

(Attachment B.)

**Criss, Jeremy**

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**From:** Criss, Jeremy  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 01, 2011 3:35 PM  
**To:** Ervin, Valerie; Elrich, Marc; Rice, Craig; Floreen's Office, Councilmember; Leventhal, George; Berliner, Roger; Andrews, Phil; Navarro, Nancy; Riemer, Hans  
**Cc:** Zyontz, Jeffrey; 'David Weitzer'; Zawitoski, John  
**Subject:** Letter from the Agricultural Advisory Committee on ZTA 10-15 Airstrips in agricultural zones

Dear Honorable County Council Members,  
Attached you will find the letter from the Agricultural Advisory Committee regarding the ZTA 10-15 Airstrips in agricultural zones.  
Please let me know if you have any questions.  
Thanks Jeremy

Jeremy V. Criss  
Agricultural Services Manager  
Department of Economic Development  
Agricultural Services Division  
18410 Muncaster Road  
Derwood, Maryland 20855  
301-590-2830  
301-590-2839 (Fax)

[jcriss@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:jcriss@montgomerycountymd.gov)  
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/agsservices>



**AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

January 31, 2011

The Honorable Valerie Ervin  
President of Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Council President Ervin:

Re: ZTA 10-15 Agricultural Zones- Airstrips

On behalf of the Montgomery County Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC), thank you for this opportunity to express our views surrounding the proposed Zoning Text Amendment 10-15 Airstrips in Agricultural Zones.

The AAC met on January 18, 2011 and discussed this ZTA 10-15 and the amendments that were offered by the community. The AAC believes the ZTA is problematic as currently written and we believe the premise behind the ZTA is a mistake. The AAC does not support or agree with the sponsors of this ZTA 10-15 that the Planning Board and the County Council originally intended airstrips must be associated with farming operations.

The Montgomery County Planning Board adopted the Functional Master Plan for the Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space in October 1980. This master plan has a dual mission of preserving farmland for agricultural uses and protecting rural open space for cultural and recreational opportunities. The AAC believes that flying an airplane in the Rural Density Transfer zone provides a recreational opportunity that is in keeping with the spirit and intent of the 1980 master plan. Starting on page 82 of this master plan the Planning Board provided Appendix A which lists land uses recommended for the agricultural zones. These land uses are organized and listed under several headings or categories as follows: Agricultural, Manufacturing and Industrial, Residential, Transportation, Communication, and Utilities, Commercial, Services, Cultural, Entertainment and Recreational, Resource Production and Extraction, and lastly Miscellaneous.

The AAC believes that if the Planning Board and the County Council intended Airstrips must be associated with farming operations, they would have listed Airstrips as a Special Exception use under Agricultural, Commercial, or Services land use category.

The Honorable Valerie Ervin  
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The Airstrip Special Exception is listed on page 83 under the Transportation, Communication, and Utilities land use category. The AAC believes the intent of listing airstrips under the transportation land use category recognizes that Airstrips associated with farm takes into consideration that farms consist of open space areas often clear of trees and other things not good for airstrips. To further expand on this open space point, the County Council would know that Airstrips are permitted by right in the common open space area within the Residential RE 2C zone. The AAC recommends the County Council should ask why the aircraft using the airstrip must aid farming operations in the agricultural zone by special exception when airstrips are permitted by right in the common open space of the RE 2C zone?

The proposed footnote requiring any approved special exception for an airstrip associated with farm but not associated with farming operations must cease operation 6 months after the effective date of this ZTA 10-15 is grossly unfair to anyone that has followed and completed the special exception requirements. The special exception process represents the most appropriate way to review airstrips and this special exception process is very difficult, very expensive, and very uncertain.

The AAC understands that amendments to the ZTA 10-15 have been offered by the community in light of the pending Special Exception Case 2778. The AAC believes the special exception process governed by the Montgomery County Board of Appeals represents the best due process for anyone applying for the special exception including airstrips. The AAC recognizes that some of the amendments offered by the community could be considered as conditions of approval for special exceptions for airstrips and we look forward to discussing these conditions in committee work session.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide the views of the Montgomery County Agricultural Advisory Committee on the amendments to ZTA 10-15 Agricultural Zones.

Sincerely,

*David Weitzer, JVC*

David Weitzer, Chairman, Montgomery County Agricultural Advisory Committee