

From: [Charles County Government](#)
To: [Public Record](#)
Subject: *NEW SUBMISSION* Aviation Business Park ZTA #23-176 and ZMA #23-02
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Aviation Business Park ZTA #23-176 and ZMA #23-02

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Public Hearing Comment Form

Questions or More Information 240-776-6709

Name

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Are you:

Against Topic

Comment

I'm submitting some final thoughts about this issue, which is of the greatest importance to me. It's important to me on many levels, but mostly because if this bill is passed and my property is rezoned to IG, I will probably be taxed out of my home. I've read all the submissions to date, and there are 2 basic principles dividing the 2 sides of this issue. The majority of those in support of this Bill live outside of the affected area and have made their choice based on profit, either for themselves, or for the county coffers. The majority of those against the Bill live within or in close proximity to the affected area and have chosen quality of life over profit. While I'm sure that could make a tidy profit from having my property rezoned commercial, I'm totally against this proposal, because not everything should be about money. This is my home, and I want to keep it. I enjoy the quality of life in an area that is still fairly wild in

many areas. I enjoy seeing bald eagles frequently flying overhead. They're making a strong comeback around here, largely due to efforts toward maintaining healthy green space around waterways for them to nest and feed in. Bald eagles are a great barometer of the condition of the surrounding environment. As conditions decline, so do their numbers. Do we really need to reverse this improving trend? The land within the proposed ZTA and ZMA includes some of the most environmentally fragile land in the county, containing tributaries and wetlands that feed and filter the ever-increasing amounts of storm water flowing into the Mattawoman Creek. In fact, all of the water in the Lily Pond along the Indian Head Rail Trail comes from within this area. As residents of this area, we owe it to our future generations to become good stewards of this delicate ecosystem so close to home and preserve it for them to enjoy. Once it's gone, it's gone forever. For the rest of my observations and comments, please see the attached file. Thanks,

Upload File(s)

[Airport Business Park ZTA and ZMA.pdf](#)

Thank you,
Charles County, MD

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May 18, 2024

Re: Aviation Business Park ZTA and ZMA

My home has been on Ray Drive since 1989, before it was called Ray Drive. Prior to the 911 addressing implementation, it was just a ½ mile long gravel lane, which I maintained for 19 years as my house is at the end. Everything along the lane was zoned residential back then and it was a quiet, peaceful country setting. It was like Paradise for many years, a great place to raise my family. Planes were seldom seen during the week back then, and those always flew respectfully. Jack Crawford, the airport owner, lived on the airport and was very concerned about the feelings and rights of his neighbors. He would stand on the runway and wave off any planes who tried to perform touch and go practice landings. Any pilots who misbehaved were promptly reprimanded. How times have changed. Rude behavior by pilots now occurs frequently, phone calls to the airport are unanswered, and messages are ignored.

In the late 1990's, the Charles County Commissioners quietly rezoned our homes and lands around the airport to Industrial General, without due process. IG zoning was in effect for nearly 2 years before residents were given notice that this had taken place. This notice was in the form of an application for a tax waiver, using a primary residence grandfather clause. This would allow us to remain in residential tax status so long as this was our primary residence. Thankfully, that IG zoning was removed in 2017, and the area was designated WCD.

Since the zoning issue appeared to finally be resolved, after my retirement 2 years ago I began purchasing additional property surrounding my home to build a homestead for future generations of my family. (My 7-year-old grandson has already moved all his earth moving Tonka toys over and begun doing site work!) If this land is rezoned our taxes will increase greatly, and we are likely to be unable to afford to stay, as I haven't owned it long enough to be covered under any grandfather clause. We are in a position to be taxed right off our land.

The Commissioners (past and present) repeatedly make comparisons between Maryland Airport and St Mary's Airport, when in fact, there is no comparison between the two. St Mary's Airport is the result of nearly 10 years of research and planning by the St Mary's Co. Commissioners. Three sites were selected for close review before the final site was chosen. It encompasses over 220 acres of flat land with great road access. It has a very professional appearance, and is a credit to the St Mary's Commissioners, who own and operate it.

The Md Airport began in 1945, when Charles Bauserman returned home from his duties as a Civil Air Patrol Pilot during WW2. He built a small runway on the land he had available, which wasn't well suited for farming or developing due to the topography. Charles passed away the following year, and Jack Crawford ended up filling his shoes. Over the years, with the help of a large infusion from the FAA, Jack and Charles's son Gilbert built the airport up to its present state.

MD Airport is the result of one man's dream, utilizing what land he had available to him. He made the best he could of a bad situation, but as everyone knows, when you make the best of a bad situation, you still have a bad situation. The airport is not well positioned strategically and is located on deeply ravined land that is unsuitable for development. At the same time the FAA was spending \$1.8 million to extend St Mary's Airport to 4,150 feet, they spent \$20 million to extend Md Airport to 3,740 feet, due to the challenges of the terrain.

The Commissioners (past and present) references to the existing businesses on Ray Drive are misleading. They include phrases like "A number of long-standing businesses" and "Many of the businesses". The actual number of existing businesses is 3, none of which fall into the desired category of "Businesses Supporting the Airport". They refer to "restoring" the Industrial Zoning like it's a right, when it was put in place in secrecy, without public hearings or due process. They state that these 3 existing businesses are "constrained", because "the County Code limits the ability of non-conforming businesses to expand or grow." Obviously, the County makes up the rules, and the County can change them. The County Code can easily be modified to support these 3 existing businesses, without removing the protection of WCD from a fragile environment and driving residents off their land.

I call attention to the fact that the requested zoning change, which is being portrayed as being so critically important now and for the future, was in effect for nearly 20 YEARS, and not ONE SINGLE Business Supporting the Airport ever showed up!

There appears to be more to this rezoning story than meets the eye or is being spoken of in public. My neighbors and I are of the opinion that there is an unseen force at work behind the scenes, putting pieces in place to make a power-move. Prior to the Public Hearing on 4/09/24, vacant land within the affected zone went up for sale at ridiculously high prices. During the Hearing, it was obvious that some of the commissioners had already decided to move forward with this rezoning regardless of any public input. Speculators were in attendance urging people to jump on board with this "fantastic opportunity" and handing out business cards in the parking lot. As one of the homeowners of long standing in the affected area, I feel like we've been stabbed in the back by some the very people who are paid to protect our interests. Our blood is in the water, and land sharks are being drawn to the feeding frenzy they've created, to snap up our land as we go under!

I do not support this proposal.

Glenn McAfee