

*Almanac  
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## Protecting Open Space Near Strathmore

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COUNCILMEMBER (R-1)



**Denis**

ceptable. Passage of this resolution restates the importance of Master Plans in protecting community resources.

The Resolution effectively mandates a review by the Planning Board to protect the land in the Legacy Open Space program. Legacy Open Space was established in

2001 by the County Council with my support and the urging of the Planning Board. It has received strong community backing in Potomac and elsewhere. The Serpentine Barrens in Potomac has been included in Legacy Open Space along with 28,000 acres throughout the County.

The green space on the ASHA property embodies all of the reasons the Council created the Legacy open Space Master Plan to begin with.

❖ It is important to our cultural heritage because it enhances the setting of the historic Corby Mansion and Strathmore Hall.

❖ It is important to the arts because it is a popular venue for outdoor concerts, festivals and films.

❖ It is important because it provides and important break in the increasingly urban character of Rockville Pike.

❖ It is important to the environment because less imperviousness is better for nearby Rock Creek.

Legacy Open Space is an ongoing program that protects exceptional open space important to the county's heritage and future. Legacy Open Space protects green space through a variety of means, including easements, dedications and acquisitions by the county.

This Resolution uses the Legacy Open Space "Class I" category. This designation permits the land to be placed in reservation for up to three years while the county decides how best to preserve it. This protection is similar to that afforded to the 250-acre Serpentine Barrens property on Piney Meetinghouse Road in Potomac, which I worked with the Potomac and adjacent communities to help set aside from development.

The adopted resolution will now bring to bear all of the tools the county has to set aside this property from development. It begins a process that I fondly hope will grant the endangered 10 acres the protection it deserves, and which is so long overdue.

I am very pleased with the unanimous vote by the Council adopting legislation I sponsored with Councilmember Nancy Floreen to preserve as open space 10 acres of the American Speech Language Hearing Association (ASHA) in North Bethesda that were threatened with inappropriate development.

When I learned of the purchase of the ASHA property by Centex Homes, it was clear to me that this development needed to be stopped in its tracks and slowed down to preserve maximum green space.

For over 30 years, our Master Plans have envisioned the preservation of this land. The 1978 Grosvenor Sector Plan and the 1992 North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan both call for the protection of this green space from development.

The community, which includes Strathmore, was outrageously not consulted about the proposed land deal. The would-be fait accompli was a betrayal of the community and unac-

COMMENTARY