



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB  
4/11/02  
Item # 12

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** April 11, 2002  
**TO:** Montgomery County Planning Board  
**VIA:** John Carter, Chief, Community-Based Planning Division JAC  
**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:** April 11, 2002  
**PUBLIC HEARING:** May 6, 2002 at Hearing Examiner

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS**

1. The applicant is bound by all submitted statements and plans, as revised.
2. Hours of operation limited to 7:00 am to 10:00 pm Monday through Thursday, 10:00 am to 9:00pm on Sunday, and 10:00 am to Midnight on Friday and Saturday.
3. No more than 200 events per year limited as follows:
  - Organization Meetings - No more than 24 per year:
    - a. 1 weekday Board meeting per month (up to 14).
    - b. 1 weeknight Membership meeting per month (up to 30).
  - Special Events - No more than 176 special events per year:
    - a. Weekdays (Monday - Thursday):
      - i. No more than 2 events per week after 6pm.
      - ii. No events for more than 100.
    - b. Weekends (Friday - Sunday):
      - i. No more than 104 weekend events exceeding 100 people per year.
      - ii. No more than two events exceeding 100 people per weekend.

- c. No outdoor events to be allowed.
- d. Traffic control must be provided for any event for 100 or more.
- 4. 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.
- 5. Compliance with Department of Permitting Services (DEP) requirements for stormwater management and sediment and erosion control and approval of stream crossing permits from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and the Department of Permitting Services (DPS).
- 6. Modify the grading for the driveway from the entrance to the stream crossing at time of subdivision to soften the slopes with more gradual transition to the existing grade.
- 7. At least 25 acres must be included in the residual farm lot.
- 8. Only one of the dwellings on the farm property may be used as a primary dwelling. The second dwelling is limited to use as farm tenant housing or a guest house.

### **Background**

This application was originally to be heard by the Planning Board in September, but was deferred due to an incomplete application. It was rescheduled for December 12, but was deferred to allow time for the applicant to work with the concerned residents of the surrounding community to see if they could find mutually acceptable terms for the operation of this proposed club. They were then scheduled for the January 7 meeting, but requested a deferral to February 14 to work out final details of their modified site plan and operations plan, and because they were still working with residents of the surrounding area. On February 12 the Planning Board pulled the report from the February 14 agenda. This was done at the request of area residents who wished more time to allow their attorney to review the case. The case was moved to the April 11 Planning Board agenda and now has a May 6, 2002 public hearing date with the Hearing Examiner.

### **PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION**

This application is for a Private Club for the Montgomery County Career Firefighters Association proposed at 24100 Stringtown Road, located on the border between the Agricultural and Rural Open Space Master Plan and the Clarksburg Master Plan area. The Club is to be a location for official meetings, social events, and business meetings.

### **Neighborhood**

The property is surrounded by residential and agricultural land uses – all in the RDT zone. South and east of the subject property is suburban residential in character, primarily the Fountain View subdivision in the Clarksburg Master Plan. 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 beyond the proposed use are mixed low-density residential and 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 and approximately 3,500 feet beyond the intersection of Piedmont Road. The property encompasses two parcels, P960 of 75.13 acres, and P942 of .57 acres within the RDT Zone. This property also contains the historic Gue Farm (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 which are clustered near a driveway along Stringtown Road, approximately 600 feet from the intersection of Kingsley Road. The application proposes to re-subdivide these parcels into three lots, the largest for the proposed use, and two smaller for the farm property and a building lot.

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 Description

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 property entrance. The proposed entry, which will provide improved sight distance, 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.

Structure - 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. It is approximately 1,200 feet to the nearest off-site residences.

Parking - Parking for 120 vehicles is proposed in three areas, small ones (primarily for staff and deliveries) adjacent to the building, and the main guest parking area southeast of the building accessed via the driveway from Stringtown Road.

At the request of staff, the applicants revised their parking plan to create a safer, less congested, and more accessible parking area. A full turnaround is now at either end of the main parking area, which will allow fewer conflicting movements as cars enter and leave the parking area. In addition, the parking area landscaping and lighting were significantly revised as discussed below to reduce lighting "bleed" and spill onto adjacent properties.

Lighting and Landscaping - The revised lighting plan includes 3-foot tall "bollard type" driveway indicators, and 14 foot tall parking lot lights (full-cutoff type). Exterior lighting is only to be used when evening events are scheduled, and will otherwise be triggered by motion sensors (set to avoid being turned on by animals). Landscaping is located primarily around the building, used as screening of the parking area, and to line the driveway. In the interest of limiting the impact of the club lighting on the surrounding area, the applicants have revised their lighting plans to reduce both the number and intensity of fixtures. These modifications include:

- Reduction in bollard lights (used along the driveway) from 89 to 43 fixtures.
- Reduction in directional lighting (used along walkways) from 30 to 24 fixtures.
- Parking lot fixtures changed to a full-cutoff/reflector fixture, and lamp wattage reduced from 150 watt to 100 watt.

The landscaping has also been adjusted to better screen the parking area and reduce the potential for headlight glare into neighborhood areas. Additional and lower shrubs have been included.

