

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
8787 Georgia Avenue • Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

MCPB
12/06/01
Item # 3

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 30, 2001
TO: Montgomery County Planning Board
VIA: John Carter, Chief, Community-Based Planning Division *JC*
FROM: Judy Daniel, AICP for the Department of Park and Planning

REVIEW: Special Exception
APPLYING FOR: Private Club
REVIEW BASIS: Chapter 59, Zoning Ordinance; advisory to the Board of Appeals
APPLICANT: Career Firefighters Association
CASE NUMBER: S-2482

ZONE: Rural Density Transfer Zone
LOCATION: 24100 Stringtown Road, Clarksburg Vicinity
MASTER PLAN: Preservation of Agricultural and Rural Open Space

FILING DATE: May 29, 2001
PLANNING BOARD: December 6, 2001
PUBLIC HEARING: December 20, 2001 at Board of Appeals

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: DENIAL/DEFERRAL

Several elements of transportation and environmental information necessary to complete the review of this application have not yet been submitted to the staff. Also certain elements of the submitted statement of operations are incomplete. A final assessment cannot be made until these items have been submitted.

PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION

This application is for a Private Club for the Montgomery County Career Firefighters Association proposed at 24100 Stringtown Road near the Clarksburg community, bordering the Clarksburg Master Plan area.

Neighborhood

The property is surrounded by residential and agricultural land uses – all in the RDT zone. Southeast of the subject property is the Fountain View subdivision in the Clarksburg Master. Approximately 26 homes in Fountain View and 7 homes on larger lots on the north side of Stringtown are located between Piedmont Road and the subject property. This includes homes located immediately across from the existing entrance to the property. Properties to the north and west are more rural in character.

Site

The application is proposed on 55.6 acres of an approximately 75-acre property located on the north side of Stringtown Road approximately 1.5 miles northeast of MD 355. The property encompasses two parcels, P960 of 75.13 acres, and P942 of .57 acres within the RDT Zone. This property comprises the Gue Farm, identified as Historic Site # 10/45 on the "Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites". Existing structures on the site include two residences and various farm buildings. These improvements are clustered near a driveway along Stringtown Road, approximately 600 feet from the intersection of Kingsley Road. The applicant is proposing to re-subdivide these parcels into three lots encompassing 55.6 acres for the Firefighters Club in the center of the property, an 8.39-acre residential lot closer to Piedmont Road, and a 9.13-acre lot with the existing buildings nearer to Kingsley Road.

The property is comprised primarily of rolling fields, streambed, and some forest area. The main branch of Little Bennett Creek extends along the south side of Kingsley Road through most of the property. A tributary south of the main branch drains northward into Little Bennett Creek, merging with it approximately 1,100 feet west of Stringtown Road. The high point is located approximately midway along Stringtown Road and the property slopes downward approximately 60 feet to the convergence with the southern tributary to Little Bennett Creek.

Application

The intent of the application is to provide a location for the Montgomery County Career Firefighters Association to hold business, civic, social, and recreational events for its members and their guests. The proposed private club facilities include a two-story building with basement, parking for 120 vehicles, and a new driveway from Stringtown Road located approximately 600 feet west of the current driveway. The proposed entry is approximately 2/3 mile from the intersection with Piedmont Road. The club is to be served by a private well and septic system and be able to accommodate groups of no more than 240 people.

A club building of approximately 20,000 square feet is proposed. It would include the club facilities, offices, and storage space. The first floor of the proposed building would have 7,500 square feet, the second floor 5,000 square feet, and a basement with 7,500 square feet. The applicant states that this space is to be used as:

Ballroom/Meeting Room:	6,365 square feet
Foyer/other open space:	13,625 square feet

The first floor will have a large event room, a catering kitchen, a smaller gathering area for small meetings, and a vending machine area. The second floor will include six offices (three for the daily employees and three for small meetings), an anteroom, a staff kitchen, a conference room, and a workroom (files, copying, storage). The stated use for the 7,500 square foot basement is storage. The food preparation equipment of the facility will be limited to the catering kitchen and small staff kitchen, as extensive food preparation on-site is not anticipated.

The proposed building would be located approximately 1,200 feet from Stringtown Road and setback 400 feet from Kingsley Road at the closest point. The building would be located more than 1,200 feet from the southern property line and 550 feet from the western property line. Although the proposed structure is large, because of the depth of the setbacks and the topographic conditions the building would not overwhelm residences in the surrounding area.

Parking for 120 vehicles is proposed in two lots, one adjacent to the building, and one south east of the building accessed via the driveway from Stringtown Road. Lighting is to include 3-

foot tall driveway indicators, and 8-14 foot tall parking lot lights. Exterior lighting is only to be used when evening events are scheduled.

