

Sugarloaf Citizens Association Newsletter - October, 2010

Updates and some new plans for two leaders in Sugarloaf County.

The Montgomery County Council voted by a margin of five to three to support the Montgomery County Park and Planning Board's recommendation to deny a ZTA that would have allowed Pet Day Care Centers to operate in the Agriculture Reserve. Pet boarding is already allowed in the RDT zone but all such facilities have to go through the Special Exception process. This process makes sure that the facility complies with all health and environmental concerns besides the usual ones of hours, traffic and lighting. S.C.A. testified against the ZTA at both the Park and Planning hearing and the County Council hearing. Please see our new website sugarloafcitizens.org for more information on this issue and other issues facing the Agriculture Reserve.

As you are reading this, good friends of the Agriculture Reserve and SCA are on their way to a new life in the Midwest. The Board of S.C.A. was shocked and saddened to receive the news that Betsy Lyman and Gary Valen have sold their beautiful home and land on Route 28 and are off to an intermediate location in Meadowcreek in the Arkansas Ozarks. They hope to buy a place half way between relatives that live in the south and relatives that live in the north. I cannot stress enough what Gary and Betsy have done for our community. Gary and Betsy came here in 1996. Gary traveled with his work with The Humane Society of the U.S. Betsy worked from home for P. Allen Smith Company. After living in NY, they returned to their home and started planting roots in their garden and their chosen community. Their interest in sustainable farming, preservation of open space, prairie restoration, gardening, and writing led them to join groups such as S.C.A., SRT, the Monocacy Garden Club, two book clubs and the Boyd's Writers Group. There is not room in this newsletter to list all of the wonderful ways that Betsy and Gary have contributed to S.C.A. and the wider community. As President of S.C.A. for the past two years, Gary quietly attending countless meetings of the PATH Transmission Line task force. Because of Gary's participation, Alleghany Power Company decided to withdraw consideration of a route through the Agriculture Reserve. Betsy's lasting gift to S.C.A. is our new web site, which should be a source of good information for years to come. As one S.C.A. and SRT board member so beautifully wrote to Gary and Betsy:

“You will be missed so much here--we thought you were embedded forever, so we took advantage of your energy, intelligence, integrity, and friendship. But all of us realize that life is complicated, and that other challenges may call us to rethink what seems like home. It will be tough at first to make do without you in the S.C.A. and SRT, but the heritage that you have built over the past few years will carry us along as we move ahead.”

Gary and Betsy wrote a farewell message to the S.C.A. Board that should be shared with our membership. “What we leave behind are cherished friendships and associations with each of you. Our efforts together to protect the Agriculture Reserve and our rural community had many twists and turns that may have led to some challenging moments at the time but will always be a source of pride and accomplishment in our memories. We leave knowing that legacy will continue with all of you and the new recruits who will take our places.”