Operations Plan - Use of the club is to be for members and their guests, which will include renting the facilities for meetings of non-affiliated groups that are sponsored by members. This is a common practice at meeting facilities of non-profit groups. While there are currently 937 members, 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 no more than 240 persons due to septic requirements, although relatively no more than 25 events of that size are anticipated.

There are 3 full time employees proposed, to be supplemented with 3-5 part-time employees on a daily basis. All food service for events will be catered, but snacks and light meals will be provided on site.

The applicants have also revised their originally submitted operations plan in response to staff and community concerns regarding the potential number of large events and weeknight events. They have revised the operating hours, limited the number of larger special events, limited the potential weeknight events, and limited the largest functions to weekends only as follows:

Hours of Operation

Office:  
Monday-Friday 7am-5pm

Events:  
Monday-Thursday 7am-10pm  
Friday 7am-Midnight  
Saturday 10am-Midnight  
Sunday 10am - 10 pm

Organization Meetings

- a. 1 weekday Board meeting per month for up to 14
- b. 1 weeknight Membership meeting per month for up to 30

Special Events - No more than 200 total special events per year.

- a. No more than 2 events per week after 6pm on Monday-Thursday.
- b. All events for 100 people or more on weekends (Friday-Sunday) only.

Event Size

- up to 100
- up to 150
- up to 240

Weekend Frequency

- no more than 125 events per year (Saturday-Sunday)
- no more than 50 events per year (Friday-Sunday)
- no more than 25 events per year (Friday-Sunday)

This plan differs from the originally submitted plan in the timing and size of events rather than the absolute number of events that may be held at the club. It reduces the potential number of large events (up to 240 people) from 75 per year to no more than 25 per year (weekends only), and the potential number of events for more than 100 to 75 (weekends only). It does not substantially reduce the total number of special events being requested.

The revised operations plan also eliminates weeknight events after 10 pm, limits the potential number of weeknight events to two, and reduces the number of potential very large events on the weekends. And it revises the hours of operation a midnight closing time 7 days per week, to a 10:00 pm closing on Sunday – Thursday.

**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.

**Master Plans**

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 staff does not believe that the proposed use will radically change the character of the surrounding area, as the area is only partially rural in character. The property borders the suburban Fountain View subdivision, which (although in the RDT Zone) contains homes on half-acre lots; and the property is approximately 2/3 mile from Piedmont Road, which is the boundary of the Clarksburg Town Center. The general character of this segment of Stringtown Road, compared to other areas of the Agricultural Reserve, is more low density residential in character than rural in character. Aside for the existing subdivision, the road has several homes, two churches, and a vista of homes in the distance. Thus, while attractive, this area is on the fringe of the Agricultural Reserve and is in an area that is not wholly rural in character.

While a private club use is allowed in the zone, it is more rational for it to be located at the fringes of the Agricultural Reserve where rural character may already be compromised by residential development, traffic, and other institutional uses. However, because it is to be located within the RDT Zone the staff believes that the use should be limited in size and impact.

However, the northern boundary of the Clarksburg Master Plan (adopted June 1994) runs along the south side of Stringtown Road at this location. Therefore, traffic and activity at this facility will primarily impact residents of the Clarksburg community – particularly the Fountain View Subdivision residents.

Clarksburg Master Plan - According to the Clarksburg planner (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 (approved June 1994) 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 will see an increase in traffic as a result of the proposed use.

The Rustic Roads Master Plan describes this .61-mile section of Stringtown (between Kingsley and Piedmont) as historically important for connecting the communities of Clarksburg and Damascus. It appears on an 1837 map, making it one of the earliest roads in the county." Its viewshed 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." The summary of criteria evaluated for inclusion of a rustic road note that this section of Stringtown Road is narrow and intended for local use, has outstanding farm and rural vistas, has historic value, and has traffic volume consistent with a rustic road and low accident history.

Low volume has been a very important determinant for Rustic Roads (although that may be changing with the adoption of the Potomac Master Plan). The 1996 Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan suggests that an average daily traffic (ADT) volume of less than 3,000 vehicles and 8 or fewer reported accidents in a 5-year period (excluding those where alcohol was a factor) characterize a Rustic Road. Also, the road cannot be widened or otherwise improved to more than 22 feet. If a new use raises the traffic load (and/or the accident level) above that established for a rustic road, the status of this road might eventually have to be reconsidered in the future, although the master plan specifies that this type of factor is not to be used as a means to deny a use that would otherwise be approved.

Also, although 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 any 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 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. This reflects the statement on page 5 of the Rustic Roads Master Plan "*The rustic roads designation is not intended to affect the use of adjoining land except in the design of access to subdivision.*" 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.

The staff does not believe that the vistas along Stringtown Road will be substantially impacted by this use. The club structure should have no more visual impact than a very large home, and it is set well back from the road, backing into a slope, not dominating a hilltop. Volume is the characteristic most likely to be impacted by the proposed use so the staff completed an in-depth study of its potential traffic impact. The staff concluded, for the reasons stated in the Traffic Analysis below, that the proposed use will not cause the section of Stringtown Road to exceed rustic road traffic volume or safety criteria. Thus this use poses no potential to impact Stringtown's Rustic Road status.