Use of the club will be for members and their guests, and there are currently 937 members. The applicant has not stated whether that number will continue to increase. The applicant states that 30-50 members, guests and employees would use the building on an average daily basis for meetings and social functions. Larger events would be limited to 240 persons due to septic requirements. Events are to include:

- 1 membership meeting of up to 30 people one weekday per month
- 1 business meeting of up to 14 people one weekday per month
- 1 weekly daytime "event" for up to 100 (weekday or weekend not specified)
- 1 weekly evening event for up to 100
- 1 annual weekend event for up to 100
- Special events for members (weddings, retirements, etc. up to a maximum of 75 weekend day or evening events per year.

This indicates that there will be approximately 6 events per month, of which 2-4 could often be for 100 or more. Since the above meeting estimates indicate at least 4 regularly scheduled meetings or events per month – this would mean approximately 25 "special" events (weddings, retirements, charity events, etc.) would be held per year. This would be about 2 "special" events per month on average, but it is probable that they would not be evenly spaced out. No indication is given as to whether outdoor events are to be allowed, and if traffic control would be provided for large events.

There are 4 full time employees proposed, to be supplemented with 3-5 part-time employees on a daily basis. In the originally submitted statement of operations, proposed hours of operation are 7:00 A.M. to 10:00 P.M. Monday through Friday, and 10 AM to 10 PM on Saturday and Sunday. However, the submitted Transportation Operational Plan (dated August 13, 2001) indicates a midnight closing time 7 days per week. All food service for events will be catered, but snacks and light meals will be provided on site. The applicant has not specified how the light meals will be prepared, or whether they will be delivered.

ANALYSIS

Zoning

Private clubs are permitted in the RDT Zone in accordance with the criteria in Section 59-G-2.42, which indicates the use must conform to the special exception requirements of Section G-2.24. The proposed facility easily meets zoning requirements for height, setback and lot size.

Agricultural and Rural Open Space Master Plan

The property is within the Agricultural and Rural Open Space Master Plan adopted 1980. The master plan is silent on special exceptions, however private clubs are permitted – with a presumption that they do not radically change the character of the surrounding rural area.

The northern boundary of the Clarksburg Master Plan (adopted June 1994) runs along the south side of Stringtown Road, dipping south along the border of the Fountain View Subdivision. Therefore, traffic from this facility will impact the level of traffic in the Clarksburg community. According to the planning staff for Clarksburg (as outlined in an attached memo) the area directly abutting the subject property "is recommended as a low-density 'edge' transitioning to

the rural character of the Agricultural Reserve.” The Clarksburg Master Plan zoning reflects the intent of the master plan to “cluster more intense uses within the centers of Clarksburg” where there are “roadway and sewer systems to support such uses.” The Clarksburg planner believes the issue of most concern with the use is the level of activity and traffic the facility would generate, stating that the Clarksburg Master Plan “clearly intended such intense uses to be within areas served by sewer and the arterial roadway system”, and thus incompatible with the premise of the master plan to “cluster more intense development into centers rather than to sprawl around the edges of the master plan.”

Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan

Stringtown Road in the area of the subject property was designated a Rustic Road in the context of the Clarksburg Master Plan, and Kingsley Road was designated an Exceptional Rustic Road in the Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan [approved December 1996]. Stringtown Road is described in the Clarksburg Master Plan as being approximately 18 feet wide, with no curbs and slight gravel shoulders and a drainage ditch. The proposed use would have an insignificant impact on Kingsley Road, but Stringtown Road may see a significant increase in traffic as a result of the proposed use.

As described in the Rustic Roads Master Plan, this .61-mile section of Stringtown (between Kingsley and Piedmont) is historically important for connecting the historic communities of Clarksburg and Damascus. It appears on an 1837 map, making it one of the earliest roads in the county.” Its view shed is described as a “framed country view of rolling hills, farm buildings, and houses...On the left a long view across cultivated fields with a tree-covered ridge in the distance.” More directly pertinent to this application, the summary of criteria evaluation for inclusion of a rustic road note the following about this section of Stringtown Road:

- narrow and intended for local use
- traffic volume consistent with a rustic road
- outstanding farm and rural vistas
- historic value
- low accident history

All of these criteria are necessary for inclusion as a rustic road. Therefore, if the new use raises the traffic load (and/or the accident level) above that established for a rustic road, the status of this road may eventually have to be reconsidered. That volume standard is no more than 3,000 average trips per day and no more than 7 non-alcohol related accidents in a 5-year period. Also, the road cannot be widened or otherwise improved to more than 22 feet.

Also, since the south side of this road segment has a clearly suburban residential character, the farm and rural vista along the north side that is a part of the criteria may be endangered by the addition of a non-residential use that creates a significant level of activity. Thus the anticipated additional traffic load, level of activity, and impact on the vistas to the north are significant factors in considering this use.

The applicant met with the Rustic Roads Advisory Committee on October 25. The Committee did not comment on the land use implications of the proposed use. They state in their comments (attached) only that they will need to review the design of the proposed new driveway to ensure that it will not impact the character of Stringtown Road.

