

REC'D
FEB - 2 2021
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

To Whom it May Concern:

This correspondence is in reference to ZTA#20-156, SB432 and/or any other agritourism interrelated amendments or changes directly affecting Charles County MD residents. My name is Paul Ringley, I have resided in many areas of Charles County for over 50 years, including Waldorf, LaPlata, St Charles, Bryans Road, Newburg and currently live in the rural community of Bryantown @ 5643 Huckleberry Dr. and have been witness to the vast expansion and accompanying growth of our county population, including, new single & multi- family homes & communities, schools, roadways & commercial business; not withstanding an excessive increase in vehicle traffic due to this population explosion(one of the determining factors for buying our home in rural eastern Charles County). I am personally concerned of the effects this dramatic expansion with minimal oversight has had on our local environment & waterways, inasmuch, the level & quality of our water table, due to the increased demand of new housing, furthermore, the CO₂ emissions associated with this increase of vehicle traffic.

These proposed amendments affect public safety & health, construction & occupancy regulations/codes/restrictions, exempting Charles County 'farms' from compliance. Thus permitting the conversion of existing structure to be utilized for 'agritourism' purposes. Definitions of 'working farm' should be specific & enforceable; minimum acreage requirements should mandated/enforced; occupancy population, vehicle traffic, noise restrictions, event scheduling/location should accommodate special consideration for adjoining/neighborhood properties.

I am not opposed to agritourism, my concern is for the due diligence by our elected officials/representatives during the design, permitting & construction, notwithstanding, occupancy & use permits. I speak with authority concerning this matter with direct personal experience of the negative effects due to disregard and lack of follow-up/diligence by our county commissioners and PGC staff. This experience is demonstrated by a situation in which our county officials have completely disregarded pre-existing codes & regulations by permitting & allowing construction/use of South Breeze Equestrian Center (7022 Leonardtown Rd Bryantown, MD), furthermore, have repeatedly delayed resolution to our nuisance complaint for almost two (2) years!

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Allow me to digress, a small pole barn on the aforementioned property, was damaged in a weather event in 2013, the property owners took this opportunity to make a mockery of the county's construction permitting system & processes, utilizing every 'grey' area or loophole to untruthfully & dishonestly obtain Charles County & Maryland state permits or acceptance to construct, occupy and maintain an illegal structure, in which, they operated a for-profit business providing public boarding for horses, training & riding lesson, public spectator events and a youth summer camp. The construction permit applied for/granted was to replace the damaged barn with a structure of similar size, location & use. These applications were complete falsities, the existing structure is +20,000 ft², houses an indoor riding arena, boarding stalls, wash down stalls, public restrooms & showers and an observation room-all this contained within the new structure. Nonetheless, our county officials have looked past the violations of set-back regulations, furthermore, permits for electric, plumbing, storm water management, health/safety and use/occupancy were either never applied for or obtained under false pretenses-where is the due diligence of our inspectors & county officials. Due to the construction & unmannerly use of the equestrian center structure, our personal privacy & lifestyle have been negatively impacted:

- (1) offensive odors emanating from the extraordinary accumulation of manure; lack of proper management/disposal per state guidelines
- (2) public events created a lack of privacy in our backyard/swimming pool(reasonable privacy & enjoyment was significantly reduced)
- (3) public events created unmanaged trash & debris which spilled over to our property(removal/clean up negated or ignored by SBEC-became adjacent property/homeowner responsibility)
- (4) NO storm water management plan was submitted or requested, therefore, anytime we have a substantial rain, our rear lawns are flooded with up to 6" of water runoff & manure sludge.

This structure and events created such a nuisance, myself and several neighbors jointly filed a nuisance complaint with Charles County PGM/Zoning Board. The building was documented as being a nuisance due to violation of the setback regulations, along with a plethora of other use/occupancy inconsistencies & violations. SBEC filed for a variance, which was denied & ultimately withdrawn by SBEC. Although the barn was deemed to be a nuisance & in violation of county regulations, the structure/business was allowed to continue to exist & operate while our complaints & inquiries to county officials went unrecognized or neglected. The occasional response by our representatives claimed they were working directly & confidentially with the farm.

