

July 25, 2025

Holly Larisch



Sent via email to ozah@montgomerycountymd.gov.

And via mail to:

Kathleen Byrne, Director

Montgomery County Office of Zoning and Administrative Hearings

Stella B. Werner Council Office Building

100 Maryland Avenue, Room 200

Rockville, MD 20850

Subject:

Request for a Conditional Use for a Solar Collection System, located at 17700 Barnesville Road
Conditional Use CU202507

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I am a resident of the town of Barnesville and the owner of 21715 Beallsville Road, an adjacent property to the subject property located at 17700 Barnesville Road.

I object to changing the permitted land use for a tract of 11.25 acres on the subject property from Agricultural to a Conditional Use for a Solar Collection System for the following reasons.

1. I object to the Planning Board's statements, in its analysis of whether the application meets the conditions of Section 59-3-7.2.B.2, that a solar collection system is compatible with the existing neighborhood and will not disturb the peaceful enjoyment by neighbors and community members.

The site is located on a Rustic Road in the Agricultural Reserve. A December 2023 Rustic Roads report shows that Barnesville Road meets the requirements for a Rustic Road in that it has natural agricultural or historic features that are predominant and compatible land uses and zoning and outstanding vistas of farm fields and rural landscape or buildings. In its introduction, the report states that rustic roads "are historic and scenic roadways that reflect the agricultural character and rural origins of the county" and "the land uses along rustic roads are not expected to significantly change". Siting an industrial landscape of solar panels and chain link fences significantly alters the natural and historic agricultural landscape of Barnesville Road.

The proposed site is located at the gateway of Barnesville, an historic municipality that recently celebrated its 275th anniversary. Residents of Barnesville live here because of the rural nature of their community and surrounding areas. The Rustic Road designation helps to protect that rural nature. Currently, when you approach

Exhibit 21(b)
OZAH Case No: CU 25-07

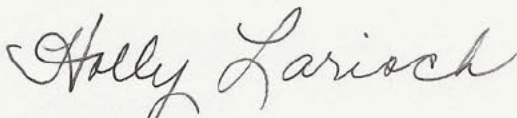
the town on Barnesville Road, you see farm fields and rural landscapes in keeping with its Rustic Roads designation. Industrial panels, which will be the first thing people see as they approach this historic town, will permanently change the landscape of the town and possibly the future of the Rustic Road designation of one of its main roads.

The applicant states that they will provide landscaping that will shield the view from the street. There currently is no vegetation along the Barnesville Road so all plantings will be new and will unlikely immediately block the 7-foot industrial panels and chain link fences. Requiring planting within a specific time that blocks the damage to the viewshed by constructing industrial panels should be a condition of approval along with penalties if they do not comply. Failure to do so will dramatically and permanently change the landscape of our rural community.

2. As an adjacent property owner, I am concerned about the possible runoff from the panels onto my property and into my pond, stocked with fish and turtles and enjoyed by waterfowl and other nesting birds and animals. Changing part of the adjoining property from an agricultural and natural area to an industrial area may have adverse effects on the migratory or nesting patterns of animals that are ecologically important. I am concerned that there is not enough research to emphatically state that creating an industrial zone within a protected agricultural reserve would not affect my property. Given that Montgomery County has created this very special Agricultural Reserve, it would seem more environmental studies would be required.
3. I did not see any references to any maintenance requirements. Company failure or lack of maintenance will negatively affect the community and potentially leave the community with an eyesore.

I strongly hope that the Office of Zoning and Administrative Hearings will reject application Conditional Use CU202507, but at the very least require more conditions as part of any approval.

Thank you.



Holly Larisch