However, because of the need to determine whether the level of traffic anticipated for this use will cause it to exceed the generally anticipated level of traffic for a Rustic Road, the staff asked

the applicant for additional traffic information. Some additional information was delivered on the day this report was being finalized, but it was received too late to allow adequate review. The transportation staff will review that information and present a report at the meeting next week.

Traffic

Based on the operations statement provided in conjunction with the special exception application, the proposed special exception will not generate the 50-weekday morning (7:00 to 9:00 am) or evening (4:00 to 6:00 pm) peak-period trips threshold that requires a traffic study. Based on the attached operations plan, however, it appears there is the potential for the generated traffic to have an adverse effect on adjacent rustic road that serves as the primary access to the facility. As stated above, the additional information requested did not arrive in time for analysis before this report was finalized. There is no policy area review because there is no staging ceiling capacity established for the Rural Policy Area.

Landscaping and Lighting

The submitted landscape and lighting plan does not contain sufficient information for the staff to be able to determine whether it complies with parking facility standards. More information and detail is needed in order to determine compliance with the parking area landscaping standards, and more lighting information is necessary to evaluate the fixtures to be proposed.

Environmental

Natural Resources - This application is subject to the Forest Conservation Law. A Natural Resources Inventory (#4-01124) has been submitted and approved. A preliminary Forest Conservation Plan has been submitted, however, it has not yet been approved as staff has requested revisions. The applicant proposes to place approximately 13 acres into a Category I Forest Conservation Easement. The applicant proposes one stream crossing to gain access to the proposed facility. The crossing will require permits from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and the Department of Permitting Services (DPS).

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MD-DNR) indicated in a letter dated November 27, 2000 that two state threatened species are known to exist in the vicinity of this property: the Fringe-tip Closed Gentian and the Purple Fringeless Orchid. After further investigation, it was determined that the gentian is not found on site and the orchid was not found within the proposed limits of disturbance (LOD).

Stormwater Management - The site is located within the Kingsley tributary of the Little Bennett watershed, that is designated Use III-P by the State. The *Countywide Stream Protection Strategy* (CSPS) assesses the Kingsley tributary as having good stream and good habitat conditions, labeling it as a Watershed Preservation Area.

However, the staff has not been able to confirm whether a stormwater concept plan has been submitted to the Department of Permitting Services. Therefore it is not known how stormwater will be treated, and LOD cannot be determined without an approved concept plan. Any changes will result in another site visit to determine overall impact as well as the potential threat to the Purple Fringeless Orchid. Therefore, in the absence of these required documents, the staff recommends **deferral/denial** of this special exception because:

- Applicant has not received approval of a preliminary forest conservation plan;
- Applicant has not received approval of a stormwater management concept plan.

Conditions - If the Board should choose to approve this request, the staff recommends the following conditions:

- Approval of Final Forest Conservation Plan by M-NCPPC technical staff prior to record plat and the release of sediment and erosion control or building permit, as appropriate.
- Applicant to comply with Department of Permitting Services (DEP) requirements for stormwater management and sediment and erosion control.

Subdivision

The Development Review staff has commented that when this proposal was submitted as a pre-preliminary subdivision plan, it seemed to indicate less traffic impact than is now indicated within the special exception application. They reaffirmed the request for additional traffic impact analysis to address the impact of the proposed level of use on the local road network. Also, if the special exception is approved, a preliminary plan of subdivision will be required subject to all provisions of the Subdivision Regulations.

Historic Preservation

The Historic Preservation staff reviewed this proposal in regard to its impact on the historic Gue Farm and associated buildings on the property. The farm buildings on this property include a 19th century log house and bank barn, and an early 20th century bungalow and dairy barn. The applicant's proposal is to include all the farm buildings on a 9-acre lot, retain 55.6 acres for the firefighters club, and create an additional 8-acre building lot. The staff strongly recommends that at least 25 acres be included in the residual farm lot so that it will have a viable potential for continuing agricultural use. This is the established minimum size for a farm within the Agricultural Reserve. The staff recommends that the land along Kingsley Road be included with the property containing the historic structures, which would expand it to approximately 25 acres.

Compliance with Specific and General Special Exception Provisions

At this time, as noted in the attached review, the application does not meet the special exception criteria for the use.

Citizen Concerns

The applicants met with the Clarksburg Civic Association, and the staff has received a resolution from them (attached) expressing their concerns with the application. The Association states in their resolution (approved on a 10-9 vote) that the primary basis of their concern is the potential for problems related to the number of and size of events that would be held at night and on weekends – given the character of Stringtown Road and the intended nature of Rustic Roads.

The staff has also received a number of calls from area residents expressing concern with the application, and a letter of opposition is attached.

INHERENT/NON-INHERENT

The most troubling characteristic of the proposed use is the amount of additional traffic (often on nights and weekends) it would generate along a narrow Rustic Road. The amount of traffic is inherent for the type of use proposed, but the problem of the traffic is inherent only to a site on a

road not equipped to handle the traffic load proposed. Thus the problem is inherently related to the type of road more than the use.