### **Traffic**

In the vicinity of the proposed use, Stringtown Road is designated as a Rustic Road, and Kingsley Road designated as an Exceptional Rustic Road. Piedmont Road, located approximately 2/3 mile from the site, changes in classification from a primary road to a Rustic Road at its intersection with Stringtown Road; and Stringtown Road west of Piedmont is classified as an Arterial Road. After extensive study, the staff concludes that with the limitations in the statement of operations and the further limitations recommended by the staff, the subject petition will not cause this section of Stringtown Road to exceed rustic road volume or safety criteria, or exceed capacity standards for this road, or detrimentally impact the area transportation network.

Local Area Transportation Review - Based on the operations statement provided, the proposed use will not generate the 50-weekday morning or evening peak hour trips threshold for a traffic study.

Policy Area Review - No staging ceiling capacity has been established for the Rural Policy Area.

Location, Access and Circulation Review - In order to evaluate the traffic impact for this use, the applicant conducted a 24-hour traffic count in November on Stringtown Road in front of the site entrance that showed an average daily traffic (ADT) volume of 764 vehicles and an evening peak hour volume of 70 vehicles, yielding a peak-to-daily ratio (K-factor) of 9.2%, typical for a roadway serving primarily local uses.

The staff estimates that the average daily traffic based on the revised statement of operations provided on February 6, 2002 (see attached) indicates that the site will generate 152 average daily trips (ADT). With the recommended 200 total events per year limit, the ADT will be reduced to 139, raising the total Stringtown Road ADT to 903 – clearly not exceeding the Rustic Road volume criteria. Even the 152 ADT only raises the ADT to 916, again still significantly lower than the 3,000 ADT goal for Rustic Roads.

However, it is important to note that traffic along this road segment is expected to rise significantly due to approved and anticipated growth in Clarksburg. A March 2001 Local Area Transportation Review analysis conducted for the Highlands at Clarksburg development (in the vicinity of the proposed use), forecasts a total background future (*after completion of all currently approved developments*) traffic volume during the evening peak hour of 316 vehicles on Stringtown Road north of Piedmont Road. Assuming the same 9.2% K-factor, the forecast ADT on Stringtown Road for the buildout period is estimated to be 3,435 vehicles, higher than the Rustic Road Functional Master Plan guidelines.

In addition, the applicant has submitted accident history data from the Department of Public Works and Transportation indicating that for the three-year period from 1998-2000 there were 3 accidents along Stringtown Road in the rustic road segment between Piedmont Road and Kings Valley Road. This accident picture does not indicate unsafe road conditions in the vicinity of the proposed use.

Given the results of the analysis the staff recommends approval of the transportation element with the conditions noted on the attached staff report, and reiterated at the beginning of this report. Most of these conditions reflect the stated operational limits in the submitted application.

### **Landscaping and Lighting**

The staff recommends approval of the revised landscape and lighting plan with a minor adjustment to be completed at time of subdivision. At the request of the staff, and to address community concerns, the applicant reduced the amount and intensity of on-site lighting, particularly in the parking lot area and along the driveway. In addition, the parking lot and driveway lighting will be motion triggered so that it will not be on unless there is an evening event at the club. Overall, the landscaping and site grading have also been revised to present a more natural and rural setting for the club. The staff finds that the modifications to the proposed site lighting levels are acceptable.

The staff recommends approval of the landscaping and lighting plans with the condition that at time of subdivision review the grading for the driveway from the entrance to the stream crossing be modified to soften the slopes with more gradual transition to the existing grade.

### **Environmental**

Natural Resources - This application is subject to the Forest Conservation Law. The Natural Resources Inventory (#4-01124) has been submitted and approved. A preliminary Forest Conservation Plan has been submitted and approved. The applicant proposes to place approximately 21 acres into a Category I Forest Conservation Easement with roughly 6.5 acres available as an afforestation mitigation bank.

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 the following two state threatened species are known to exist in the vicinity of this property: the Fringe-tip Closed Gentian (*Gentiana andrewsii*) and the Purple Fringeless Orchid (*Platanthera peramoena*). After further investigation, it has been determined that the Gentian is not found on site due to the lack of calcareous soils on site. In regards to the



Purple Fringeless Orchid, environmental technical staff visited the site in July 2001 to determine if this species was within the proposed limits of disturbance (LOD). Staff determined that the orchid was not found within the proposed LOD.

Stormwater Management - The site is located within the Kingsley tributary of the Little Bennett watershed, 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.

A stormwater management concept plan has been submitted to the Department of Permitting Services. Water quantity and quality shall be provided on-site via a detention pond designed for the two-year storm and a sand filter, respectively.

Conditions - The staff recommends **approval** of the environmental analysis with the following conditions that must be completed at time of subdivision:

1. 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.
2. Compliance with Department of Permitting Services (DEP) requirements for stormwater management and sediment and erosion control.
3. Approval of stream crossing permits from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and the Department of Permitting Services (DPS).

### **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 (which was completed for this report) 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 19<sup>th</sup> century log house and bank barn, and an early 20<sup>th</sup> century bungalow and dairy barn. The applicant's original proposal was 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 recommended 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.