Why are we, the affected constituents or victims, not included/informed/advised of ANY/ALL progress in this matter? Our elected officials are being untruthful & dishonest concerning the negotiations with SBEC business owner, focusing on accommodating the illegal business. Why should *non-commercial* residents be treated with less regard or respect, particularly in respect to PUBLIC topics/matters, when the county has a responsibility to enforce these codes & regulations- this is clearly evident by the repeated but unanswered inquiries made by the plaintiffs over the past twenty(20) months concerning the county's intentions to progress to a resolution/elimination of this documented nuisance, inasmuch, any relief from financial burdens(home appraisal/well water testing/legal fees) incurred by the plaintiffs during this ongoing process. Our county officials have done little more than request SBEC to create temporary earthen berm to alleviate flooding of our properties, inasmuch, negotiated a short-lived & limited *shut down* of public operations/functions @ SBEC. As a county resident, waiting over two years for our county officials to provide relief from this nuisance is excessive and unacceptable. We have received no reprieve, no justice & no satisfaction, yet the illegal business/structure continue to exist, operate, profit and create nuisance. Again, where is the due diligence by our elected representatives? Over the past two years we repeatedly made inquiries with different county commissioners for a status update & have continuously received the same robotic response "*our officials are working with SBEC to resolve*" or "*we are not in a position to discuss this*", yet, we the sufferers, are still affected on a daily basis by the dust, dirt & debris from the farm, the unbearable stench of manure & the invasion of "manure" flies due to the improper collection/storage/disposal of the droppings.

Oddly enough, during the most recent public hearing (3 Nov), I mentioned the SBEC had installed a 20-30yd construction dumpster in JULY 2020, during the vacating process, which was filled with trash/debris & had become a home for a multitude of feral & wild animals, still remained on the property @ the time of the hearing. Miraculously, Saturday 7 Nov (over 3 months of fermenting refuse) the dumpster was removed! Why are we required to superintend this vacating process for the county? Without our comments or complaints the county officials are again, neglecting their duties & attentiveness towards resolution of this matter. Just another example in which our county officials have demonstrated absolutely NO concern for conscientiousness towards victims nor the offenders' compliance or liability created by this situation.

The actuality of due diligence demonstrated by our county officials is non-existent concerning this case, they have purposely neglected these zoning & permitting violations in favor of the offending party, nonetheless, have shown no apprehension for allowing this business to continue to operate and persistently create a nuisance to adjoining properties. I have NO reasonable expectations for the current administration (or future reps due to the precedents set by current commissioners) to improve their follow-up procedures unless specific definitions and rules are enacted and ENFORCED by state legislature & representatives.

Again, we filed & won our nuisance complaint in Feb 2018, it took over 600 days (20+ months) of numerous repeated inquiries, hours upon hours of legal counseling, county public hearings, in-person & virtual meetings with county administrators & representatives until the 'business' portion of the equestrian center was relocated (July 2020), unfortunately for ourselves & neighbors, the focal point of our nuisance complaint, the indoor riding arena, has yet to be dismantled or relocated, has been left abandoned and continues to flood adjoining properties.

Therefore, without specific definitions of "working farms" or minimum acreage, these proposed amendments would only benefit the business owners, furthermore, could be disastrous for adjoining property owners. I am not anti-agritourism, I am against the current proposed amendments, the manner & thoroughness of inspection/verification & post-construction use/occupancy compliance validated by county officials.

I respectfully request this matter be kept open for further review

Thank You,



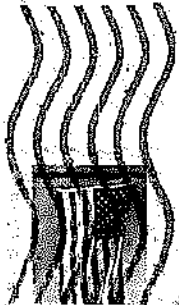
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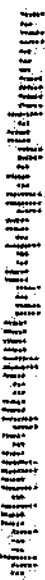
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