



www.columbiatowncenter.org

ph: 410.730.4744

January 23, 2024

**TO: Dr. Calvin Ball, Howard County Executive
Howard County Council**

FROM: Columbia Town Center Residential Community Association (TCCA) Board

RE: FY2025 HoCo Budget Comments from TCCA Board

We would like the County Executive and County Council to consider the following comments when preparing the FY2025 HoCo Budget:

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Larry Akinyooye
Alyse Carter
Dean Dworkin
Lynn Foehrkolb
Jamie Hibbard
Collin Sullivan

COLUMBIA COUNCIL

Dedrick Asante-
Muhammad

1. **Install more crosswalks on Little Patuxent Parkway:** the stretch of roadway from Governor Warfield to Union Jacks on Little Patuxent Parkway is dangerous for all pedestrians especially those that are sight and hearing impaired. TCCA Board would like more crosswalks with multi-sensory signage (sound and texture) for all residents to use.
2. **Purchase the Vacant Lord & Taylor Building in the Town Center to be Used as a Youth Center.** This is a logical location as it is one of the most visited attractions in Howard County by all age groups. This request was sent to your attention in August 2023. Since that time, we surveyed all residents in Town Center (apartments, condominiums, home, and townhomes) and **70% of all support this location as a Teen Center:** "Do you think adding a Youth Center with programs and activities at the Columbia Mall for kids 11-17 is a good idea?"
3. **Re-hire Community Resource Officers:** all Village Managers sent a letter to Chief Der on September 20, 2023, requesting immediate reinstatement of the Community Resource Officers. This decades-long program has worked successfully in all ten villages. The decision to redeploy them to the patrol level was disappointing and has resulted in numerous community complaints within the villages.
4. **Improve Route 29 Lights and Access Roads Near Toby's Dinner Theater:** The signage to/from Route 29 to Little Patuxent Parkway and off Merriweather drive are poor and need attention. The bottleneck near the Central Library and poor signage has led to many accidents. We would like these issues evaluated and improved during the next budget period.

COLUMBIA TOWN CENTER COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

5430 Vantage Point Road, Columbia, MD 21044 ■ e: villagemanager@columbiatowncenter.org

5. **Improve Winter Treatment of Roads in and Around the Mall Area:** We request a re-evaluation of your snow removal plan around the mall area and ask that you collaborate with the stakeholders (Howard Hughes Corporation and Brookfield Properties) to improve the plan. The first two snowstorms in January 2024 did not meet residents' expectations based on calls to the Town Center Community Association.
6. **Fund Shelters in Columbia Association Facilities:** We request that you provide funding to the Columbia Association to offer winterization programs to the homeless in space that is underused or space that can be built on to provide additional shelters.
7. **Fully Fund Schools' Capital and Operating Budgets:** all outstanding capital projects for schools should be completed on a priority basis before resources are diverted to other County projects. Some projects are a decade behind expectations, and it is a shame that many students must attend school in portable/temporary units. As important, the TCCA Board asks that the County Executive fully fund the HCPSS operating budget (in addition to fully funding the capital budget) — the number of proposed cuts is severe, and we want to support teachers to deliver the highest quality of education to all HCPSS students. Being one of the richest counties in the State should allow us the flexibility to allocate/divert more financial resources to these critical areas.

We appreciate your consideration of our views for the Howard County FY2025 Budget. Thank you.

From: [Malcolm, P. Ann](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Long Reach Shopping Center - In need of an uplift.
Date: Friday, February 9, 2024 10:15:07 AM

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

ANN MALCOLM

This message is subject to Kelley Drye & Warren LLP's email communication policy.
[KDW-Disclaimer](#)

From: Chiara D'Amore <cdamore@cei.earth>
Sent: Tuesday, April 30, 2024 11:07 AM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: testimony in support of capital improvements on Harriet Tubman Lane

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

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

Good morning County Council,

I am writing in appreciation and support of the improvements included in the County's capital budget for part of Harriet Tubman Lane in Columbia. The Community Ecology Institute runs Freetown Farm at 8000 Harriet Tubman Lane and as such we are regular observers of activity along this road. It is currently a narrow road with a fairly sharp bend along the south side of Atholton High School. People tend to drive quite fast along this road, which is of considerable concern given how many students walk along it to and from school and how many cyclists use the road as an alternative to Cedar Lane. Especially with the wonderful addition of an active Harriet Tubman Cultural Center, it becomes increasingly important for this part of Harriet Tubman Lane to have more complete sidewalks, a crosswalk, and traffic calming measures.