Again, in response to these concerns, the Firefighters revised their subdivision plans to reflect a 25 acre lot with the historic structures, and they have reduced the building lot to 5 acres, which also reduces the lot for the club to approximately 45 acres.

Subsequent to this, however, the Historic Preservation Commission recommended that this property should not be subdivided. This would mean that the two dwellings and attendant farm structures on the property would become tenant structures only. The HPC staff still recommends the 25 acre minimum subdivision.

### **Compliance with Specific and General Special Exception Provisions**

As noted in the attached review, the application meets the special exception criteria for the use.

### **Citizen Concerns**

The applicants have met with the Clarksburg Civic Association twice, and the staff has received a resolution from the area residents (attached) expressing their concerns with the application. The Association states in their resolution recommending against the proposal (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. Several area residents are also particularly concerned with the potential for alcohol use at the club.

The staff also received a number of individual calls from area residents expressing concern with the application, and a letters of opposition are attached.

On January 15, the staff met with the area residents and the applicant to see if there was any mutually acceptable level of activity. The results of that meeting were inconclusive, and although the applicants and the residents continued to talk, no mutually acceptable agreement was reached. The area residents have hired an attorney to represent their interests in this application. From listening at the meetings and talking to area residents it appears that their greatest concerns are related to the number of meetings and events to be held, the size of the events, and the potential impact of events involving social drinking. They generally do not wish to see a private club, or any other use that brings a significant level of activity and traffic in their neighborhood, which has heretofore been very quiet and peaceful.

### **INHERENT/NON-INHERENT**

Activity, traffic, and lighting are the inherent characteristics of potentially greatest concern for a social club, although there are other private clubs of various types located in residential areas in the county. The amount of additional traffic and activity (often on weekends) it could generate along a narrow Rustic Road bordering a single-family subdivision necessitated a detailed review of traffic impact. Some additional traffic is inherent for the type of use proposed, but the amount of traffic is non-inherent, because it varies with the frequency and size of meetings to be held. In this instance, as discussed in the Traffic Analysis, the level of traffic was not found to be a problem, and its potential impact has been further adjusted by reducing the size of meetings and events. In addition, the on-site lighting was also modified to reduce impact on the surrounding community. The staff believes that with the modifications to the site plan and operations plan, the facility will be acceptable at this location.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Career Firefighters is a group that deserves community support – but the proposed use is one that would ideally be located where there are minimal traffic, safety, and operational

concerns. Because of these concerns, the staff met with the applicants last fall and suggested several alternate sites in the Clarksburg area. They chose not to pursue those suggestions, presumably due to financial limitations. After substantial review and evaluation, and subsequent modifications to the original application by the applicant, the staff believes that the application should be approved as modified and with several additional conditions.

Traffic - The traffic issues associated with this application that concerned the staff relate primarily to its location along a Rustic Road. However, although this road has a Rustic designation it is on the border of a high growth area within the Clarksburg Master Plan, it borders a residential subdivision, and is only approximately 2/3 mile from the intersection where Stringtown will become an arterial road. Thus while its designation is Rustic, the character of the road and the area is not wholly rural. However, the use necessarily proposes additional traffic and activity that will cause disruption to the residents of the adjoining subdivision.

If this use were being proposed at the nearby intersection of Piedmont and Stringtown Roads there would be fewer community concerns related to its operation. However, because of the potential for traffic safety issues, as well as the potential for disruption to the adjoining neighborhood, it was important to know the full traffic implications of the proposed use. After an in-depth review by the transportation staff, it now appears that the amount of traffic generated is not a substantive transportation issue. Essentially they conclude that this segment of road will see a large increase in traffic over the next decade due to overall growth in the Clarksburg area, and the amount of traffic that this use will generate will not impose a significant additional burden. Further, the amount of additional traffic the use will generate will not impact the Rustic Road status of Stringtown Road, particularly if the Rustic Road criteria are modified to limit volume as a detrimental characteristic as proposed in the Potomac Master Plan.

Master Plans - The situation of a use being poised on the border of two master plans presents a special type of conundrum; particularly in a case like this. The Clarksburg planner has stated that the use at this location will be detrimental to the intent of the Clarksburg Master Plan, yet it is not within that master plan. From the viewpoint of the Agricultural and Rural Open Space Master Plan, special exceptions are to be considered on their merits in the zone, but not to cause excessive detriment to the intended character of the zone.

This is a property that is extremely unlikely to stay in full agricultural use due to its immediate proximity to the rapidly expanding community of Clarksburg. The use is allowed in the zone, and there are other private clubs in the RDT Zone, as well as within other agricultural and residential zones. Additionally, this area overlooks a residential subdivision, is less than a mile from the burgeoning Clarksburg Town Center, and the access road contains far more residential and institutional uses than agricultural uses. From that perspective, it is a good location for a club site, and certainly far better than one located further out in the rural area, removed from major access roads, that would have the potential to disrupt agricultural operations.

With the need to balance these conflicts, the staff has recommended approval of the use because the applicant has modified their application in a number of ways. The staff believes that these changes, and those proposed by the staff below will allow a club of the proper scale and level of activity appropriate for a "border" rural/suburban area.

