

TO: Council President Hans Reimer and all Members of the County Council

**RE: Proposal to increase authority of Hearing Examiner in Conditional Use Cases.**

Dear Councilmembers,

We have just been alerted to proposed changes in procedures involving public participation before the MC OZAH. It seems inappropriate that such changes move forward without benefit of a public hearing so we oppose taking up the changes without one.

As to the changes themselves, citizen participation is essential to the process and outcome. It is not unusual in hearings before the OZAH that the public case takes more time than that of the applicant. A simple reason being the array of issues various public stakeholders may need to address that the applicant has not considered. Changing the rules of procedure to give the public *equal* time rather than *adequate* time diminishes the value of public input. We oppose the procedural changes as one more way to curtail citizen participation in their own government.

Sincerely,

Ginny Barnes, *President*  
**West Montgomery County Citizens Association**  
[www.wmcca.org](http://www.wmcca.org)



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[WMCCA - West Montgomery County Citizens Association](http://www.wmcca.org)  
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The West Montgomery County Citizens Association is committed to protecting the Agricultural Reserve and open space in Potomac, Maryland from urban sprawl and gridlock.

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