I hope that you will retain the funding to provide approximately 360 feet of new sidewalk on the north side of Harriet Tubman Lane from the Harriet Tubman Cultural Center to the existing sidewalk west of Freetown Road and provide a marked crosswalk across Harriet Tubman Lane at Sanford Place.

Sincerely,

Chiara D'Amore

[Chiara D'Amore](#), Ph.D.

(she/her/hers)

Executive Director

[The Community Ecology Institute](#)

*Please note, I often work in the field and am away from my computer at those times. Non-urgent emails may take several business days for a response. If your need is urgent, please contact me at 443-832-3824.

[Be an "evergreen" giver in CEI's operational support campaign!](#)

CEI humbly acknowledges the Indigenous people who were wrongfully removed from their ancestral lands where we live and work today. We offer our deepest respect to the [Piscataway Conoy Tribe](#), and all other tribes Indigenous to the central Maryland region where our organization is based. To learn more about the Indigenous people where you live, visit [Native-Land.ca](#).

From: Amanda Hof <amanda@howardcountytourism.com>
Sent: Friday, May 10, 2024 1:26 PM
To: CouncilMail
Cc: Jung, Debra; Walsh, Elizabeth; Jones, Opel; Rigby, Christiana; Yungmann, David
Subject: Howard County Tourism Council: FY25 Operating Budget Letter of Support
Attachments: Howard County Tourism Council FY25 Funding Request Written Testimony_Council.pdf

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

Dear Honorable Members of the Howard County Council:

Deb Jung, Chair
Liz Walsh, Vice Chair
Opel Jones, Council Member
Christiana Rigby, Council Member
David Yungmann, Council Member

In lieu of live testimony on behalf of Howard County Executive Ball's FY25 Operating Budget, please accept the attached letter of support from the Howard County Tourism Council, Inc.

I welcome your questions or requests for additional information.

Thank you,

Amanda Hof





Howard County Tourism Council, Inc. | 8267 Main Street | Ellicott City, MD 21043
410-313-1900 | VisitHowardCounty.com

Howard County Council
George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21043

Deb Jung, Chair
Liz Walsh, Vice Chair
Opel Jones, Council Member
Christiana Rigby, Council Member
David Yungmann, Council Member

May 13, 2024

Re: Howard County Tourism Council, Inc., FY25 Budget Request Written Testimony, 05.13.2024

Dear Madam Chair and Members of the Council:

First and foremost, on behalf of our board, staff, and the 300-plus tourism businesses and organizations we serve, thank you for your work and ongoing support of Howard County's tourism community.

On behalf of the Howard County Tourism Council Inc. Board of Directors and Staff, thank you for this opportunity to write in support of Howard County Executive Ball's FY25 Operating Budget and ask that you fully fund Executive Ball's budget allocation for the Howard County Tourism Council, Inc.

Working in partnership with Howard County Government and our colleague organizations, including the Economic Development Authority, the Howard County Chamber, the Maryland Office of Tourism Development, and numerous others, we can effectively respond to the needs of our tourism businesses by connecting them to resources and opportunities and advocating on their behalf all while keeping them in front of consumers through impactful marketing programs.

Howard County's annual investment in tourism promotion yields returns. According to the 2022 Tourism Economics Study for Maryland, 2.9 million visitors spent 738 million dollars in Howard County restaurants, hotels, retail stores, arts and cultural attractions, amusements, and transportation businesses. This spending generated 91 million dollars in tax receipts. Visitor spending also helped support over 9,000 jobs in Howard County.

Each of the following spending categories saw substantial increases over the previous year:

- Food and Beverage - up 12%
- Retail - up 9%
- Recreation - up 22%
- Lodging - up 30%
- Transportation - 19%

Of these categories, all but retail have surpassed their 2019 benchmarks. To help put these numbers in perspective, I have a few examples:

- **738 Million Dollars** in visitor spending is equivalent to selling out Merriweather Post Pavillion 38,000 times if each person represents one dollar.
- **9,300 Tourism Industry Workers** standing shoulder to shoulder would span Ellicott City's Main Street seven times.
- **91 Million Dollars** in tax receipts would cover the construction of nearly nine Waterloo Fire Stations.

As you can see, tourism is an economic driver and part of the economic solution. Visitor spending supports businesses and community organizations as well as government priorities and citizen services, including transportation, education, and public safety.

