

June 20, 2019

To: Montgomery County Planning Board

From: League of Women Voters of Montgomery County (Diane Hibino and Kathy McGuire, co-presidents; Margaret Chasson, agriculture committee chair)

In re: Opposing the proposed change in density on the agenda today

Basic position: The League of Women Voters of Montgomery County has long supported the preservation of agricultural land through various easement measures -- including the TDR (transfer of development rights).

Background on exemptions: The ZTA 17-06 exempts certain dwellings, namely the Farm Labor Housing Units, in the Agricultural Zone from the calculation of density under certain circumstances.

Farm Labor Housing Unit means a dwelling unit accessory to the farm and under the control of the owner or operator of the farm on which the dwelling unit is located and occupied by an agricultural worker actively engaged in farming on a full-time or part-time basis on that owner's property.

At the time that the 840-acre farm again under discussion was approved for development, there were a number of farm tenant dwellings on the property rented out to non-farm workers: this led to the inclusion of condition 13 in the approval of the preliminary plan #120090110:

Record Plat must reference a recorded easement for the parent parcels indicating (i) that density and TDRs for these lots was removed from the parent parcels; and (ii) per §59-C-9.41 of the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance, following this subdivision, any farm tenant dwelling, farm tenant mobile home, or guest house is included in the total permitted density of 33 residential structures on the Property.

To remove the condition now would not be consistent with either the 1980 Master Plan for the Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space or with ZTA 17-06.

- The Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve benefits county residents in a variety of ways -- including prevention of urban sprawl, preservation of regional food supplies, protection of the environment, energy conservation, maintenance of open space, and preservation of rural lifestyles.
- The League supports compliance with the plan and avoiding expanded subdivision development within the Reserve.