



**TOWN OF BARNESVILLE
COMMISSIONERS
Montgomery County**

June 15, 2019

Via Email (MCP-Chair@mncppcmc.org)
Planning Board M-NCPPC
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Re: Barnesville Oaks Subdivision

Dear Board Members:

The Town of Barnesville is located near the Barnesville Oaks Subdivision that lies between Route 109 and Peachtree Road. The Commissioners of the Town of Barnesville understand that the Board is considering a staff recommendation to apply certain zoning changes regarding farm tenant housing to permit additional housing to be built on farmland that abuts or is a part of the Barnesville Oaks Subdivision. The Town of Barnesville **opposes** any action that would permit – now or in the future – additional housing to be built within or abutting the Barnesville Oaks subdivision.

When the Barnesville Oaks Subdivision was permitted in 2010, unambiguous conditions were imposed to maintain the surrounding farmland and to prevent its development. The developer committed to those conditions. They limited the housing that could be clustered within the buildable portion of the subdivision, and took into account rules regarding tenant housing, meaning to state the full limit on development and not just a partial limit. There was an obvious tradeoff for the developer and for the community: the development added value to the land and permitted a housing cluster to be built in the Ag Reserve, but the surrounding community was assured that green farmland would survive outside the housing cluster.

Now the relatively inexpensive farmland surrounding the housing cluster in the Barnesville Oaks subdivision has been purchased, and the purchaser is asking the Board to clarify that farm tenant housing rules will permit additional homes – beyond those permitted in 2010 – to be built on the protected farmland. That does not represent good policy; it undoes conditions and commitments

that were the basis for the 2010 authorization of a housing cluster in the Ag Reserve; and it is not what the residents of the Ag Reserve want. Consequently, the Town of Barnesville opposes the new purchasers request and the staff recommendation to grant it. Further, any decision the Board makes should be clear that no further subdivision or housing construction within the preserved farmland near the housing cluster will be permitted. The 2010 arrangement – which authorized a limited housing cluster in exchange for truly preserved farmland – should be enforced.

As expressed in the Town’s Master Plan, Barnesville’s “citizens are committed to achieving a spirit of mutual respect with the county and state governments that will allow the town to maintain its undisturbed boundaries and simplistic way of life as a rural residential community”. The Town feels that Planning Board approval of these actions would negatively affect the quality of life for Barnesville residents and, by failing to enforce commitments already made, would allow creeping development in small stages that would not be permitted when viewed as a whole.

Sincerely,

The Commissioners of Barnesville