

Exhibit E



October 19, 2021

From: Mattawoman Watershed Society and Friends

To: Charles County Board of Commissioners, Clerk to the Commissioners, County Attorney, County Administrator

Re: Comprehensive Plan, Watershed Conservation District, Maryland Airport

Our coalition – made up of the undersigned organizations-- is writing to request that the county commissioners postpone making a decision at your scheduled work session regarding the Comprehensive Plan amendment that would remove 558 acres of environmental protection of the Watershed Conservation District in order to expand Maryland Airport. You should instead plan a new hearing.

You should plan a new hearing specifically because your public notice was defective, and generally because public outreach did not meet a reasonable standard.

The new hearing you plan should have adequate public notice and should take genuine effort to inform the public of the significance of your proposed amendment.

The August 2021 notice outlined a process for signing up for the hearing. On the date of the hearing, September 22, 2021, the registration period began at 8 a.m. The County informed those persons who called to register to speak in the hearing that a new and markedly different procedure would be used, and which was spelled out in emails apparently improvised during the day.

The procedure given in the notice was that those wishing to speak would call between 8 and 4 on the day of the hearing to register. After registering, the citizen would get a telephone call between 6 pm and 9 pm and could testify then in that phone call.

The new procedure required waiting for an email with further instructions which required a person to log into a county webinar to testify. No provision was made for those without internet access; although, at least one citizen who explained he would not have internet access was told he would be called to testify. He waited for the call, which never came.

We know of a significant number of opponents of the amendment who made great effort to testify but the systems did not function. It should not be made difficult for an interested citizen to testify.

Furthermore, at least one affected property owner never got notice. Also, the signage that should have been posted for the hearing was either absent or grossly inadequate.

The Watershed Conservation District resulted from a great deal of citizen participation. The Commissioners must not consider making such a dramatic weakening of the WCD without the citizenry being reasonably well informed and notified.

The CCGTV recording of the hearing begins with an onscreen disclaimer asking the citizens to be patient with the County and understand that the Covid emergency has presented unique obstacles to public participation. It states that the County is taking every effort to adjust to overcome the obstacles. It is true that Covid causes such problems, but it is not the case that the County has taken adequate steps to overcome the obstacles to citizen participation. On the contrary it appears that the County is attempting to take advantage of the situation to justify grossly inadequate outreach.

Two examples are the defective public notice and the very short comment period, after the hearing.

The only remedy is to schedule a new hearing.

The new hearing should have these features:

- * a public notice that includes a fair and rational signup procedure for those who wish to speak at the hearing.
- * adequate on-site signage for the hearing
- *truly informative and well-distributed outreach and education

* an unbiased staff presentation that does not conceal the many environmental justice and environmental damage concerns that this proposed amendment raises.

Sincerely,

Alex Winter,

Mattawoman Watershed Society

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