

Montgomery Countryside Alliance 2014 Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Douglas Duncan

City: Rockville

Office Sought: Montgomery County Executive

More Info: www.dougduncan.com

If you were asked to describe the County's Agricultural Reserve to someone, what would you say?

The Agricultural Reserve is a jewel of Montgomery County & was a creative and prescient program when initiated & its value is even more important today. When previously County Executive, we did a lot to further preserve the reserve, leading the country in setting aside more open space & farmland than any other county, something we can no longer say. The status quo isn't good enough & we need change. We need an effective, responsible & hands-on leader dedicated to protecting and ensuring the long-term vitality of it. In my Leadership in Action Agenda, I talk about creating an Agricultural Reserve Ombudsman position reporting to me to work with our communities in the Reserve. He or she will make sure that those residents have a place at my table to ensure their needs are being heard and acted on, especially farmers to strengthen our agricultural economy. The ombudsman will also directly connect the agricultural community with our urban & suburban communities to strengthen public support.

What is your vision for the future of the County's Agricultural Reserve?

As a community that has long dedicated itself to protecting our environment, Montgomery County needs a leader who will make this issue a priority & follow through on his actions. As County Executive, working together we will preserve our community's natural resources for generations to come. I want Montgomery County to lead again in setting aside farmland & open space, as we were during my previous time as County Executive, & get to at least 100,000 preserved acres as well as grow its ability to boost our economy. In addition to working with the Preservation Foundation & other agencies to increase & maintain the integrity of the Reserve, we should develop strong partnerships with nonprofit entities that are interested in such preservation. I also want to create an Agricultural Reserve Ombudsman as stated above. The status quo is not good enough & we need change. We need an effective, responsible & hands-on leader so that together, we can make our Reserve a jewel of the country.

What more should the County be providing in terms of legislation and/or services to realize that vision?

We can do this on multiple levels, & it's all about working together. At the County level, I want to create an Agricultural Reserve Ombudsman to work on exactly these issues with the community to ensure that our Government is doing all it can to promote & assist in creating

successful, vibrant, generational farms. At the state level, we will work with our own delegates in the reserve, as well as neighboring jurisdictions to create an effective alliance of pro-reserve representatives to ensure the state is doing all that it can to help as well. Lastly, working with our Congressmen & Senators, we can ensure that Montgomery County is included in any federal aid. We cannot do this alone & we need an effective leader who can build alliances with elected officials & organizations like yours to realize that vision.

What challenges exist to ensuring that your vision for the Reserve is realized?

I am & have always been a firm believer in & ardent supporter of protecting the Agricultural Reserve. Any discussion that starts with cutting into the reserve is a non-starter for me. However, we do face challenges, particularly with the growing population & town centers throughout the county. If though, you have an effective, hands-on leader who will do what he says, then we can continue to protect the reserve. At the same time, that is why I also want to create an Agricultural Ombudsman to bring more attention to this jewel, including to those down county that dont know much about it. In the end its all about priorities & balance, when previously County Executive we revitalized Silver Spring, built Strathmore & at the same time preserved more farmland & open space than any other county in the country. That is the kind of experienced, effective leadership I bring to the table. The status quo is not good enough & we need change.

What role do the County's schools play in the support of our local food system and success of local agriculture?

How great would it be for our Countys farmers to provide the food eaten in our County Schools? My Agricultural Ombudsman will work with our school system to try & solve that question. At the same time, the more our kids understand & realize what the reserve is & can do they will become more invested in ensuring its vibrancy. With all the resources we have here in Montgomery County there is no reason that we cannot become a much more sustainable place to live, work & raise a family. The status quo is wasting money on things like the gross mismanagement on the Silver Spring Transit Center; that is millions of dollars that could go toward improving the distribution of local produce to our schools or funding class trips to the reserve for our kids learn more about all it has to offer. We need the right effective, responsible hands-on leadership with such a vision to get the job done & ensure the success of local agriculture.

The County has undertaken a comprehensive zoning code re-write. What are your thoughts about the County's zoning code enforcement? Does that division have adequate resources and is it properly functioning?

County Governments chief task is to manage daily operations within the County, including enforcing the rules they themselves create. The status quo severely lacks at this. With the new zoning

code re-write, its now more important than ever to have a responsible enforcement team. County Government can do great things, like saving Silver Spring, Glen Echo & 10 Mile Creek. But in order to do the big things, residents must first trust them to the day-to-day things that are just as important. We need change; the status quo in Montgomery County is not working. We need an effective, hands-on & responsible Executive who will follow through on the rules his or her county government set. Otherwise, whats the point in creating the rules in the first place? Local government is what I like doing most & is what I am best at. As I did before, I will bring again just as much enthusiasm & effectiveness to ensuring code enforcement, as I will to preserving and enhancing our Agricultural Reserve.

Do you support an additional Potomac bridge and highway in the Reserve or adjacent rural zones?

I do not support a 2nd crossing of the Potomac in Montgomery County. As I stated above, any conversation that starts with cutting into the Agricultural Reserve for development purposes is a non-starter. I have supported a 2nd crossing at Point of Rocks in Frederick County.