

Dear Neighbors,

Do you live within five miles of 22620 Peach Tree Road? If so, you should be aware that approval of a proposed private airstrip at that address could reduce your property value—**perhaps by as much as 10 percent.** Why? Section 40-11 of the Montgomery County code requires that you disclose the location of any airport or air strip within five miles of your property to all prospective purchasers.

Airstrips associated with a farm are allowable in the RDT zone as a special exception. SCA supports the position that “associated with a farm” means “related to farm work”. This application (S-2778), which was specifically submitted for “recreational use”, received Park and Planning approval with flight limitations. However, the FAA has ultimate authority, and Montgomery County would relinquish control over the operation of this airstrip were it approved. The Board of Appeals will continue hearing this case on February 18, 2011. SCA opposes approval of this airstrip, S-2778.

Seeing the need for zoning clarification, Montgomery County Councilpersons Elrich and Craig proposed a Zoning Text Amendment, ZTA 10-15, to clarify that airstrips on farms must “aid farming operations”.

1. SCA supports the position that the zoning code should only permit publicly owned or operated airstrips in the R.D.T. zone. No private airstrips exist in Montgomery County; crop dusting has become an infrequent, highly specialized service usually contracted out; and farmers needing to travel on farm business now have many choices of regional public transportation hubs. Thus, it appears that airstrips associated with farm work are no longer needed.
2. If the County should decide to continue to allow air strips associated with farm work, a provision to protect homes and nearby farming operations is vital. SCA would support an amendment to require a one-thousand foot buffer between an air strip for farm use and any existing home.

The County Council held a public hearing on Jan. 18, 2011 on ZTA 10-15. SCA welcomes ZTA 10-15 and hopes the County Council will pass it with amendments. ***We urge you to contact County Council President Ervin with your support of proposed ZTA 10-15 with amendments at Councilmember.ervin@montgomerycountymd.gov.***

Mark your Calendars: SCA Annual Meeting – **April 2, 2011**, Linden Farm, 9:30 a.m.
Guest Speaker- Francoise M. Carrier, Chair MC Park and Planning.