

# Montgomery County 2026 Candidate Questionnaire



## Personal Information:

**Name** Steve Solomon

**What Office Are You Seeking in the 2026 Election?** Montgomery County Council - At Large

## Where Can Voters Learn More About Your Positions Or Contact Your Campaign?

[www.VoteSteveSolomon.com](http://www.VoteSteveSolomon.com)

[VoteSteveSolomon@gmail.com](mailto:VoteSteveSolomon@gmail.com)



**Please Answer the Following Questions- responses will posted in their entirety and will not be edited. There are no word limits but please try to be consise.**

(pictured above: One Acre Farm)

## Please share 3 sentences that help us to know you better:

I am a lifelong Montgomery County resident. I have volunteered with several civic, community, and nonprofit groups over the last several years. I love dogs, chocolate, and old sitcoms!

**When we recently surveyed residents throughout the County, they shared that their top priority was a lack of government transparency - How can Montgomery County ensure transparency in their legislative and land use decision making? How would you grade current public engagement? Do you support re-establishing the Office of the People's Counsel?**

Many candidates speak of transparency and accountability, but once they get elected, you can't get a hold of them. I am always looking to learn more. I don't know everything about every issue, and encourage public engagement. I have been an active member of not only my civic association, but the Montgomery County Civic Federation as well. We've been advocating for a re-establishment of the Office of the People's Counsel for many years.

**Do you believe that the way that local government branches (executive, legislative and planning), and state entities currently interact can be improved? If so, what steps would you take to bring better collaboration?**

Yes, government can always be improved! There has long been conflict between planning and the executive/legislative branches regardless of who is in office. I am in favor of more coordinating meetings, establishment of common goals, and strengthening partnerships across government, business, and nonprofit sectors.



**Source water protection is a priority for County residents. Rural residents are served by wells drawn from a federally designated Sole Source Aquifer. What specific actions will you take to protect groundwater quality and ensure a sustainable supply of drinking water for residents, farms and businesses? And what do you propose with regard to protecting the Potomac River, a drinking water supply for more than 5 Million people in the Washington DC metropolitan area. Given increasing drought conditions, growing data center water consumption, and projections that the Potomac River may not meet future demand, how will you plan for a water-constrained future? What policies or investments would you prioritize during your term?**

Clean drinking water is something no family should ever have to worry about, and protecting it must be one of Montgomery County's highest responsibilities. Millions rely on the Potomac River, so we need to take a long term, common sense approach to protecting it. I believe that means strengthening safeguards against pollution, improving stormwater management, preserving the Ag Reserve, and supporting farmers and homeowners in protecting water quality. At the same time, we have to prepare for a future with more droughts by investing in conservation and infrastructure. Growth should never come at the expense of safe drinking water.

**What role can the Ag Reserve play in helping our County address Climate Change? Do you have plans to bolster the county's funds to address climate change, i.e. expanded grant making, review of energy tax structure for high energy consumers such as data centers?**

The Ag Reserve is not only one of Montgomery County's most beautiful places, but also one of our greatest tools in the fight against climate change because it protects the farms, forests, and open spaces while preserving clean water, and strengthening our local food system. As the county faces growing energy demands, we should also look at ways to expand funding for climate solutions – including grants for regenerative farming, clean energy, and conservation projects – while ensuring that large energy consumers help pay for the environmental and infrastructure impacts they create. By protecting the Ag Reserve and investing in sustainable practices, Montgomery County can balance economic growth with long term environmental responsibility.

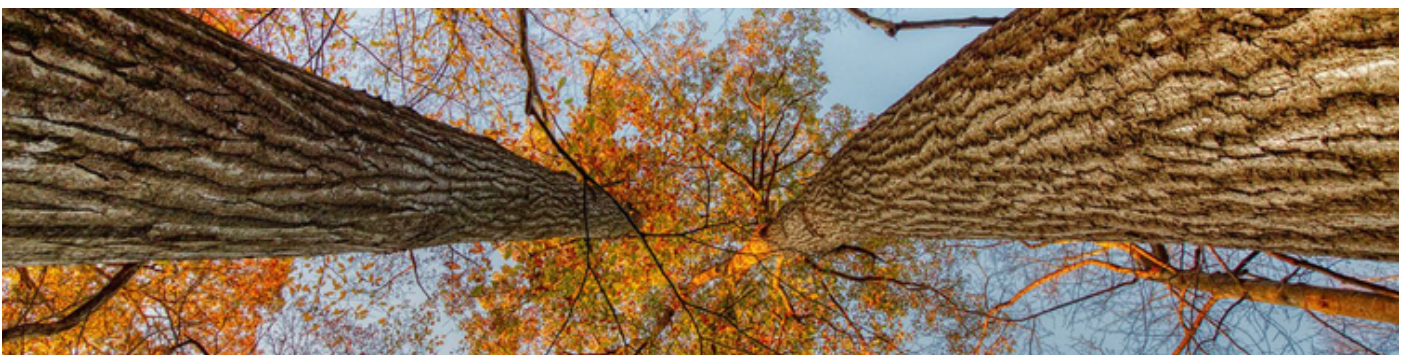


**Do you support the long planned closure of the trash incinerator in Dickerson? Please provide some details as to why or why not. (pictured above: Shepherd's hey Farm)**

