

Name: **Reggie Oldak**
Address: Bethesda
What office are you seeking?: Montgomery County Council District 1
Where can voters learn more about your positions?: www.reggieoldak.com

- 2 **Someone new to Montgomery County may ask, "What's the Ag Reserve and why is it important?" What's your answer?**

The Agricultural Reserve is Montgomery County's greatest natural resource. It preserves one-third of the County's land so that it is not developed, and it continues to be a place for farming and very low density homes.

- 3 **What are your priorities regarding stewardship of the County's natural resources (water, forests, open spaces) and parkland?**

It is critically important that we continue to protect the County's natural resources and parkland, both in the Agricultural Reserve and outside it.

- 4 **What is your vision for the future of the County's Agricultural Reserve? Briefly, how would you achieve that vision?**

I want to see sustainable agricultural activity in the Ag Reserve. It's important that our farmers are able to continue to farm, and that includes permitting agriculture-serving activities to locate in the Ag Reserve. I would be very careful about activities that I would want to see in the Ag Reserve. Certainly, I would want to continue to limit residential development to 25 acres per home. At the same time, one example of something I would support is the Council's recent action to permit Farm Tenant Housing in the Ag Reserve, because farmers need workers to continue to sustain their farming businesses.

- 5 **Can you identify some of the top challenges to the Reserve's local agriculture and what actions you would take, if elected, to address them?**

For as long as the Ag Reserve has existed there has been pressure to open it up to development. Montgomery County has a serious need for affordable housing. Many call for developing the Ag Reserve to help address that need. I would oppose those proposals. The Ag Reserve is the 'lungs' of Montgomery County. I would be steadfast in resisting these efforts.

- 6 **What more can be done to support our local farm businesses and rural communities?**

I am not an expert in farming or the support our farm businesses and rural communities need. If elected, the first thing I would do is to convene groups of residents of the Ag Reserve to find out what the needs are from those most affected.

7 How should our County manage its solid waste? What role should incineration, composting and recycling play?

I support expanding composting and recycling programs for Montgomery County. First, the County should finalize and implement a work plan to advance composting. I understand from a conversation with the Montgomery County Department of Economic Development Agricultural Services Division that there is still much work to do, including finding ways to make composting as easy as possible for residents. Ideally, the County would pick up food waste as it does yard trim.

I support shutting down the Dickerson trash incinerator.

8 How can we expand the role the County's schools play in the support of a healthy local food system and the success of local agriculture? Do you support a rural schools' policy that provides equity for Reserve cluster schools acknowledging the unique nature of schools in region set aside for farmland and open space preservation?

Yes, I support a rural schools' policy that provides equity for Reserve cluster schools and acknowledges their unique nature. Poolesville HS needs capital improvements. I support the concept of combining the school with a community center as a way to solve several needs at once. I also would support an agricultural business curriculum in the Reserve schools and expansion of the outreach efforts regarding agriculture in other schools.

9 Currently the County is exploring how best to support a strong agricultural economy through agritourism and new farming enterprises such as on farm breweries and wineries. What are your thoughts about how best to advance on farm activities within the context of the master plan?

I want to hear from farmers about what they need. If they tell me that agritourism and growing and using farm products in brewing and wine-making is beneficial to preserving the Ag Reserve and sustainable farming, I would be very sympathetic to that course of action.

10 What are your regional transportation priorities? Do you support M83 and an additional Potomac bridge and outer beltway through the Reserve or adjacent rural zones?

My overriding concern with transportation planning is that we work to create a transportation system that gives commuters a reliable system of alternatives to driving. We need a dedicated funding source for Metro and enhanced bus service. I support a significant expansion of the MARC train schedule. When it comes to new road construction, I believe that we need targeted improvements, and we need to tie any new highway construction to transit options wherever feasible. I oppose extensive highway construction that would cause unacceptable environmental and property impacts and promote sprawl development. The M83 highway has been in Montgomery County's Master Plan of Highways for decades, but given its enormous fiscal and environmental costs, I believe the County would be far better served by examining possible transit alternatives and capacity improvements along existing roads for Clarksburg. I do not support a Second Bridge Crossing due to its projected cost and environmental impact.