Zoning Code, its Subdivision Regulations, and the Building Code. Where necessary and appropriate, make recommendations for modifications.

Task 5 - Montgomery County Heritage Area Management Plan

Evaluation and updating sections of the 2002 Montgomery County Heritage Area Management Plan to determine if adjustments are needed to incorporate agricultural economic development and cultural initiatives; market analysis undertaken for the original heritage plan could be reviewed and updated as part of this effort.

Finalizing the Study: Tasks 6 and 7 will primarily be the responsibility of the Planning Staff and may require multiple meetings with various elected and appointed individuals and bodies.

Task 6 – Narrow Choices

- Begin to narrow potential solutions to address agritourism issues based on input from Advisory Committee, Planning Board, County Executive, and County Council.

Task 7 – Identifying/ Refining Policies

- Identify policies and regulations that need to be modified as necessary based on direction from the Advisory Committee, Planning Board, County Executive, and County Council and complete report.

Task 8 – Composing and Presenting the Final Report

- Prepare and present final report to the Planning Board and Council.

Agritourism Study Timeline

Tasks 1-8

Task 1 - Stakeholder Coordination and Input (ongoing and continuous)

Advisory Committee (ASAC)

Committee Created and first meeting was November 29, 2017. Second meeting is scheduled for January 17, 2018. Meetings will continue until June 2018, for a total of 7 meetings

Technical Committee

Committee Created and waiting on input from ASAC. Will continue work throughout Study.

Task 2 – Interviews (February – April)

Plan on conducting individual meetings with stakeholders who have operated Agritourism enterprises and have firsthand experience of the challenges and benefits of Agritourism. Number of interviews to be determined.

Task 3 - Comparative Review (Spring, 2018)

Study other Agritourism in the region and nationally to understand how they have dealt with zoning and building code challenges, how they have successfully marketed their Agritourism efforts, and what the total economic impact of Agritourism has been for their communities.

Task 4 – Zoning/Building Code Evaluation (Spring, 2018)

Assess the Montgomery County Zoning Code and Building Codes to identify elements that inhibit or prevent Agritourism. Identify sections that may need to be amended or changed. Suggest specific ideas for amendments/changes.

Task 5 - Montgomery County Heritage Area Management Plan (current and ongoing)

Look at 2002 Montgomery County Heritage Area Management Plan to see if it adequately addresses the issue of Agritourism. Update sections of the Plan to identify new themes and facilities that contribute to the Heritage Area. Three specific sections being evaluated: Transportation page 32, Marketing pages 19-21, and Economic Returns pages 57-61.

Share useful information with Heritage Montgomery and work with Heritage Montgomery on updating the interpretative and visual aspects of the 2002 plan. The State of Maryland is currently conducting an economic evaluation of the heritage areas and should be available summer of 2018.

Finalizing the Study:

Task 6 – Identify a menu of recommendations (June)

Task 7 – Refine Policies (July)

Task 8 – Prepare and Present the Final Report to Planning Board (August - September)

Agritourism Study Advisory Committee (ASAC)

Ground Rules:

1. Respect for all committee members is essential.
2. One person speaks at a time.
3. Speakers must be recognized by the facilitator.
 - a. Only ASAC members and invited guest speakers should be recognized.
4. Comments should be related to the topic of discussion recognizing pros and cons of topics.
5. Agenda times will be adhered to as close as possible.
6. Use the notes from the meeting as the communication tool.
7. Use the distribution list as a means of communication.

Section 3.2.6. Farming

Defined

Farming means the practice of agriculture on a property, and any associated buildings. Agriculture means the business, science, and art of cultivating and managing the soil; composting, growing, harvesting, and selling crops, and the products of forestry, horticulture, and hydroponics; breeding, raising, managing, or selling livestock, including horses, poultry, fish, game, and fur-bearing animals; dairying, beekeeping, and similar activities; and equestrian events and activities. Agriculture includes processing on the farm of an agricultural product to prepare the product for market and may cause a change in the natural form or state of the product. Farming includes the following accessory uses:

- A. Accessory agricultural processing and storage of products grown or raised on-site or on property owned, rented, or controlled by the farmer. Accessory agricultural processing includes a milk plant, grain elevator, on-farm animal slaughtering, and mulch or compost production and manufacturing.
- B. The sale of products of agriculture and agricultural processing, if products are produced on-site or on property owned, rented, or controlled by the farmer.
- C. The sale of horticultural products grown off-site, but kept on the farm temporarily on a maximum of 2 acres or 20% of the site, whichever is less.
- D. The delivery and installation of horticultural products grown on the farm.
- E. The production and manufacturing of mulch or compost where up to 20% of the materials used in accessory processing can come from off-site sources.
- F. Accessory agricultural education and tourism activities conducted as a part of a farm's regular operations, with emphasis on hands-on experiences and events that foster increased knowledge of agriculture, including cultivation methods, animal care, water conservation, Maryland's farming history, the importance of eating healthy, and locally grown foods. Allowed activities include corn mazes, hay rides, and educational tours, classes, and workshops. The maximum footprint for any structure and the total footprint of all structures primarily used for education or tourism is limited to 10% of the total footprint square footage of all structures on the site used for agriculture. The property must have DPS approved sanitation facilities for this accessory use.