

# SCA NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2009

Fall is in the air in the Agriculture Reserve with the beginning of brilliant tree leaf colors, harvesting of crops and the hosting of various festivals including Poolesville Days. We can always tell when fall unofficially arrives with the increased weekend traffic of residents and visitors picking up fruit at the orchards and farm stands, traveling the trails of Sugarloaf or enjoying the vineyard's bounty.

If you visit the Agriculture Reserve this fall, you will see two sets of signs that register how some residents are feeling about two issues facing us. This first is the huge Global Mission Church that will be located just off highway 109 not far from the 270 exit. Negotiations with church officials and county leaders have been conducted all summer to see if there are any compromises to the plans for a 138,000 square foot structure located on a rustic road on agriculture land.

We have written about this issue in previous Newsletters and it is clear that most of the residents in the area close to this proposed large complex feel that the scale does not match existing churches or even other structures in the countryside. But community feelings are not especially valid to the county officials who must approve such building projects. There must be some solid legal reasons to deny a permit to build.

In the case of the huge church, there are two concerns that have legal ramifications. 1) The legal limit of 4999 gallons of waste a day that can be sent to a septic field is unrealistic for the estimated congregation of almost 1200 people. 2) The environmental degradation to Little Bennett Creek, a protected stream, is a potential danger from a two acre sand mound located on the hill just above the flowing stream and the driveway that must cross a bridge over the creek and descend up a steep slope to the site of the church. It is not enough for designers and officials to simply declare these are not problems. Before this church can go forward, there must be certainty that sewer regulations are enforced and environmental degradation to Little Bennett Creek is not even a possibility. The Frederick Planning Commission will hold a hearing at 9:30 on October 14 to determine whether this construction can proceed.

The second issue is the planned development of 31 new houses in clusters along Peach Tree Road. While this project has not yet been submitted for county review, it does threaten another of our rustic roads and is a potential source of conflict between farmers who grow crops and raise animals in the area and the new suburbanites. SCA is monitoring this development and will present additional information when it is available. In the meantime, enjoy a trip through the country. You will understand why we work so hard to protect it.