Yes I support the closure of the incinerator in Dickerson. Montgomery County's long term goal should be to move toward cleaner waste management through recycling and composting. The facility is aging, costly to maintain, and has harmful emissions. However, I believe the closure should be done carefully and only after we have reliable alternatives in place. Closing it too quickly and just shipping more of our trash to someone else is not the answer. We would just be creating new environmental and financial problems rather than solving them.

**Should Montgomery County host hyperscale Data Centers? If so, what zoning standards and regulations should be established? Have we gathered all the necessary information to make an informed decision at this time?**

Montgomery County should take a careful, balanced approach to data centers. If we allow them, it must come with strict rules, regulations, and a clear understanding of what is expected. These projects could bring new tax revenue, technology investment, and economic growth, but they also raise real concerns about energy use, water demand, noise, traffic, and impacts on communities. If we decide to allow them, they should only be located in appropriate industrial areas and be subject to strong rules on environmental protection, infrastructure upgrades, public input, and community benefits, all with developers covering the costs rather than residents. At the same time, it is premature to fully embrace expansion before we have completed deeper studies on long term impacts to the power grid, water resources, climate goals, and overall quality of life. A moratorium can be placed while we work on these issues to figure out the best long term solution for the county.



**Forests are a key tool for climate protection and protecting public health. How would forest protection and control of non-native plant species factor into your administration's goals? (Picture above - Wib Middleton)**

I live near Wheaton Regional Park with Brookside Gardens and the Wheaton Park Stables. I drive by them every day and am thankful we have beautiful, protected land like this in Montgomery County. Protecting our forests and controlling invasive plant species will be a major part of my vision for Montgomery County because healthy forests are essential to both our environment and our quality of life. Trees help clean our air, cool our neighborhoods, and create healthier communities for families. I believe we have a responsibility to preserve the forests we already have while expanding tree canopy in areas that need it most. My administration would focus on restoring native habitats, investing in long term forest stewardship, and working closely with residents and community groups to protect the natural spaces that

define Montgomery County.

### **Where do you stand on synthetic turf playing fields for school and community use?**

I believe Montgomery County should be cautious about synthetic turf rather than treating it as either a completely good or bad option. Turf fields do solve a real problem because heavily used school and community grass fields often become unusable from overuse and weather, especially with year round sports, so synthetic surfaces can increase access and reliability. At the same time, the concerns about heat, microplastics, and PFAS are legitimate and should not be dismissed. New field technology is being developed all the time, and we need to be at the forefront of this using synthetic fields without crumb rubber and PFAS. My view is that turf makes the most sense at the highest-demand sites where year round field capacity is truly necessary, while the county should avoid making it the default option everywhere, especially at elementary schools or environmentally sensitive areas.



### **Challenges to current and future farmers are increasing. The average age of County producers is 59. The cost of leasing farm acreage (60% of farms are leasing) is skyrocketing while a diverse new crop of farmers struggle to afford farmland. Have you got any plans for how the County can help keep the industry healthy and promote expansion– with an understanding that resilience depends on local food and fiber production? (Pictured above: Afrithrive Farm)**

I have many farmers in my family and have learned that even though we are living in a digital age and technology is everywhere, farming is still the backbone of this country. And we're so lucky in Montgomery County to have an Ag reserve where hundreds of farms can exist. I believe Montgomery County has to focus not only on preserving farmland, but on making sure farming itself remains possible for the next generation. With the average farmer now 59 years old and leasing costs continuing to rise, too many young and beginning farmers simply cannot afford to get started or stay in business. The County should strengthen protections for the Ag Reserve, encourage long term leases that give farmers stability, and create more opportunities for new and diverse farmers through land-link programs, incubator farms, and affordable financing. We also need to help farms stay profitable by supporting local food purchasing, expanding infrastructure like food hubs and cold storage, and making it easier for farmers to diversify through agritourism. Local food and fiber production are essential to our economy, our environment, and our community, and if we want agriculture to remain a part of Montgomery County's future, we have to make sure the next generation has a real path to succeed.