The staff is not as deeply concerned with further curtailing the absolute number of allowed events per year, because we believe that the impact of the use is more greatly related to the size of the events, the frequency of larger events, and the number of affected evenings.

Operational Elements - The staff finds most elements of the submitted operational plan to be acceptable. However, the staff has spent a considerable time evaluating the number of meetings proposed and the number of people allowed to attend events in relation to the location proposed for this use. The staff believes that of all the operational elements, the special events will cause the most disruption to the community.

The plan submitted indicates no more than 200 special events per year. The staff does not consider this to be an excessive number of events for a club – particularly with the proposed limitations on the number of large events. With the limitations proposed, there would be no more than two weeknight meetings per week, and none of the weekday or weeknight meetings would be for more than 100 people. Further, the change in operating hours to 10:00 pm on weeknights and Sunday night will ensure limited disruption for families in the immediate area.

However, the proposed plan would still mean a potential for up to three or even four large meetings every weekend. The staff believes that this number of meetings would be unnecessarily disruptive in an area that has previously been suburban and rural in character. The staff believes that there should be a limit on the number of large weekend events allowed for the proposed use at this location as an accommodation to the existing community.

The staff also believes that the absolute number of events and meetings (including club board and membership meetings) should be limited to 200 per year – thus including the proposed weeknight membership meetings in that total. Again, if the intent is to limit weeknight impact on the surrounding area, leaving this weekly meeting out of the total means that there is actually the potential for 3 weeknight meetings every week, for up to 100 people. If these weeknight events were limited to 50 or fewer people they would not pose as much of a burden, but as proposed by the applicant they would be allowed to be significantly larger. Therefore, the staff recommends the following additional conditions for approval of this use:

1. No more than two large events (100 or more people) allowed on any one weekend.
2. No more than 200 total events per year – including the weekly membership meeting.

The result of these limitations is that while 200 events a year are allowed, there will be no more than 176 party type events allowed, and of those no more than 104 larger events (more than 100 people) will be allowed on weekends, and no weekend will have more than 2 larger events. The staff does not believe this to be an unnecessarily onerous burden in an area that is rapidly changing from rural and low-density residential to suburban in character. In addition, to further limit impact on the area the applicants have agreed to staff conditions that preclude outdoor events, and require traffic control for events for 100 or more.

The staff has recommended these limitations because of a belief that the Fire Fighters Association desire for a club site 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. There are a number of significantly larger private clubs, golf clubs, and country clubs in the county, which generate significantly more than 200 events per year, but although they are located in the middle of residential neighborhoods, they are generally located on major roadways. The 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 should be more limited than a facility in a more central location.

The staff recommends **approval** of the use with the conditions noted above and at the beginning of this report. The staff believes that the activity level from this use will cause a change to the character of this border suburban/rural area, but given the overall changes anticipated in this area and the need to place active uses at the edge of the Agricultural Reserve, the staff does not believe the level of change is sufficient to deny the use.

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 complies with the criteria of section 59-G-2.24.*

- (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 is recommended to be limited due to potential conflict with the adjoining existing neighborhood.*

- (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, and there are no significant traffic concerns. However the staff has recommended additional limits on the size and number of weekend events.*

- (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. Revisions have been made to the proposed lighting to further limit its impact on the surrounding area.*

- (6) Will not, when evaluated in conjunction with existing and approved special exceptions in the neighboring residential area, increase the number or intensity of special exception uses sufficiently to affect the area adversely or alter its predominantly residential nature.

*The use would not significantly alter the 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.

*Staff evaluation finds no regulatorily admissible adverse impact on safety, security or morals.*

- (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.

*The proposed use is not on a street with a local road classification, but on a Rustic Road, which functions as a rural primary road. 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 weekend (Friday-Sunday) activity. After study, the amount of traffic proposed was not found to be at a level that would be inappropriate for a Rustic Road. In addition, the staff has proposed additional limits on the size of events, and number of events allowed to further limit the impact of club activities on existing area residents.*

- (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.*





VICINITY MAP FOR  
**FIRE FIGHTERS**

-5-2482

- (A-2)



Map compiled on November 27, 2001 at 9:56 AM | Site located on base sheet no - 233N112 | Date of Orthophotos - March 1998 | Orthophoto Images Licensed from VARIO LLC

**NOTICE**

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This map is created from a variety of data sources, and may not reflect the most current conditions in any one location and may not be completely accurate or up to date. All map features are approximately within five feet of their true location. This map may not be the same as a map of the same area plotted at an earlier time as the data is continuously updated. Use of this map, other than for general planning purposes is not recommended. - Copyright 1998