Our return on investment is strong: Every dollar spent on tourism marketing returns \$31 to state and local economies. Your investment also supports jobs and generates state and local tax revenue, saving each Maryland household \$1,000 in annual taxes.

While we recognize we are among many worthy causes in need of your support, we thank you in advance for fully funding Executive Ball's FY25 budget allocation for the Howard County Tourism Council, Inc.

Once again, we thank you for your work and ongoing support of Howard County's tourism community.

With gratitude,



Amanda Hof
Executive Director, Howard County Tourism Council, Inc.

Attachments: Infographic, Pages 3&4

HOWARD COUNTY TOURISM

A SOUND INVESTMENT



\$1=\$31

spent returns

WHY INVEST IN TOURISM

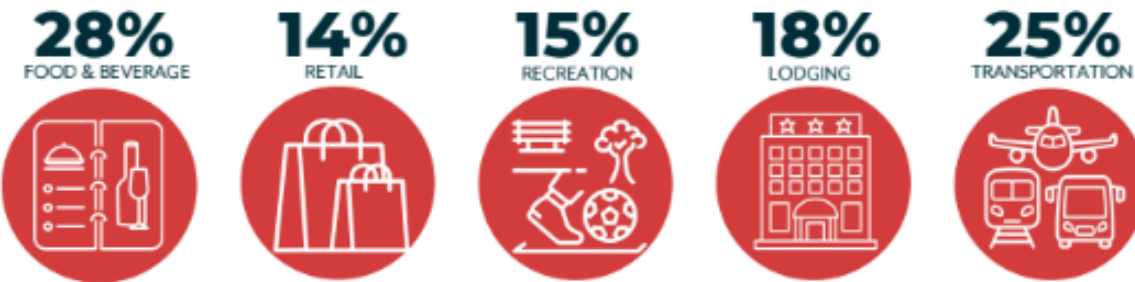
Visitor spending funds government priorities and citizen services, including transportation, education, and public safety. Our return on investment is strong. Every dollar spent on tourism marketing results in an increase in state and local tax revenue, jobs, and economic impact.

\$1 spent on tourism marketing = \$31 for state and local economies.

Source: Destination Analysts

ECONOMIC IMPACT

The travel sector is an integral part of Howard County's economy. In 2022, Howard County attracted 2.9 million visitors who spent \$738.5 million, supporting the following economies:



growth 2021

12%	9%	21%	30%	19%
-----	----	-----	-----	-----

% relative to 2019

109%	94%	101%	116%	130%
------	-----	------	------	------

738.5 million
Visitor spending

At max capacity for 1 show at Merriweather Post Pavilion, each concertgoer would have to spend **\$40,000**.

Reduces each Maryland household's state tax burden by \$1,000 annually.

9300+ jobs
in 2022

Standing shoulder to shoulder, workers would span Main Street in Ellicott City **7 times**.

Making the tourism industry Maryland's 10th largest private-sector employer.

\$91 million
in taxes

Would cover nearly 9 fire stations like the Waterloo Fire Station (opened in 2022)

Generates income for both state and local taxes, that is used for education and public safety.

Source: Tourism Economics, Economic Impact of Tourism in Maryland - 2022

VHC Annual Meeting 2023



MTTS Awards 2023



Restaurant Weeks & Craft Beverages



Koreatown



Meetings Matter 2023



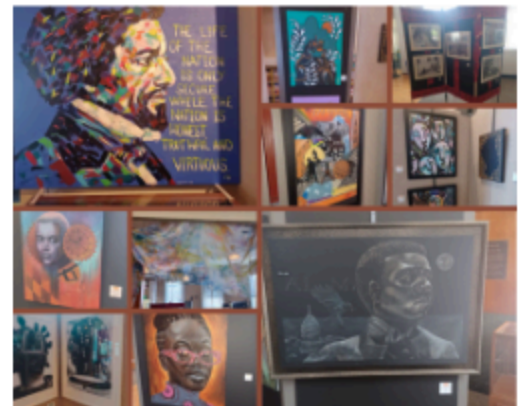
Welcome Center:
Plain Air exhibit 2023



Welcome Center:
the front lawn renovation



Welcome Center :
The Rise Above exhibit 2023



From: [Joan P](#)
To: [CouncilMail](#)
Subject: Testimony for Operating Budget regarding enforcement by DPZ
Date: Tuesday, May 21, 2024 2:53:09 PM

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

May 20, 2024

Dear County Council

In your *Operating Budget Work Session #3* held on Wednesday May 8, 2024, council members raised concerns about the lack of enforcement of zoning regulations by the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ). Comments made at the session suggested that part of the problem is due to shortcomings of inspection, for example, inability to perform inspections on off hours. Below, I'd like to share how I've seen additional stakeholders contribute to the lack of enforcement of zoning regulations in Howard County, resulting in the loss of quality of life for residents in my neighborhood.

