



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

MARC ELRICH  
COUNCILMEMBER AT-LARGE

May 21, 2013

Ms. Françoise Carrier, Chair  
The Montgomery County Planning Board &  
The Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Re: Farm Road; Recent WUSA TV Reports

Dear Ms. Carrier:

I am writing to strongly urge Planning Department staff to issue street addresses to the Farm Road property owners as soon as possible, preferably by the end of this month. On May 3, shortly after I saw you at the Montgomery County Civic Federation Awards reception, I spoke with several of my Sandy Spring constituents – they are Farm Road property owners who made it clear that their lives have been turned upside down as a consequence of the inability to make productive use of their properties. Without a street address, their properties are rendered practically worthless – an unacceptable, unfair burden for members of this community with historic Quaker and African American roots. They should not be denied their street addresses any longer.

Despite the Commission's contention that Farm Road does not exist, or is a "driveway" or "cart path," there is convincing evidence that the ingress and egress to Farm Road has existed as a privately maintained road since at least 1895 and has been used to access several properties. In addition to a substantial amount of first-hand information from residents who describe its use as a road (which had a number of houses on it over the years), Farm Road appears on both USGS maps and County maps and also in the chain of title of each property shaded in blue, green and green stripes on the [Farm Road Property Map](#). Apparently, there were addresses assigned in your address book to at least some of the Farm Road properties, although they were deleted at some point. It is also worth noting that the property owners report that they have paid taxes on these properties for years and continue to do so.

MNCPPC General Counsel Adrian Gardner has been quoted as saying that "The law in Montgomery County requires that each piece of property have undisputed access to a public street before our agency can properly assign a street address." Sandy Spring property owners also were told that addresses on Farm Road could not be issued if any of the neighboring property owners dispute the road's existence, or if corrections to the tax maps are not made, or if the road isn't shifted or widened. In the [absence of any written policies or rules](#), it is difficult to know what truly governs the issuance of addresses or the reissuance of addresses that were

deleted. Despite the seemingly arbitrary obstacles being placed before them, the property owners have now obtained affidavits from neighbors recognizing the existence of Farm Road and agreements to allow the road to be widened and/or shifted. I am told that all of the properties at issue, with one exception, have not changed in shape or size since June 1, 1958 (the one exception was divided by will). If this is the case, then the properties should be exempt from platting requirements pursuant to Sec. 50.9 of the Subdivision regulations and the Commission should be able to issue the street addresses.

Finally, I have been informed that there have been at least two Public Information Act (PIA) requests regarding Farm Road issues, [one dated 1/10/08](#) and [another dated 1/20/10](#). I would appreciate your working with the requestor to provide the requested information. Given the long and tortured history of this case and its clearly harmful effects on the lives of a handful of property owners, I hope you will find a way to resolve this issue quickly and satisfactorily. There is nothing to be gained by continuing along the current path, and much to be gained by trying to provide relief to the property owners.

Thank you for your prompt attention to these matters. I look forward to hearing that the street addresses have been issued.

Sincerely,



Marc Elrich  
At-Large Councilmember  
Montgomery County Council

cc: Ike Leggett, County Executive  
SaveSandySpring.org