CONCLUSION

This is a group that deserves community support – but the proposed use is one that should ideally be located in a place that is not subject to traffic, safety, and operational concerns. The staff met with the applicants several months ago and suggested several alternate sites in the Clarksburg area that would not create the concerns that exist at this location. They chose not to pursue those suggestions. The staff also requested additional information required to evaluate the request. While they have made some adjustments in their application, at this time some necessary information is still missing, and there remain several concerns about the proposed use at this location.

Traffic - The traffic issues associated with this application relate primarily to its location along a Rustic Road, approximately 2/3 mile from the intersection where Stringtown will become an arterial road in the Clarksburg Town Center. If this use were being proposed at the intersection of Piedmont and Stringtown Roads there would be few problems related to its operation. However, because of the potential for traffic safety issues at this location, it is important to know the full traffic implications of the proposed use. Therefore, the staff cannot make a final recommendation until that information has been evaluated.

Environmental - Similarly, approval of certain environmental elements is required and no approval recommendation can be made until they have been submitted and evaluated. However, it appears that these issues can be resolved.

Operational Elements - The staff does not support the proposed midnight closing time except on Friday and Saturday nights.

Landscaping and Lighting Plans - Insufficiently detailed information was submitted to allow a full evaluation of the landscaping and parking regulations.

Activity Level - Finally, the staff believes that there is a problem with the level of activity proposed at this location along a Rustic Road that serves as a buffer between the suburban character of the Fountain View subdivision and the rural character of the Agricultural Reserve. They will potentially be holding 4 or more meetings or special events per month for more than 100 people, and possibly other charitable events. The beneficial intent of the Fire Fighters Association must be weighed against the probable intent of the Clarksburg and Agricultural and Rural Open Space Master Plans for private clubs in this type of location to be smaller scale in level of activity. For this reason, if allowed, the club will have to be limited to no more than 75 total events of any size per year including meetings, social, charitable, and civic events. The staff would support a request for a moderate increase in the allowed number of small meetings (30 or fewer), but no additional large events.

Because these elements are not resolved, the staff recommends **deferral/denial** of the use.

However, if the traffic information is submitted and found to cause no significant impact on the Rustic Road status, and if all required environmental information is approved, and if the landscape and lighting plan is approved, and if the operational limitations are clarified and found acceptable -- the staff would recommend approval of this use with the conditions noted by the Historic Preservation staff. Those conditions are necessary because there are too many farm

buildings present on this historic property to allow them to be reduced to a 9-acre plot with no realistically viable potential for further agricultural use. With a 25-acre property there is potential for agricultural reuse – although either the historic home or the bungalow would have to be designated for use by a farm employee or as a guesthouse use only. In addition, a closing time of 10:00 pm would be recommended for Sunday through Thursday evenings.

The activity level would still be of concern, but as an isolated issue the staff does not believe it should be sufficient to deny the use, given the nature of the applicant and their service to the greater community.

The staff also notes that even if the traffic information indicates that the Rustic Road would not be negatively impacted, the status of this particular segment of Rustic Road (from Piedmont to Kingsley) may eventually come into question due to its proximity to a small lot residential subdivision and the growing Clarksburg Town Center area. If it should be eventually removed from the Rustic Road Master Plan – due to increasing levels of traffic, accidents, and/or loss of rural character – the road would then be eligible for more extensive improvements to increase its safety for motorists. It is very difficult for Rustic Roads to be widened, straightened or otherwise made safer for drivers, which is why it is problematic for them to be located in areas subject to increasing suburbanization.

Attachments

Special Exception Requirements
Sec. 59-G-1.2. Conditions for granting.

59-G-1.21. General conditions.

(a) A special exception may be granted when the board, the hearing examiner, or the district council, as the case may be, finds from a preponderance of the evidence of record that the proposed use:

- (1) Is a permissible special exception in the zone.

The property is zoned RDT, which permits a private club as a special exception.

- (2) Complies with the standards and requirements set forth for the use in division 59-G-2.

The proposed use does/not comply with the criteria of section 59-G-2.24 at this time.

- (3) Will be consistent with the general plan for the physical development of the district, including any master plan or portion thereof adopted by the Commission.

The Agricultural and Rural Open Space Master Plan is silent on special exceptions, deferring to the Zoning Ordinance. However, the intensity of the proposed use may create a conflict with the intent of the Rustic Roads Master Plan and additional information is required to determine whether a conflict exists.

- (4) Will be in harmony with the general character of the neighborhood considering population density, design, scale and bulk of any proposed new structures, intensity and character of activity, traffic and parking conditions and number of similar uses.

The proposed building is large, but not out of scale with the size of the proposed property. However, the amount of traffic to be anticipated along a narrow Rustic Road does have the potential to create problems that may endanger the designation of this road as Rustic. Therefore, additional traffic information is required to determine whether a conflict will be created.

