

## Montgomery Countryside Alliance 2014 Candidate Questionnaire

**Candidate Name:** Jim Shalleck

**City:** Montgomery Village, Maryland

**Office Sought:** Montgomery County Executive

**More Info:** [www.voteshalleck.com](http://www.voteshalleck.com)

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

The Agricultural Reserve is an historic and essential part of our County. It is a treasure to be protected from development and environmental pollution. This land symbolizes our County's dedication and respect for natural, open and undeveloped land. Without this Reserve, development would encumber this land, adding overcrowding, pollution and traffic congestion to this part of the County. This would change the personality and character of our County which prides itself on the diversity of its land use and environmental priorities. Montgomery County would not be the same place without the Agricultural Reserve. Agriculture is part of our community.

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

My vision is for the Agricultural Reserve to be protected and preserved for all generations to come. There is enough land in the County for development and enhancement without invading the Reserve. The Reserve is an essential and historic feature of our County which only enhances our character and symbolizes our devotion to a diverse environment. The Reserve is an attraction for people to move to our County who desire a community that respects and protects nature and open lands. The old phrase "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" comes to mind answering this question. There is no reason to invade the Reserve.

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

Additional legislation and action may be necessary by the County if there is an attempted effort to encumber the Reserve lands. However, the best way to protect these lands is through strict enforcement of civil and criminal penalties that exist to protect the environment. Criminal law enforcement is the best deterrent against those who would pollute or damage our environment. We must be proactive and aggressive against those who seek to harm our environment.

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

Challenges will come from those who seek to develop and encumber the Reserve with residential and commercial infrastructure. Arguments will be made that land is necessary to accommodate a growing population and to recruit new business to the County. I reject those arguments. Encroachment on the Reserve, once the door to development is opened,

will not stop. Eventually, there would be no Reserve. Residential development and business growth are important and essential but it must be smart growth. Growth around Metro stops and in older parts of the County should be examined. We must work with developers to accommodate the growth our County needs and in that regard provide whatever appropriate incentives are available to accomplish these goals together.

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

A big role. There is a tremendous school population that is a built-in market for our local food system. Our local agricultural community will greatly benefit from the use of their products at all of our schools. Not only is this a financial benefit to our local agriculture but a benefit to our students who will be provided with fresh and healthy food from reliable sources.

**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?**

I support a comprehensive review and re-write of our zoning code to deal with our changing and growing demographics. We now are a County of over one million people. We are larger than six states.

But codes are just words. We need more enforcement officers and aggressive civil and criminal prosecution of code violators. Words are not deterrents, penalties are.

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

No. It will harm the environment and the cost would be prohibitive. We must look for other alternatives to this issue.