

Dear County Commissioners:

On Nov. 27, the Public Comments page for this ZMA contained the wrong phone number 301-645-0555. I called the number listed to determine the deadline date and time for this ZMA and a woman in the county attorney's office said she could not help me and said obviously the wrong phone number was listed. From previous hearings I knew Carol DeSoto's name so I asked for her phone number because I knew she would straighten out the issue. She told me she was contacting the planner for this ZMA and a new phone number was added when I checked however there still was no contact name, no date or time to determine the deadline to submit a public comment. Quality Control is needed to ensure the public has accurate information. Also, the public notice signs recently placed on Dash-In property are unreadable from either Mattawoman Beantown Rd or Leonardtown Rd even when you are stopped. I was looking for the signs and all I could see was a few white signs and with the wind blowing yesterday they were curled up. Planning & Growth should have placed the signs facing the direction of their parking area, entrance doors or where customers leave their store. The signs face out to Leonardtown Rd and Mattawoman Beantown Rd. To read the signs you have to get out of your car, walk up next to the roadway with vehicles traveling at over 55 mph to read. The County must do better job alerting the public of what is being planned near their neighborhoods. This lacks transparency.

I OPPOSE this amendment for the following reasons:

1. The original ordinance of a special exception or a "Mistake" in zoning occurred in 1996 when the County Commissioners allowed split-zoning and approved the Dash In to be built on land zoned Rural Conservation.
2. The rationale that the Applicant should be allowed to rezone based on "a substantial change in character of the neighborhood" is a far stretch since the new Lennar residential neighborhoods are 5 miles away on Rosewick Rd. This is the Applicants only option to rezone.
3. The state invested 1.2 Million in the Zekiah Watershed Rural Legacy Area where Dash In property is located. Zekiah Watershed has the largest natural hardwood swamp in the State and is considered by the Smithsonian Institute to be one of the most important ecological areas on the East Coast. This is a very important standpoint also for preserving the Chesapeake Bay. This area was protected under RC zoning for a reason and should not be developed.
4. There is no justification other than financial gain/greed by Applicant to amend 1.748 acres to rezone.
5. A car wash already exists a mere .03 mile away at Spirit of America Car Wash on Smallwood Parkway. Why is another car wash needed?
6. The Staff report does not indicate a Traffic Impact Analysis was conducted on Leonardtown Rd and Mattawoman Beantown Rd. Neither road is mentioned yet both abut to Dash In. An analysis is necessary since both roads are heavily travelled with frequent delays due to traffic volume in the morning commute. Vehicles must use the shoulder due to the backup.
7. In August 2023, The New York Times wrote a 25-page article titled "America Is Using Up Its Groundwater Like There's No Tomorrow." Charles County is the only county in the U.S. listed due to three-quarters of monitoring wells have seen their water levels drop over the past 40 years, some by more than 100 feet. Charles County has used most of its groundwater for HOMES and agriculture. Another reason that a car wash is not supported. The water issue is of great concern since most residents are on wells.
8. The Charles County Infrastructure Management Staff (pg 7) of the Planning & Growth staff report conclude the proposed zoning map amendment could feasibly have an impact on public water/sewer. This parcel goes directly to the MD Route 5 pump station which is OVER ALLOCATED (according to County Utilities).

9. The County's Comprehensive Plan state that the Rural Conservation District is Tier IV which only permits minor subdivisions served by individual sewage disposal systems. The property that is the subject of this rezoning map amendment which is in Tier IV (conservation area).
10. County staff point out that by approving this ZMA, an INCONSISTENCY will be created in the County's Land Use and Septic Tier Maps.
11. The rezoning is NOT consistent with the Charles County Comprehensive Plan therefore should be denied. This is a major red flag!

As noted, there are numerous reasons for denying this ZMA. This ZMA is solely for the financial gain of the Applicant. There is a plethora of gas stations, convenience food options and car washes all over Waldorf. I **strongly oppose ZMA #23-01**. If you can not make a decision to deny this ZMA then keep the record open 60 days to allow more public participation since this notice lacks transparency.

AC Stark