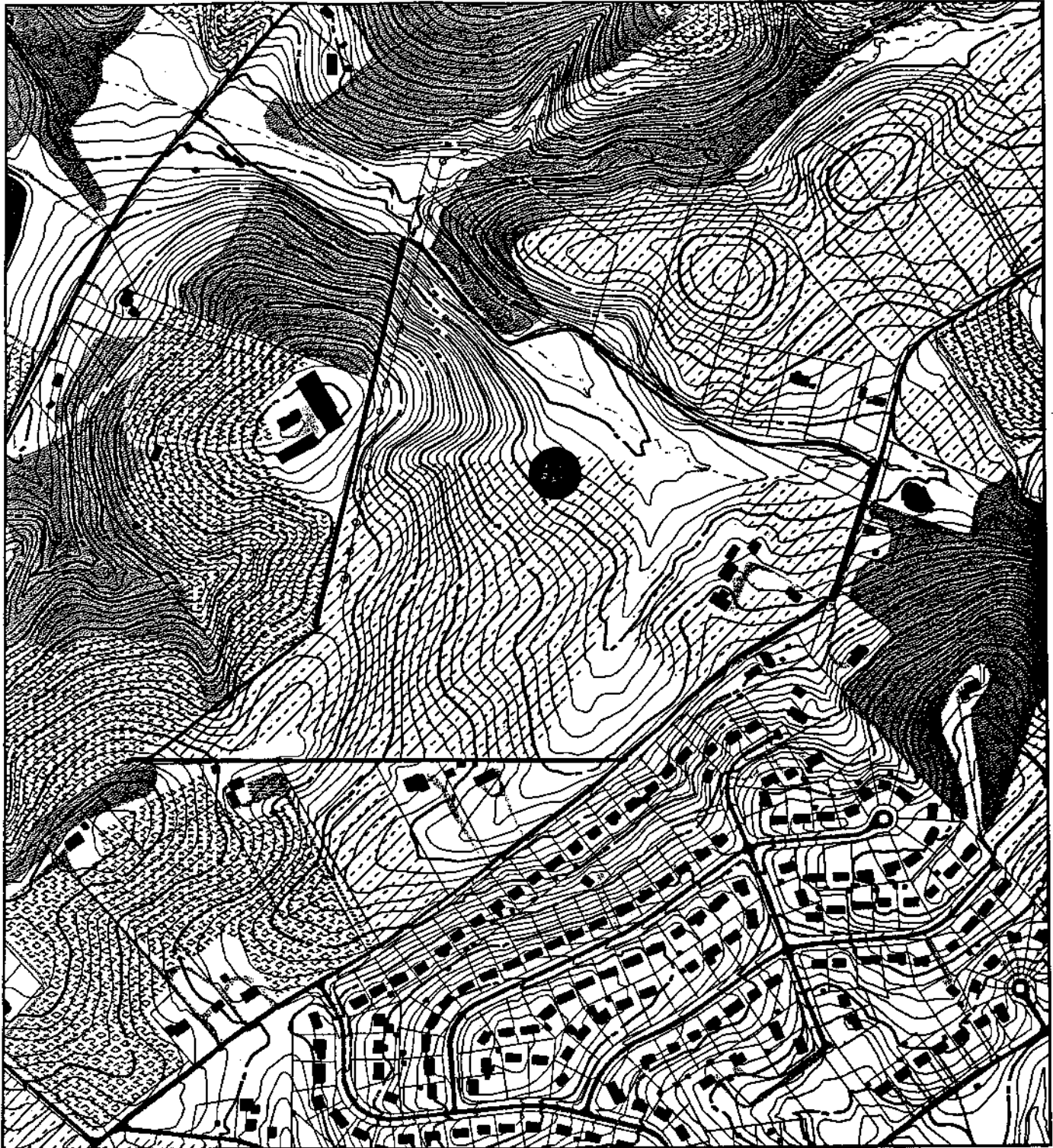


**MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING**  
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION  
2207 Georgia Avenue - Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-1208

1:7200

# VICINITY MAP FOR FIRE FIGHTERS

A-3



Map compiled on November 27, 2001 at 8:48 AM | Site located on base sheet no. 22200012