I hope you'll agree that the problems Howard County is facing in enforcing zoning regulations is more widespread than simply the lack of inspectors. The regulations are being selectively enforced and ignored, to the benefit of special interests while eroding the quality of life in Howard County.

Thanks for your work on this important topic.

Joan Pontius
4879 Manor Lane
Ellicott City MD
joanpontius@gmail.com

BACKGROUND

These instances refer to the parcel at 4411 Manor Lane in an RC district of Ellicott City, which is part of the Agricultural Land Preservation Program (ALPP), owned by the Murriner Family Trust. The allowed accessory uses of the parcel include as a farm brewery, as agritourism, and as a home business. Currently, the parcel is the location of Manor Hill Farm, Manor Hill Brewery and Manor Hill Productions, chairman Randy Murriner.

Manor Lane is a narrow road and the excessive visitation and truck traffic to the Manor Hill parcel has changed the character of the lane, hindered the use of the road by its residents

and has led to multiple complaints filed to DPZ over the past ten years. Mr. Marriner was well aware of the potential for this negative impact, and was quoted in several publications that opening to the public would be an imposition on his neighbors. Yet this all changed soon after his permit was granted.

The county's legislation specifically includes safeguards to prevent the negative impact of excessive traffic.

These include:

- SECTION 128.0: Supplementary Zoning District Regulations I. Permits for Special Farm Uses (3) That the use of the local road for access will not unduly conflict with other uses that access the local road.
- SECTION 128.0: Supplementary Zoning District Regulations I. Permits for Special Farm Uses 5. Agritourism Enterprises b. The use supports the agricultural use of the property and will not have significant adverse impacts on neighboring properties.
- SECTION 128.0: Supplementary Zoning District Regulations O. Farm Winery-Class 1A or Farm Brewery Class 1A 1. b (2) (d) That the use of the local road for access to the property will not unduly conflict with other uses that access the local road.
- SECTION 128.0: Supplementary Zoning District Regulations O. Farm Winery-Class 1A or Farm Brewery Class 1A 1. h. The use shall be compatible with the rural character of the farm and the surrounding area.

County legislation allows the DPZ to respond to the negative impact of traffic by restricting visitation.

- SECTION 128.0: Supplementary Zoning District Regulations O. Farm Winery-Class 1A or Farm Brewery Class 1A 1. k Visitor hours shall be restricted to between 10:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., Sunday through Thursday; and 10:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m., Friday and Saturday. DPZ may reduce the hours for visitors, but shall not increase them.

Yet the county continues to ignore zoning regulations for the benefit of the special interest of the Marriner Family, to the detriment of the farm's neighbors.

The root cause of this excessive traffic is the lack of enforcement of multiple restrictions of use. Social Assemblies are Conditional Use, for which this parcel is not eligible, yet Marriner continues to host organized events. There is also no enforcement of the

requirement that a primary product from the farm (instead of imported ingredients) is used to manufacture the beer. This has led to the farm in agricultural preservation becoming converted to a bar and manufacturing facility in a rural residential neighborhood.

The most recent complaint regarding use on the Manor Hill parcel was filed from 14 households of Manor Lane (BA 794D - Dr. Sara Via, et al <https://cc.howardcountymd.gov/calendar/ba-794-d-dr-sara-0>). The DPZ's decision of *no zoning violation found* was appealed, and the hearing examiner's Decision and Order of May 1, 2023 was that the case must be reopened and the *DPZ must properly investigate the detailed allegations [of] the Complaint*. The DPZ responded again with *no violation found* and this decision also has been appealed (BA-806 . <https://cc.howardcountymd.gov/calendar/ba-806-d-sara>). The first session of this appeal was held on 3/6/2024.

