

July 16, 2024

Public Hearing: ZTA-24-02 Agricultural and Rural Zones – Campground

Dear Council member,

Please consider the cumulative negative impacts of permitting non-agricultural land uses in the Agricultural Reserve. Campgrounds are but one of many non-agricultural land uses proposed in the Reserve. Other examples include data centers, industrial sized solar arrays, and increased housing density around MARC stations at Barnesville, Boyds and Dickerson. What else is next – a new bridge across the Potomac and a new highway through the countryside?

Campgrounds may seem like a minimal impact, but every time land is converted away from agriculture the integrity of the Reserve is diminished. Please preserve the scenic and peaceful qualities of our rural zone and place a high importance on protecting the hydrology of the ground water aquifer.

If you do allow camping, keep it simple. Here are some suggestions for low-impact camping:

- 1) Accommodate tent sites but exclude RV's as they detract from the rural scenery, are noisy and demand lots of water.
- 2) Please limit each stay at two nights.
- 3) Prohibit structures on wheels as they are essentially semi-permanent mobile homes. Yurts and open sided structures such as lean-tos are acceptable if the footprint is kept small.
- 4) Do not permit shower facilities or septic systems. This will help to protect the ground water. Instead require portable toilets as an alternative so that human waste is taken off-site to a wastewater treatment facility.
- 5) Require potable water to be provided in ways to conserve its use.

You must not allow the agricultural reserve to be exploited for economic gain to accommodate non-agricultural land uses. It is up to you to make sure farming and farmland remains intact and the rural setting is protected.

Respectfully submitted,

John Parrish