- (5) Will not be detrimental to the use, peaceful enjoyment, economic value or development of surrounding properties or the general neighborhood; and will cause no objectionable noise, vibrations, fumes, odors, dust, glare or physical activity.

Since most of the activity proposed will occur indoors and proposed lighting will be restricted to the immediate vicinity of the proposed building, driveway and parking area, the use should not have any of these negative impacts.

- (6) Will not, when evaluated in conjunction with existing and approved special exceptions in the neighboring one-family residential area, increase the number, intensity or scope of special exception uses sufficiently to affect the area adversely or alter its predominantly residential nature. Special exception uses in accord with the recommendations of a master or sector plan are deemed not to alter the nature of an area.

The use would not alter the low-density residential / rural character of the area.

- (7) Will not adversely affect the health, safety, security, morals or general welfare of residents, visitors or workers in the area.

The use may have the potential to impact safety, but will not have any other negative impacts. Additional information is required to determine if there will be a potential safety hazard due to anticipated traffic.

- (8) Will be served by adequate public services and facilities including schools, police and fire protection, water, sanitary sewer, public roads, storm drainage and other public facilities. If the special exception use requires approval of a preliminary plan of subdivision in accordance with chapter 50 of this Code, title "Subdivision of Land," the adequacy of public facilities will be determined by the Planning Board at the time of subdivision approval. In that case, the Board of Appeals must include such Planning Board approval as a condition of the grant of the special exception.

If this special exception request is approved, subdivision of the property will be required and adequacy of public facilities will be determined during that process.

Specific Conditions

Sec. 59-G-2.42. Private clubs and service organizations. See section 59-G-2.24

Sec. 59-G-2.24. Golf courses and country clubs.

The Board may authorize a golf course, country club, private club or service organization including community buildings, upon a finding that the proposed use will not adversely affect surrounding residential and agricultural uses because of noise, traffic, number of people or type of physical activity; provided, that the following standards and requirements can be met:

- (a) The provision of food, refreshments, and entertainment for club or organization members and their guests may be allowed in connection with such use, provided the availability of such services is not reasonably expected to draw an excessive amount of traffic through local residential streets.

During normal day-to-day operations, the proposed club would generate a minimal amount of traffic – however the club is proposing a significant level of off-peak, evening, and weekend traffic that the staff believes may create problems along Stringtown Rustic Road. This road is not classified as a local residential street, but a Rustic Road, which implies that it should not be subject to high traffic impacts. Additional traffic information requested by the staff has not yet been received. Also some of the submitted operational characteristics are contradictory and must be clarified to determine impact.

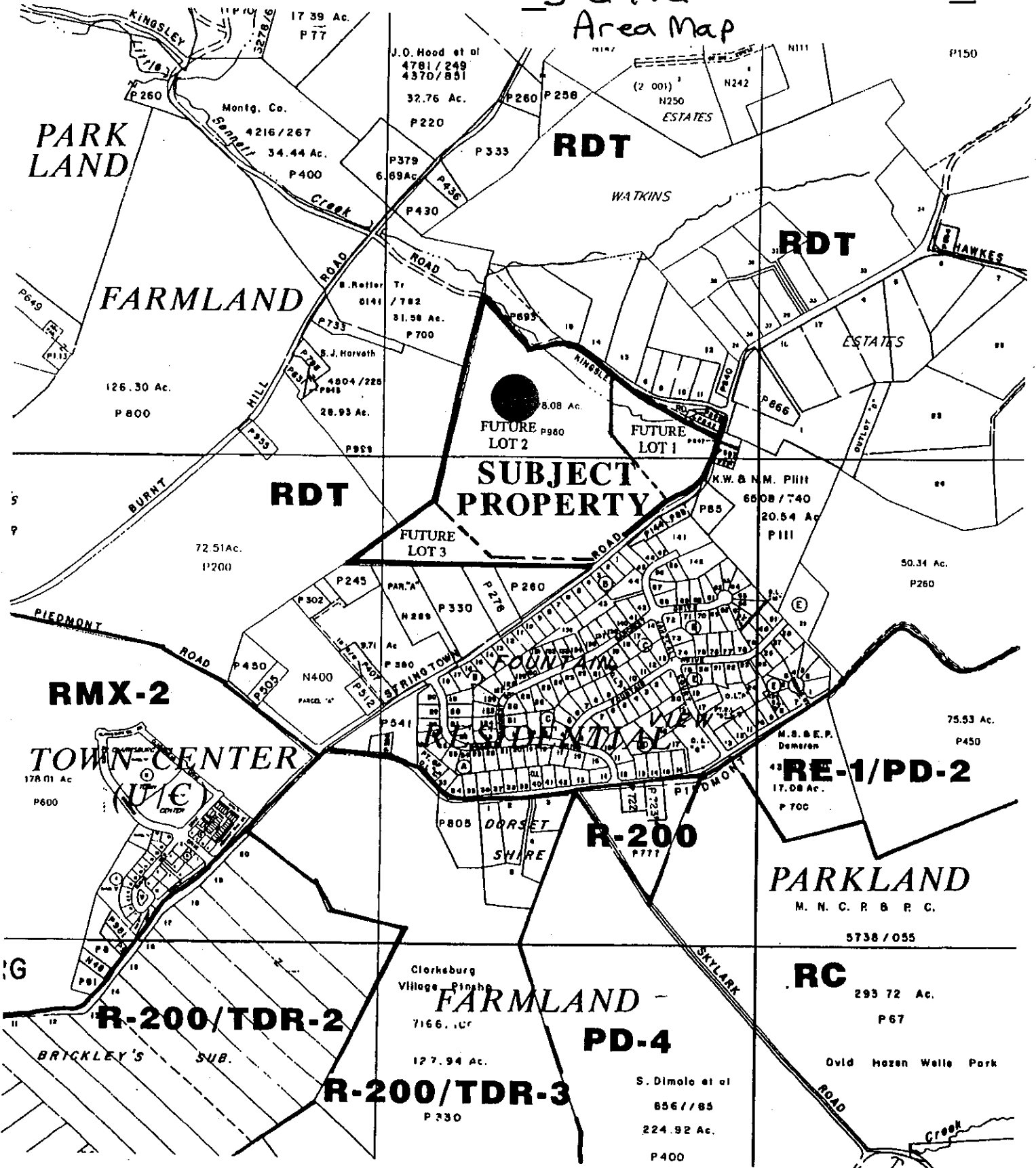
- (b) All buildings shall conform to the height, coverage, and setback regulations of the zone in which they are located; and all facilities shall be so located as to conform to other special exception standards.