DPZ INSPECTORS

The County Council's work session mentioned the role that inspectors play in enforcing zoning regulations. However, the history of Dr.Via's case suggests that the inspectors are being prevented from performing their duties, or their findings are ignored. In response to my complaint filed years ago, the inspector photographed a big rig entering the farm. The use of such a truck contrasts with the DPZ's evaluation used as a basis to issue the farm brewery, where Marriner states that the truck traffic would consist of two 22 ft flatbed trucks with a lift gate. In spite of the inspector's finding, the weekly deliveries by big rigs and other trucks has escalated. Also in that case, the inspector mentions using social media (FaceBook) to research activities at the parcel. In contrast, while testifying for Dr.Via's case, the same inspector testified that no violation was found at the Manor Hill farm on a Wednesday inspection. When questioned why the inspection was done on a day when the brewery was closed to the public, rather than consulting the visitation hours posted on the MHB website, the inspector responded that social media cannot be used to investigate cases.

This gives the impression that other factors are at play in investigating and enforcing zoning regulations judiciously for all of us. A sampling of my concerns regarding stakeholders other than inspectors are provided below.

DPZ Permit approval

The Farm Brewery Permit to Manor Hill Farm was approved by DPZ's Cindy Hamilton, subsequent to an evaluation for use done by Bob Lalush. Within that evaluation is a site plan with over 3,600 square feet of brewery processing equipment. However, in the RC zoning district, accessory structures are restricted to 2,200 square feet.

-

SECTION 128.0: Supplementary Zoning District Regulations A. Supplementary Bulk Regulation 12. Regulations for detached accessory structures on residentially zoned lots developed with single-family detached dwellings a. Size restrictions (1) (c) 2,200 square feet for a lot in the RC or RR district which is greater than 2 acres.

So why was this restriction not enforced for the Manor Hill Parcel? In 2017, the DPZ had no problem using the size restriction to shut down the Omar farm, also on Manor Lane. Why has DPZ chosen to enforce this restriction for the Omar farm but not Manor Hill?

DPZ - Director Lynda Eisenberg

In the most recent hearing for Dr. Via's appeal (BA-806), DPZ Director Lynda Eisenberg made two comments that showed complete disregard for zoning regulations and the concerns of the residents facing the negative impact of lack of enforcement of zoning.

When the legislation for a farm brewery was crafted, the risk for excessive visitation was the basis for a 50 person limit to visitation. When Dr. Via asked Ms Eisenberg about the 50 person limit at Manor Hill, Ms Eisenberg mentioned that it is problematic to enforce, since the agritourism permit allows unlimited visitation and the DPZ can't count how many people are drinking beer at one time. This point shows a highly contrived misinterpretation of zoning restrictions, since the 50 person limit refers to the total number of *visitors* and makes no mention of drinking.

- SECTION 128.0: Supplementary Zoning District Regulations O. Farm Winery-Class 1A or Farm Brewery Class 1A 1. I . At any one time, the number of visitors to the winery or brewery shall not exceed 50 visitors.

Upon additional questioning, Ms Eisenberg testified that the county's agritourism permit does not include the serving of alcohol, and she could not provide the basis for allowing Manor Hill Brewery to serve alcohol to an unlimited number of visitors.

Inspections, Licenses & Permits

In 2014, the residents of Manor Lane saw an endless stream of dump trucks coming up and down Manor Lane, delivering dirt to the parcel next to Manor Hill Farm, which at the time was owned by real estate and land use lawyer, Megan Reuwer. The dirt was being piled in a huge hill on her parcel, alongside that of Randy Marriner. When concerned neighbors reached out to Randy Marriner, he answered: *She is building a berm on her/our side property line, that when finished should provide additional screening of my property from Manor Lane. It is my understanding that she has all the required County permits and has installed the necessary sediment control devices.* Mr. Marriner's email suggests that this hill's sole purpose was to provide the screening required for a Farm Brewery.

- SECTION 128.0: Supplementary Zoning District Regulations O. Farm Winery-Class

1A or Farm Brewery Class 1A 1. f Appropriate screening of adjoining parcels shall be provided, which may include a solid fence, wall, landscaping or a combination that presents an attractive and effective buffer.

The grading permit (G1400003, granted Feb 12 2014, inspected for release on April 29, 2015) was described as GRADING & SEDIMENT CONTROLS FOR HORSE FARM/STOCK PILE - LOT #4. This permit was reviewed by Bob Frances, and marked as completed by Veronica Landis. Yet there was never a horse farm on this parcel. The processing of this permit resulted in permanent loss of agricultural use of a huge section of the Reuwer preservation parcel, and a change in land topography, with no added value, except to help Mr. Marriner fulfill the requirements of accessory use of Farm Brewery.

