

Montgomery Countryside Alliance 2014 Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Christopher Barclay

City: Silver Spring

Office Sought: County Council District 5

More Info: www.christopherbarclay.org

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

Montgomery County's Agricultural Reserve is a visionary initiative of 93,000 acres of pristine land that the county set aside to promote local farming and also to manage the county's density. It provides thousands of jobs and recreational activities to citizens. I am a believer and admirer of the Agricultural Reserve.

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

I see a lot of potential, and a lot of opportunities for making the Agricultural Reserve an even more productive source of affordable fresh produce and dairy, and more importantly an instructional tool for the children of Montgomery County. I'd like to see the Reserve become, not only a local attraction, but also regional attraction and that it builds on its reputation as a model for land preservation.

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

We should have a conversation with all key stakeholders to determine from their perspective how we can best support the Agricultural Reserve through flexible and friendly legislation and services. The Council should also ensure that land preservation remains a priority for the county government.

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

The farmers of the Agricultural Reserve have to be supported in the face of pressure from developers and development that encroaches upon reserve land. As the population grows, there will be pressure on the Council to open up the land for housing. Because of this, it is imperative that the Council always be mindful and a steward of the Reserve's purpose.

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

The County's schools have increasingly played a pivotal role in information sharing of best practices with respect to nutrition and the role of farming in our lives. There are opportunities for farmers to provide

fresh produce to our school system for the feeding of our children. I also believe that Reserve teaches young people about local agriculture and allows them to appreciate it as a local resource.

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?

It is an issue I am studying. If elected I will fight for appropriate staffing and resources for planning and zoning code enforcement.

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

I am concerned about the impact on the Agricultural Reserve. Also it might create additional pressures to develop some of the land.