The proposed club building will meet the development standards of the RDT Zone for lot size, lot width, setbacks, lot coverage, and building height.

- (c) All outdoor lighting shall be located, shielded, landscaped or otherwise buffered so that no direct light shall constitute an intrusion into any residential area.

Outdoor lighting is proposed to be limited to the building area and adjacent parking lot, with low-level lighting along the entry drive. Light fixtures will be shielded to protect spillage to the area surrounding the property and will be further screened by proposed landscaping and distance from the property boundaries. A more in-depth review of the proposed lighting would be a part of the subdivision review.

5-2482
Area Map

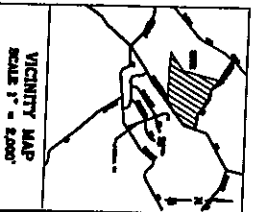
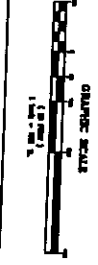
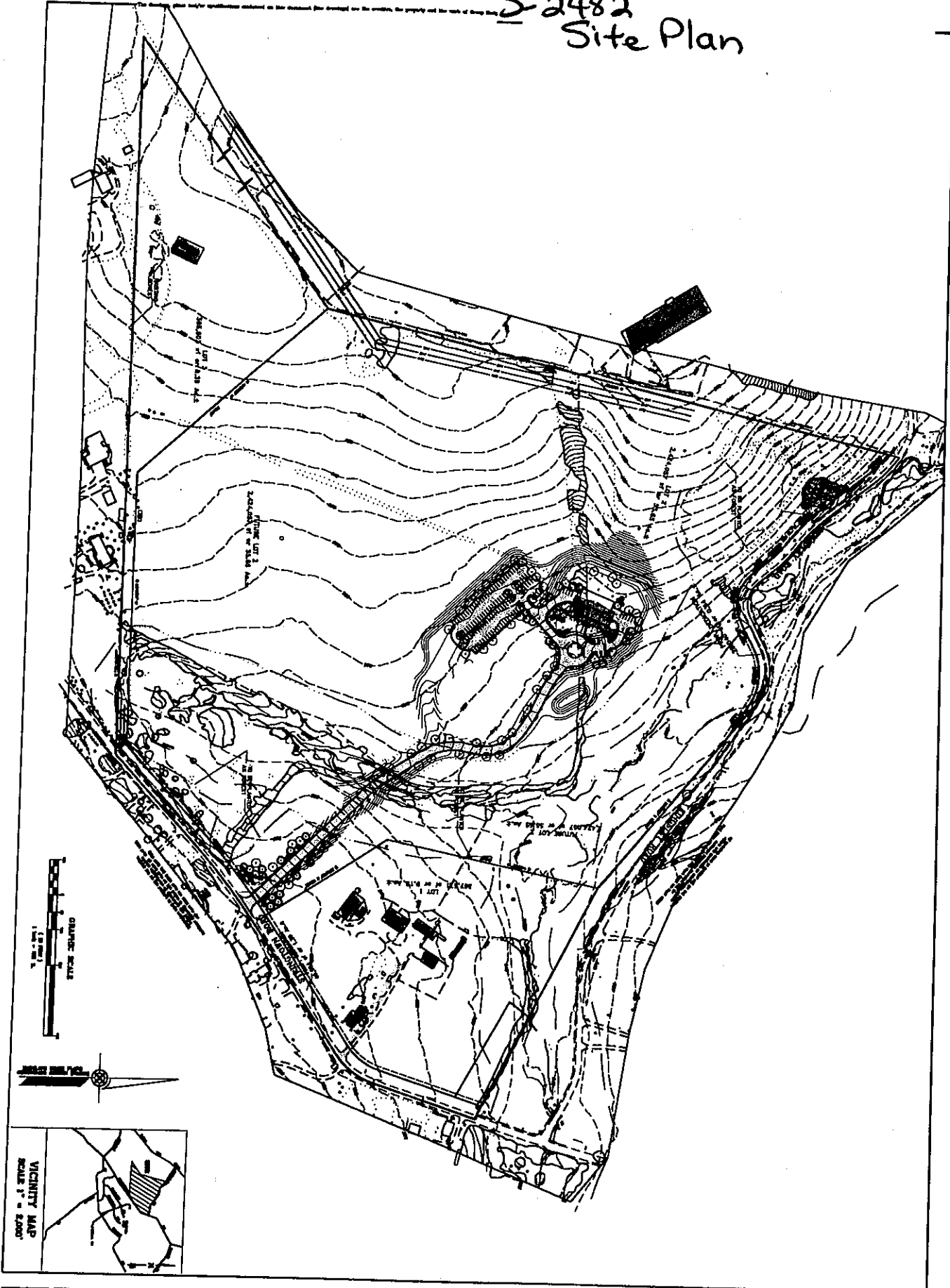