Howard County Economic Development Authority (HCEDA)

In December of 2014, Manor Hill Farm was granted \$10,000 from HCEDA's Catalyst Loan Program to be used for what was described in the Baltimore Sun as a brewery being built in a 7,200 sq ft barn. Not only was this award for a project that exceeds accessory use size limitation of 2,200 sq ft, but it disregarded conflict of interest between the Catalyst program and owner Randy Marriner and his daughter and CFO Rachel Mull.

- On Sept 15, 2014 was a public hearing for County resolution CR105-2014 to appoint Randy Marriner to the Board of Directors of the Howard County Economic Authority. This was only withdrawn on Jan 5, 2015. This means the Catalyst grant was given while the grantee was being considered for Director of the HCEDA.
- On November 12, 2014, recently elected County Executive Allan Kittleman announced his transition team with Randy Marriner's daughter and CFO of Manor Hill Farm, Rachel Mull, to evaluate the Howard County Economic Development Authority. Six weeks later, in a photo shoot for the Baltimore Sun, the check for \$10,000 is handed to Ms. Mull's parents and sister.
- The Catalyst Loan Program is funded by Maryland's Video Lottery Terminal (VLT) fund by using the proceeds from video lottery terminals (slots) to assist small, minority, and women owned businesses. In a March email to neighbors MHB's owner Randy Marriner describes himself as: *the longest serving member of the Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Commission, where I have served as Commissioner, Vice-Chairman and Chairman, having been appointed by the last two Governors.*

These considerations show that in their grant, the HCEDA lowered themselves to the same level of lack of ethics and integrity as the Marriner family.

DPZ Development Engineering Division

Chad Edmondson, a Division Chief of the Development Engineering Division

Mr. Jagarapu, Chief of the Bureau of Highways at Howard County's Department of Public Works.

In Dr. Via's appeal BA 794D, the hearing examiner ordered the DPZ to properly investigate the requirement for *"safe and convenient vehicular and pedestrian traffic movements appropriate to the various uses of land and structures throughout the County."*

A traffic study was done over the course of one week and confirmed the excessive traffic, counting 358 Peak Hour Trips (PHT), *meaning 6 trips each minute* to the end of Manor Lane, and an Average Daily Trips (ADT) of 681.

In a letter to Sara Via, Zoning Supervisor JJ Hartner refers to analysis of the study done by Chad Edmondson. Mr. Edmondson referred to Design Manual Appendix A(2-109) to suggest that Manor Lane resembled a Residential Access Street with 12' lanes and an ADT of 500 trips. However, as its name suggests, Manor Lane (not Lanes) has one but not two 12" lanes. The width of Manor Lane varies from 17-21". Clearly the traffic on Manor Lane should fall well below that of a two lane road.

In the appeal hearing, Mr Jagarapu elaborately testified that the road could carry even more traffic than the current levels. However, he then finally clarified that his analysis referred to the structural integrity of the road, and not the safety or use of Lane by its residents, or the damage of the sides of the Lane when vehicles drove off the road to pass one another. This suggests that not only the DPZ, but also the county's traffic engineers are willing to misrepresent traffic studies and disregard safety standards for the sole benefit of the Marriner family.

Howard County Office of Law - Steven Yeager, Assistant County Solicitor,

In the appeal of Dr. Via's case (BA 794D) Steven Yeager, Assistant County Solicitor, explained that the DPZ did not issue a violation because of the potential for the violation to be contested when it reaches circuit court. In her conclusion, the hearing examiner pointed out that the county's subsequent actions regarding a violation could not be used in determining whether a violation exists. Yet in the second appeal, Mr. Yeager again used this justification for not issuing a zoning violation.

This comment shows disregard for the conclusion of the Hearing Examiner. Furthermore, in the case of BA 794D, as mentioned previously, the DPZ could put an end to the negative impact, without issuing a violation, by restricting visitation to the farm. The refusal to make use of this solution gives the impression that the Office of Law is actively allowing the Marriner's unrestricted use of the parcel, to the detriment of neighboring residents.

Agricultural Land Preservation Program

The Manor Hill Farm is on a parcel in the Agricultural Land Preservation Program and does not have the required approval for social assemblies. Yet Manor Hill advertises weddings and other social gatherings online. These gatherings have included political fundraisers, attended by **elected officials at the county, state, and federal level**. Why has Joy Levy, Administrator ALPP not stepped in to enforce the restriction? Why do our own elected officials not adhere to the zoning regulations of the areas they represent?