### NOTICE

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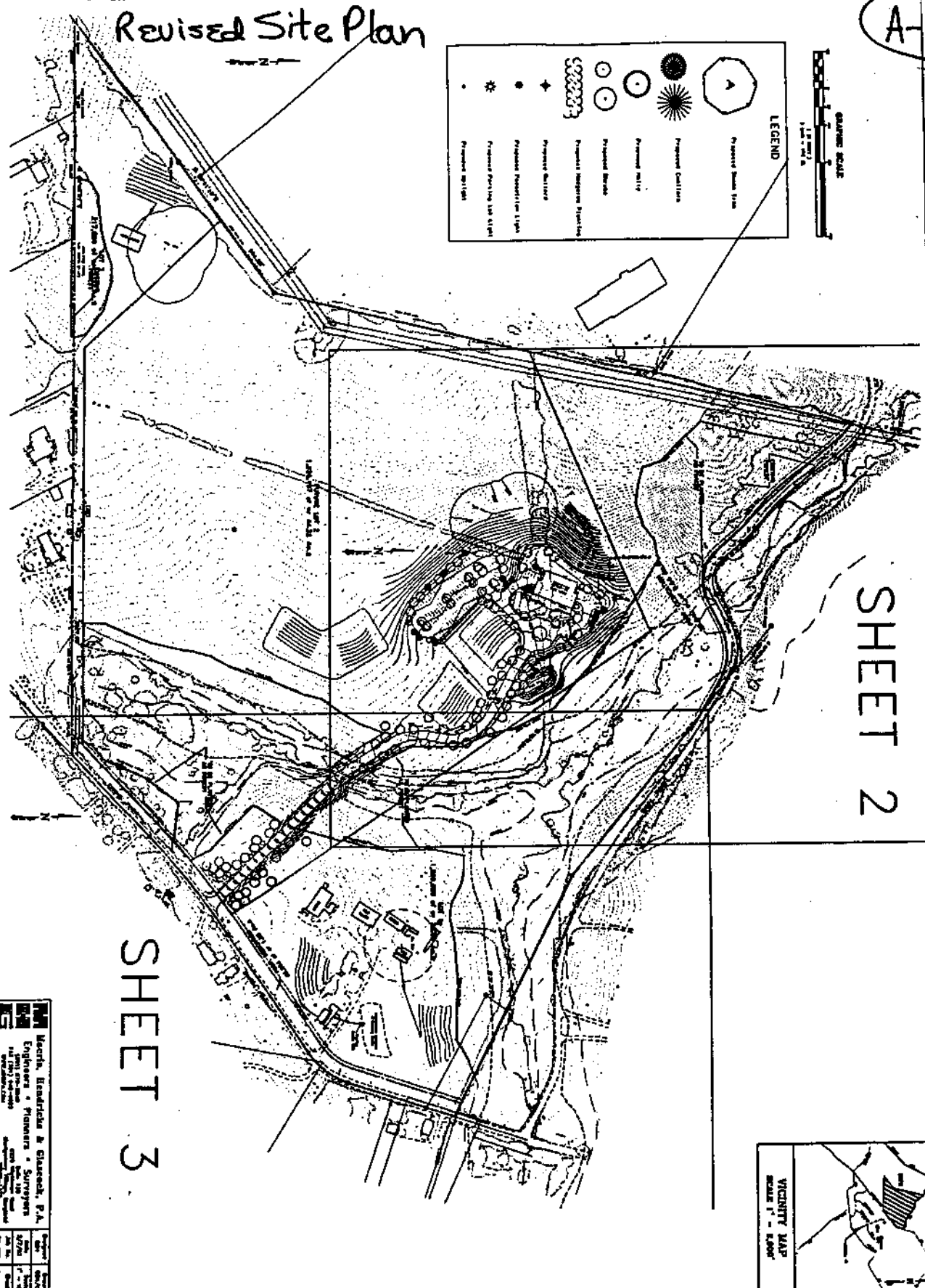


**MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING**  
 THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION  
 527 Georgia Avenue - Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-4700

1:7200

A-4

# Revised Site Plan



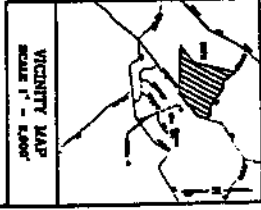
**LEGEND**

- Proposed Street Line
- Proposed Building Footprint
- Proposed Tree
- Proposed Shrub
- Proposed Planting
- Proposed Light Pole
- Proposed Light Fixture
- Proposed Sign
- Proposed Wall
- Proposed Fencing
- Proposed Utility
- Proposed Spot Light
- Proposed Wall Light



SHEET 2

SHEET 3



**MACRIS**  
Hendricks & Glasscock, P.A.  
Engineers • Planners • Surveyors  
1100 North Rockwell Street  
Rockville, MD 20850  
Tel: 301-770-1000  
Fax: 301-770-1001  
www.macrishendricks.com

L-1

1" = 100'

LANDSCAPE AND LIGHTING PLAN  
FOR SPECIAL EXCEPTION  
FUTURE LOT 2


20207-01

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY**  
**CAREER FIREFIGHTERS UNION OFFICE**  
24100 STRINGTOWN ROAD  
CLARKSBURG, MD 20871

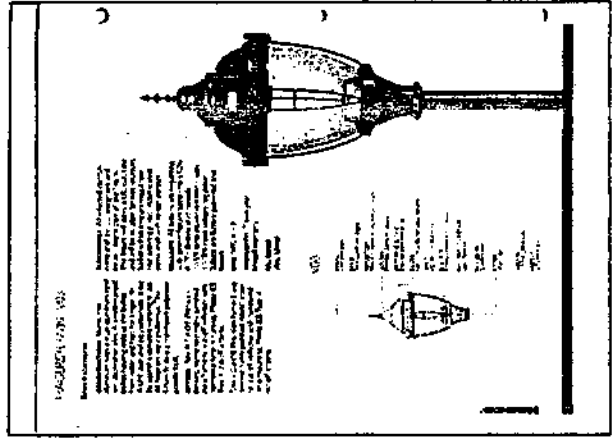
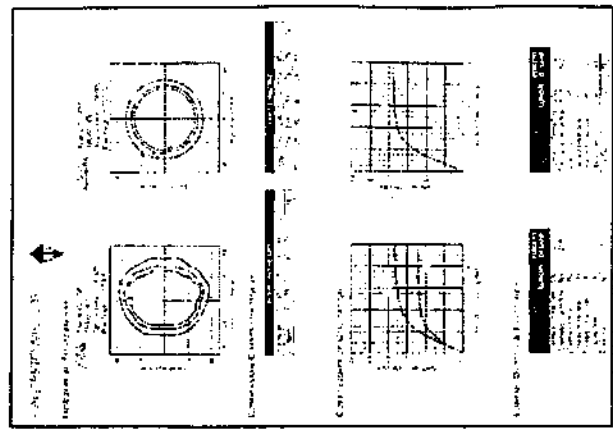
**GMA**  
Group Design Associates  
1100 North Rockwell Street  
Rockville, MD 20850  
Tel: 301-770-1000  
Fax: 301-770-1001  
www.gma.com

