

The purpose of the Zoning Text Amendment; (ZTA) was to address and correct problems in previous amendments that disallowed agribusiness and agritourism in some areas of Charles County. To that end a task force was created. Research was done and recommendations were made. As a lifelong resident of Charles County and a fulltime farmer I felt it was important that I take a role on the task force. At no time in the work that we did was there a discussion on setbacks for activities. We did not make a recommendation for any setback. And yet in the current ZTA set before you; the County Commissioners, there is a 150-foot setback added in. This dramatic addendum will have unintended consequences. It will disallow innovation and diversification of farms in the future and have deleterious consequences for farms currently providing ag education.

As a multi-generational family farm, we have had to diversify our business model. We have wholesale, retail, pick your own, and agritourism channels. One of our greatest joys is the ag education that we provide to the community at large, and specifically teaching the children where their food comes from. Each year we partner with The Judy Center, Title I Elementary Schools, Churches preschool programs and Life skills class of all ages and abilities. Their trip includes an educational component tailored to the specific group, fun learning activities and a hayride around the farm.

Our farm, purchased in 1911, is long and narrow and bisected by a County road. It is bordered by Pinefield Subdivision on 2 sides. The proposed 150-foot setback addendum will restrict the use of 65 acres of our farm. This limited use zoning proposal will prove devastating to our business model. As written the proposal will require us to cease all field trips and educational tours. There will be no more Hayrides to the pumpkin patch and the children will be deprived of an opportunity to see a real working farm.

Farming on the urban fringe is not always easy. I would argue that more important than being a good steward of the land, is being a good neighbor. We've shared a boundary with Pinefield for more than 50 years. We've seen homes change ownership 5 times or more. The one constant has been us. We've been here 111 years and want to be here that many more. We have demonstrated our good neighbor policy countless times. From not working a field when the neighbor told us they were having a backyard wedding, moving

beehives when they took a fancy to a new inground pool, letting neighbors cut a tree down and drop it in our field so it wouldn't fall on their house, and many more instances.

In the 1970's and early 80's when tobacco and hogs were raised on this farm, I didn't know I would be raising vegetables in the 90's. When I was growing those vegetables in the 90's I didn't foresee the opportunity of pick your own strawberries that began in 1999. In the early 2000's I didn't anticipate the potential that we had for ag youth education and outreach. As we began 2020, I didn't anticipate online stores for produce and drive up contactless curbside service for our high-risk faithful customers. Agriculture changes with societal needs. There is no way to predict what those needs will be ten years or 20 years from now. The one thing that I am sure of is that this proposed amendment will put me out of business. I am the current owner of the farm but one day I hope to pass it to my three sons who work with me every day and hopefully then on to one or more of my many grandchildren.

The proposed amendment does not consider the future of Ag in our County much less the current usage of my farm.

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