

Sayers, Margery

From: Mike & Candice Lawson <mikeandcandice16@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, March 4, 2023 9:09 PM
To: CouncilMail
Cc: Jones, Opel; Lynn Albizo
Subject: Oppose CB9-2023

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

TESTIMONY OF Michael & Candice Lawson ON CB9-2023
Shipley's Grant Community
5911 Talbot Dr
Ellicott City, MD 21043

Howard County Council
3430 Courthouse Dr
Ellicott City, MD 21043

Hearing Date: March 20, 2023

Position: OPPOSE CB9-2023

We are residents of the Shipley's Grant Community and we oppose CB9-2023. This legislation, if passed, would allow the Curtis Shipley farm, currently zoned as residential, R-20, to hold large outdoor affairs such as weddings in an area disturbing our family and neighbors who live very close to this property.

Examples and specific issues of concern for our family include:

1. Primarily the noise level. During a wedding or other celebratory event that would be held, it is only natural to have guests listening to loud music, talking loudly, and even shouting. However, the Curtis Shipley farm is literally within and surrounded by our neighborhood of densely packed townhomes, many of which are homes to young children who need to take naps or have bedtime during the hours that events would be held. We have 2 year old and 2 month old children, so this would deeply affect the ability of our family to function as we live on one corner of the farm. During an event held a few months ago for County Executive Calvin Ball, the band played as far as possible from our home, but could still be heard inside our home with all the doors and windows closed. We would be severely affected if regular events began to occur with an infant needing to sleep much of the day. Even if noise barriers are put up, due to the outdoor location, only so much of the noise would be reduced, especially any music or guests closer to our home. The privacy and residential feel of our community would be lost. We would actually plan to move if this amendment is approved. A location like the Howard County Conservancy which is surrounded by non-residential fields is an appropriate locale for such events, but definitely not the Curtis Shipley farm.

2. Safety is another concern. For any large event, especially a wedding of up to 200 guests, many types of people will be coming, including persons who inevitably would not be respectful of the surrounding neighborhood or even those who may consider criminal activity. Our homes will be exposed to the public much more than before, to "prying eyes" and even vandalism or theft. There have already been reports of cars coming into the neighborhood looking for parking for the event for Mr. Ball, and there is no way to screen those who have innocent versus unsavory intentions for driving around our home. We often walk around the neighborhood with our kids, and we would feel ill at ease if strangers instead of neighbors were frequenting the street in front of our home and watching us come in and out of the house. Also with event guests consuming alcohol, the potential for drunk driving accidents and fatalities in the community increases significantly.

3. Devaluation of our home is our final main concern amongst others that would be too many to list. We have not purchased a single family home due to the excellent location and community atmosphere of our neighborhood, and are planning to raise up to 3 children in our home. However, if the farm is approved for large events, we would have no alternative but to move, and would disclose our concerns about why we are moving to potential buyers. Our area is wonderful for families and others looking for a tranquil place to live, but this would no longer be the case for the many homes that border the farm. It would be much more difficult to sell our home for a good price or even to find a buyer, as most potential buyers would likely have our same concerns.

We strongly urge you to vote against CB9-2023, which will negatively impact our family and community. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael & Candice Lawson