EXISTING ZONING & LAND USE

PERRINE PLANNING & ZONING, INC.

CAREER FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOC., INC. SPECIAL EXCEPTION

S-2482 Site Plan



A-1	1:100	LANDSCAPE AND LIGHTING PLAN FOR SPECIAL EXCEPTION - FUTURE LOT 2 -	20207-01 	MONTGOMERY COUNTY CAREER FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOC. 24100 STRINGTOWN ROAD CLARKSBURG, MD 20871	
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VICINITY MAP FOR
FIRE FIGHTERS

-5-2482



Map compiled on November 27, 2001 at 9:56 AM | Site located on base shoot no - 233NW12 | Date of Orthophotos - March 1998 | Orthophoto Images Licensed from WARGIS LLC.

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Key Map



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1 : 7200

MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

8787 Georgia Avenue - Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

S-2482

VICINITY MAP FOR

FIRE FIGHTERS



Map compiled on November 27, 2001 at 8:40 AM | Site located on base sheet no. - 233NW12

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Key Map



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1 : 7200

MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING
 THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

4787 Georgia Avenue - Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

November 28, 2001

Memorandum

To: Judy Daniels, Rural Community Area
From: Karen Kumm Morris, Clarksburg Planner
Subject: Montgomery County Career Firefighter's Private Club, S-2482

The proposed Firefighter's Private Club directly abuts the planning boundary of the Clarksburg Master Plan on the eastern edge of Clarksburg along Stringtown Road. An existing residential community of Fountain View lies across Stringtown Road directly to the south of the subject property. Needless to say, the convention center will have an affect upon the character, activity and traffic within the Clarksburg community.

Master Plan Recommendations

The Ridge Road Transition Area which directly abuts the subject property is recommended as a low residential density "edge" transitioning to the rural character of the Agricultural Preserve. The area is zoned primarily as Rural Density Transfer (1 du/25 ac) and Rural Cluster (1 du/5 ac). Stringtown Road is recommended as a Rural Rustic Road and intended to remain unaltered in order to preserve the rural characteristics of the roadway.

The Master Plan zoning reflects the intent of the master plan to transition low densities to the Agricultural Preserve and thus cluster more intense uses within the centers of Clarksburg. The Town Center and Transit Corridor District are zoned for denser, mixed use development and have the roadway system and sewer system to support such uses.

Concerns and Issues

The plan proposes to construct a 20,000 square foot, 2 story building to function as a social hall for the Professional Firefighter's Association. The size of building, 120 feet by 70 feet, results in a very large building more commonly found within commercial centers than located in rural settings. However, the more important issue is the level of activity and traffic generated by such a proposal.

The proposal indicates that 900 members will have access to this facility. The applicant has stated that weekend events will be limited to 75 per year and that typically 100 people will visit the facility per week. The Clarksburg Master Plan clearly intended such intense uses to be within areas served by sewer and the arterial roadway system. This proposal seems incompatible with the whole premise of the master plan that is to cluster more intensely used development into centers rather than to sprawl around the edges of the master plan.

The traffic generated by the proposal is a major concern especially given the Rustic Road designation of Stringtown Road. The road is intended by the Master Plan to remain a low volume, scenic rustic roadway. Currently, it is experiencing a great deal of traffic further from the east, Damascus and Frederick County, as drivers attempt to find alternative routes from MD 27 to I-270. Safety and traffic volume are major concerns. The Transportation Division staff memo has more detailed analysis of these traffic concerns.

