

Season's Greetings!

Given the recent political theater we all watched unfold this past year, I suspect that no matter what side of the partisan aisle you fall on, you might be tempted to escape to a game replay on ESPN or perhaps a feel-good movie on the Hallmark Channel at this point. Understandable. But the lesson I drew from this past election is how imperative it is to stay connected to your community, listen to and respect one another, and stay engaged and informed on the issues.

When it comes to the Agricultural Reserve-- that is Sugarloaf's mission. Whether meeting with Maryland Transportation Secretary Rahn to present research debunking the wisdom of a second Potomac bridge crossing or working with the County to install bee hives on Linden Farm as an outdoor classroom for PHS students, Sugarloaf's all-volunteer team is your watchdog and works to preserve the rural legacy of the Agricultural Reserve.

Like many prior years, 2016 was a busy year for our volunteer team. Sugarloaf took action and met challenges on many different fronts, including:

- **Global Mission Church (GMC)** — Plans to build an 118,000 square foot mega-church facility, larger than the Nashville Convention Center, on a piece of property off of Old Hundred Road with no public sewer or water is still in motion. Sugarloaf met with Frederick County Executive Jan Gardner and her staff to discuss our concerns. The facility's septic plan has not yet been approved and Sugarloaf is hiring a hydrologist to closely examine the GMC's sand mound plan and the geology at the proposed site to bolster our case. The findings will be submitted to both Frederick and Montgomery Counties as well as the Maryland Department of the Environment.
- **Ten Mile Creek Sewer Proposal.** In an unusual legal move, Pulte Homes took action to subpoena communications and documents from Sugarloaf and other civic organizations who were part of the Save Ten Mile Creek Coalition in their case against Montgomery County. We are grateful that Donald Mitchell, an attorney at Arent Fox, kindly offered to represent us pro bono. Our case will be before Judge Sullivan in US District Court in Greenbelt on December 13<sup>th</sup>. We hope that the judge will reject Pulte's demand. Not only is it very time consuming and burdensome to retrieve a year's worth of communications, but we are especially concerned it could put a chill on civic activism for fear of retribution.
- **Creative Essay Contest.** Sugarloaf partnered with Poolesville High School (PHS) educators to design and rollout an essay contest. Clara Jackson was declared this year's winner. The judges were impressed with how Clara's Hops Farm concept captured the spirit of Montgomery County's Agricultural Reserve. Check out her winning essay @ [sugarloaforcitizens.org](http://sugarloaforcitizens.org).
- **Broadband Access.** High speed broadband access is no longer a luxury—it is a necessity and widely considered an essential, core utility. Sugarloaf and other Ag Reserve stakeholders are working with county officials to expand broadband access well beyond the current pilot program to benefit all in the Ag Reserve—farmers, home-based businesses, students, and residents. We are working to secure a county cable expert as a speaker at our upcoming Annual Meeting this Spring.

None of this would have been possible without your support. From its inception nearly 44 years ago, Sugarloaf has been an all-volunteer organization, but it sometimes takes more than sweat to get the job done right. Land use attorneys, environmental experts, and communication tools to mobilize and inform supporters cost money. And we would not have realized the successes of this past year without investing in that expertise.

So, we thank you for your generosity in the past, and ask you to contribute again this year to help Sugarloaf protect the Agricultural Reserve. Contributions can be made on our website: [sugarloafcitizens.org](http://sugarloafcitizens.org) or by mailing your check and the form below.

Again, thank you for your past and future support. And please keep an eye out for future communications about upcoming Sugarloaf events, such as MidWinter's Garden Dreaming and our Annual Meeting at Linden Farm.

Warm wishes to you and your loved ones this holiday season!



Beth Daly  
President, Sugarloaf Citizens Association

Please detach along line, complete, and mail in enclosed envelope.

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- I live in the Ag Reserve and would like to join Sugarloaf Citizens Association (\$20 per individual; \$40 family)
- I live outside the Ag Reserve but would like to be a Friend of Sugarloaf Citizens Association (\$20 per individual; \$40 family)
- Please accept my additional donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\*We do not share email address information with other organizations