



SUGARLOAF CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER May 2010

"Protecting our rural legacy"

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Our Future ...

The annual meeting of Sugarloaf Citizens' Association drew nearly 100 people to the Gothic Barn at Linden Farm on April 17 for a morning of dialogue, information, and fellowship. Young people from schools in Montgomery County demonstrated environmental projects sponsored by the Piedmont Environmental Foundation, an SCA affiliate.

The main speaker was Royce Hanson, the Chair of the Montgomery County Planning Board and one of the original creators of the Agricultural Reserve. He is leaving public office in June this year and presented SCA with a valedictory address that touched the past but mainly looked to the future of the Reserve. There is not enough room in this article to repeat this address but we will emphasize two major insights that serve as beacons for the work of SCA and other organizations that contribute to the protection of the agricultural and open land legacy of Montgomery County.

Royce Hanson clearly stated that while the Ag Reserve is unique in that it provides a protected zone for agriculture in Montgomery County, the Reserve is not safe from attacks by developers. Pressures are constantly mounting as demand increases for housing and business activities in the Metropolitan Washington area.

A second insight was his view of how the future of the Reserve can be sustained by dedicated politicians and motivated activists. Increased food producing opportunities in the Reserve will strengthen the will of all Montgomery County residents to support the preservation of agricultural land. Another way to sustain the Reserve is placing as much land as possible into the Maryland Environmental Trust or similar easement programs as a way to prevent the building of new highways through the Reserve.

Sugarloaf members are dedicated to do what is necessary to protect agriculture in Montgomery County. Royce Hanson leaves a powerful legacy that will serve as an inspiration and guide for years to come

One other matter has just appeared as this article is being written, involving the routing of transmission lines (PATH) by Allegheny Power Company through the Ag Reserve. Maryland Public Service Commission has allowed a PATH application despite the fact that both Virginia and West Virginia have rejected PATH applications. We are monitoring the situation and will keep our readers informed.