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What office are you seeking?: County Council At-Large
Where can voters learn more about your positions?: www.mckennaformoco.org

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

The Ag Reserve is 93,000 acres, roughly a third of the County along the Northeast and Northwestern edges, that was created in 1980 by the Planning Board and County Council to preserve farmland by making agriculture the primary land use. Housing density was limited to 1 in 25 acres, but did allow for transfer development rights of 1 per 5 acres to other areas of the county so as not to deprive landowners development opportunities. It is important because it preserves large swaths of open green space in our county that are also home to historical sites; protects the environment while providing healthy recreational activities in beautiful scenery; protects large family farms; promotes traditional farming, wineries, orchards, and raising livestock; provides local, organic foods to the County and nearby areas; and is an important economic industry in the county.

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

Our natural resources must be protected to every extent possible because once lost they cannot be reclaimed. I would argue that water is the top priority of those listed. We must ensure adequate quantity, assure the quality of our drinking water, and its affordability. This would include stream valley improvements, watershed restoration, lake dredging, and planning now for at least one additional reservoir. I believe the Tree Canopy Conservation law passed in 2013 is a wonderful support for forest conservation. Land use trends are challenging with redevelopment and urbanization. Preservation of park land and dedicated open spaces will continue to be addressed through Subdivision Staging Policy and Master Plans.

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

My vision is a beautiful, thriving Ag Reserve that more people are aware of, visit, and appreciate. Education and awareness are key components. Even MCPS recognizes the value of the agrarian way of life there and will be creating an educational program to prepare the next agricultural generation in our county. Making people aware of the importance of the various protections that the Ag Reserve provides from trees to absorb CO2 to unbroken large farms, and a real-life hands-on workshop that we don't have to recreate in a building to enjoy and study. We have to take the stigma out of that land being set aside. I feel many see it as something to be carved into later, as if we 'saved the best for last' development. Careful development and planning, especially transportation infrastructure, to preserve natural resources must be continuously monitored to avoid unintended negative consequences.

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?

I alluded to some challenges above in transportation and urban redevelopment. Because of the vastness of the space available, extraordinarily large private facilities may be attracted to locate in the Ag Reserve. That poses of the problem of massive development of a site in one isolated location, burdening roads, storm water management, and septic infrastructure. Farming is not for the faint of heart. The risks are great with weather being out of your control, and machinery and the cost of doing business always increasing. We need to make farming a noble profession. We all must eat! Farms are the giver of life and literally sustain us all. Again, it is a matter of shifting public perception through awareness and education. Just as our MCPS 6th graders have several days of outdoor education, perhaps in the future we can also have them spend a few days out in the Ag Reserve to really experience a very important lifestyle and appreciate the history and natural habitat it preserves.

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

Any subsidies to farms or businesses in the Ag Reserve are a double win because it's reinvested in itself and the County at large from the ~\$50M generated from business conducted there. Large charitable deductions are available for produce donated to nonprofits. I feel more could be done to try to explicitly include produce, livestock, and products from the Ag Reserve in the County economy. Supports for small businesses could be tailored to their unique situation. We would have to go out and ask them what would benefit them the most. Perhaps it's better marketing of farm markets or farm tours, reducing the expense of cost of getting goods to market, allowing expansion of complementary agribusiness, credits on certain capital investments (especially carbon-neutral energy initiatives), special loan rates for expensive equipment, or some sort of reimbursement for extreme crop or livestock devastation from weather. It will take government, businesses, and nonprofits working together.

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

The goal of Zero Waste will not be obtained without a cultural shift in packaging. So while incineration won't stop tomorrow, we can make sure it's not considered a renewable resource. We can make incremental change in better recycling. I would love the creation of a real Circular Economy, which I believe with engagement from all sectors is doable in a relatively short amount of time. This would be on economic and social fronts. A circular economy is one in which the output of one process becomes the input for another. It is recovering and reusing that which would have been wasted so there is no end of life. This also applies to food recovery, and socially in work with the Time Bank in Silver Spring that people "bank" their time and talent to receive credits to use someone else's skills/time. I would love to see more composting. Rather than as a countywide initiative, I see it on a more individual level and scale. For that, then suburban HOA restrictions would need to be addressed.

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?

I mentioned MCPS is already planning agriculture-related coursework and programs. Those cluster schools have a unique culture and history. Rather than just respect it, it should be shared, and widely. Smaller school size has traditionally limited the spectrum of available classes due to low enrollment. Fortunately,

we have modern technology that can reach into classrooms around the County. We should have a discussion about how to leverage that technology so our teachers can reach students while not in the same physical classroom. We could also ask the Board of Education to consider allowing more students into those cluster schools through boundary changes or ‘opt ins.’

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- 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?**

Instead of keeping what goes on in the Ag Reserve as some trade secret, we should share its riches with everyone. That would be greater marketing through the Economic Development Corp. and certainly more marketing through Visit Montgomery. With the proper outreach, our Ag Reserve can be as much of a draw to inside the beltway and Tyson’s Corner as Loudoun County. Just as we keep an eye to economic development in urban Master Plans and redevelopment plans, we should set goals to similarly grow the economic development of the Ag Reserve. While growth in Bethesda is about square feet and cost, we need to consider regular infrastructure investments and evolving changes in technology for the Ag Reserve. Simply put we need to actually plan and actively invest rather than ‘see what happens’

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- 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?**

More people move into the County every year and travel to work, shop, learn, and play. We must carefully balance moving people from place to place with land preservation. The M83 was planned and land dedicated. This will relieve local pressure on 270 and provide N/S options East of 270. The Corridor Cities Transitway would only address traffic West of 270 and then only to the Shady Grove Metro. We need better data on where people need/want to go, when, and why before more investment in prescribed or existing mass transit options. Intra-county travel is particularly difficult, and transit is geared more toward commuting only. Bus rideshare startups like Bridj, Chariot, and others are the Uber for groups, challenge traditional mass transit through crowdsharing, and may be a better solution for service to Tobytown and low ridership. The American Legion bridge should be double decked. Any bridge or 495 solution will require buy in and commensurate capacity on the VA side.