Community Concerns

The Clarksburg Planning Committee and Civic Association have both reviewed and expressed concerns with the proposal. Also, Fountain View, the community that is most affected by the proposal is generally not supportive. The primary concerns are traffic generation and traffic safety along Stringtown Road, level of activity/number of events, hours of operation, amount of light pollution in an area known for its "dark skies", and noise generated from the amount of traffic.

Staff Recommendation

The proposed plan is not consistent with the intent of the Clarksburg Master Plan on the basis of intensity of use and level of traffic as discussed above. The proposal creates a level of activity beyond the "edge" of Clarksburg that was never intended by the master plan. Therefore, staff recommends DENIAL of the proposed special exception. Staff has met with the applicant and suggested other sites closer within Clarksburg that would not have such associated issues. However, these other potential locations are more expensive land due to the zoning.



RUSTIC ROADS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

November 7, 2001

John F. McCabe, Jr.
Chen, Walsh, Tecler & McCabe, L.L.P
200 Monroe Street, Suite 300
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Montgomery County Firefighters Union Office
Special Exception S-2482

Dear Mr. McCabe:

I am writing on behalf of the Rustic Roads Advisory Committee (RRAC) with regard to the Special Exception Site Plan and Transportation Operation Plan forwarded to me on October 8, 2001 for their review.

The RRAC reviewed the plans at their meeting of October 25, 2001. They do not have any objection to the proposed development but will want to review more detailed plans of the proposed driveways on Stringtown Road when available. The rustic road character and any special features must be maintained. For your information, Kingsley Road is classified as an "Exceptional Rustic" road, and as such requires an 80 foot right-of-way; Stringtown is "Rustic" and requires a 70 foot right-of-way.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this plan.

Sincerely,

Sarah R. Navid, Staff Coordinator
Rustic Roads Advisory Committee

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From: John Fauerby [johnfauerby@hotmail.com]
Sent: Monday, November 26, 2001 10:08 PM
To: Daniel, Judy
Subject: Clarksburg Civic Association Resolution

Ms. Judy Daniel
Area 7 Rural Montgomery Team Leader
Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning
The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

Ms. Daniel:

A more formal letter will be mailed to you and Chairman Holmes on Wednesday containing the information in this note.

The Clarksburg Civic Association (CCA) held its November members meeting tonight (11/26/2001). At this meeting we held a lengthy discussion about the Montgomery County Career Fire Fighters Association, Inc. proposal about a Private Club special exemption for the 75 acre property on the corner of Stringtown and Kingsley Roads. The CCA passed the following resolution:

"Resolution Against the Private Club

Whereas the Montgomery County Career Fire Fighters Association, Incorporated (The Association) is proposing a Private Club,

Whereas the proposed Private Club is to be located on Stringtown and Kingsley Road,

Whereas Stringtown Road Road is rural rustic road,

Whereas Kingsley Road is an exceptional rural road,

Whereas rural rustic roads are typically for low volume traffic,

Whereas The Association is proposing a maximum of 75 weekend events per year with a maximum of 120 cars arriving and leaving,

Whereas the outdoor lighting may cause light pollution,

Whereas evening events may not get over until midnight,

The position of the CCA is to recommend against The Association's Private Club."

The vote on the above resolution was 10 for and 9 against.

John Fauerby
Vice-President of the Clarksburg Civic Association

Daniel, Judy

From: Paul and Mary Majewski [mmajewski@att.net]
Sent: Thursday, November 29, 2001 11:03 PM
To: Daniel, Judy
Subject: I am opposed to the FireFighters hall special exception

Judy -

I have followed the effort of the Fire Fighters union to obtain a special exception on Stringtown Road in Clarksburg. There are many reasons why this special exception is a mistake:

- traffic on the rustic and exceptional rustic roads there;
- the loss of agricultural reserve land;
- the noise at late hours;
- the cheapening of the zoning; (ie, Why zone land and then change its use so drastically? Residents were expecting the zoning to reflect its use.);
- the liquor license on the RDT land in combination with the above;
- the car headlights that shine in the direction of residences. (And I find the union's planners' amendment to their plan faulty - it states that the length of the high beams is 100', which my amateur test shows to be off by a factor of 10.)

Personally, I oppose it because they don't need to have a big hall in the country. Their president John Sparks said a year or so ago that there might be 3 big events a year. Neighbors told me "Right! They are going to build a hall and leave it empty!" I was open minded until I received a copy of the Transportation Operational Plan. The late hours, amount of parking lots, and number of events is staggering.

Finally, if political or sentimental feelings prevail and the exception is granted, the Transportation Operational Plan surely must limit them to 9pm, 12 big events a year, 40 car parking spots & 3 bus parking spots.

Please relay this message to Arthur Holmes and Don Spence.

Also, I would like to testify at the Dec. 6 meeting.

- Paul E. Majewski
12233 Piedmont Road
Clarksburg MD 20871-9329
pmajewski@att.net