

Sondra Blackiston

Office

Date

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From: Bob Ford <fordb21661@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 13, 2020 4:27 PM
To: Kent County Commissioners
Subject: Public comment on proposed change to Growth Allocation Policy

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Kent County Commissioners
Chestertown, MD.

August 13, 2020

To the Commissioners:

In the matter of altering the county zoning code and Growth Allocation Policy to make allowances for campgrounds, and, specifically, for an anticipated expansion application from Bay Shore Campground near Rock Hall, I would like to take exception.

As has been pointed out previously by other residents of Eastern Neck Road, the additional traffic and environmental impact of such an expansion is problematic for the area, particularly as it involves a business with a previous history of compliance issues.

It is understood that one of the most difficult balancing acts the commissioners must perform is weighing preservation and quality of life in the county with the desire to encourage businesses and generate economic gains. In this case, there is no greater economic good for the county, merely a benefit for one business. That is offset by the potential for a significant negative change to the very nature of a narrow strip of land that leads to a National Wildlife Refuge.

My grandmother was born and raised on Eastern Neck Island. My family has been on the property where I live since 1920. That doesn't give me more or less standing than anyone else interested in this matter, but it does give me a lifetime of understanding the neck. It's not the right place to allow the doubling in size of an already unwieldy, ill-placed campground.

This is without question a "backyard" issue, but no one should have to apologize for wanting to preserve and protect his or her backyard. I would suggest the commissioners would feel much the same way if this situation were taking place at the end of their lanes. I would also suggest that part of the mandate of the jobs granted them by voters is to look out for the backyards of every citizen.

The commissioners who approved the original exception to allow for Ellendale Campground in 1972 could not have envisioned the scope of today's contemplated expansion. The current commissioners should keep in mind there might be similar unintended consequences years from now because they are making it significantly easier to change a Resource Conservation Area into an Intensely Developed Area.

Should the application be submitted and granted, I expect you as commissioners to commit to sufficient oversight of the expansion by the county. That has not always been the case in the past. We want to be good neighbors, but that depends on the campground remaining within the health and environmental compliance parameters that are granted. The responsibility for seeing to that lies with the county, and whether that responsibility is fulfilled will be closely monitored.

More preferably, the commissioners will conclude that the change to the zoning code and the Growth Allocation Policy, and the ensuing expansion of the campground, is a misstep with potentially far-reaching consequences that are not in keeping with the mission of their body to sort out the difference between long-term good and short-term greed.

Thank you for your consideration of this position.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Ford
2905 Eastern Neck Road
Rock Hall