# Lighting Fixtures

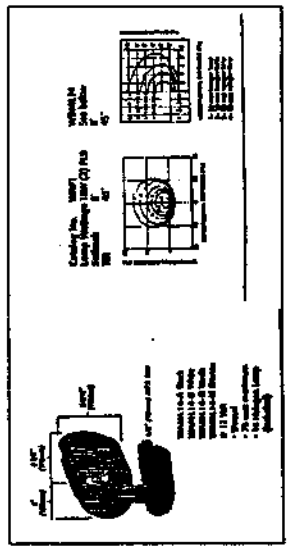
A-5

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY**  
**CAREER FIREFIGHTERS UNION OFFICE**  
 24100 STRINGTOWN ROAD  
 CLARKSBURG, MD 20871  
**Group Design Associates**  
 20207-01  
 LANDSCAPE AND LIGHTING PLAN  
 FOR SPECIAL EXCEPTION  
 FUTURE LOT 2  
 AS NOTED  
 L-5

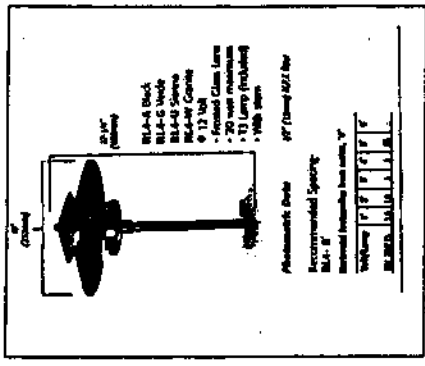
**Macica, Bradrich & Glascock, P.A.**  
 Engineers & Planners & Surveyors  
 1000 N. ...  
 ...  
 ...



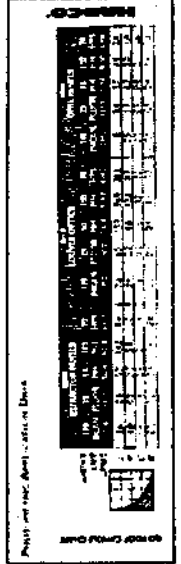
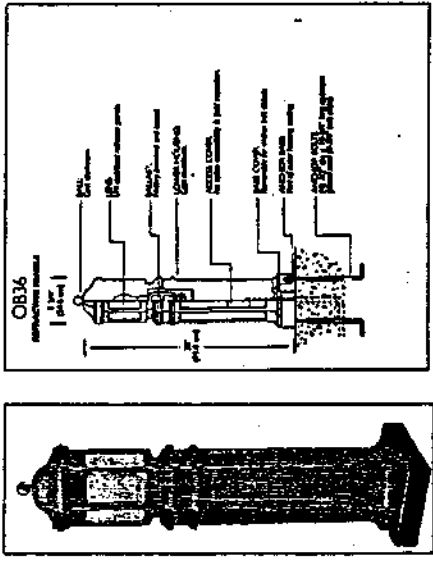
**PARKING LOT LIGHT**  
 Fixture Dimensions: 29.5" H x 16.5" W  
 Lamp: 100 Watt, Metal Halide  
 Finish: Black  
 Pole: 1 1/2" Aluminum Pole  
 Total Fixtures: 14



**UPLIGHT FOR ENTRY SIGN**  
 Will Include Born Doors  
 Lamp: 20 Watt T  
 Total Fixtures: 2



**PEDESTRIAN LANDSCAPE LIGHT**  
 Lamp: 20 Watt T max. or 12 V  
 Total Fixtures: 24



**BOLLARD**  
 Lamp: 28 W Fluorescent w/ refractor ponds  
 Total Fixtures: 41

A-6

# Revised Operations Plan

## REVISED TRANSPORTATION OPERATIONAL PLAN FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY CAREER FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION, INC. SPECIAL EXCEPTION CASE NO. 2482

### 1. Hours of Operation

#### a. Offices

Monday - Friday 7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
3 employees - ADT for offices use - 15  
(3 peak hour trips)

#### b. Events

Sunday	10:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Monday - Thursday	7:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m.
Friday	7:00 a.m. - 12:00 a.m.
Saturday	10:00 a.m. - 12:00 a.m.

### 2. Organization Meetings

a. One Board meeting per month approximately 14 people  
7:30 a.m. last Monday per month

b. One Membership meeting per month approximately 20-30  
members, more for an issue of special interest.  
After 6:00 p.m. second Tuesday per month

### 3. Special Events: 200 per year:

a. Monday - Thursday - no more than 2 events per week after  
6:00 p.m.

b. 25 events up to 240 people - Friday - Sunday only  
(max 240 trips/event)

c. 50 events up to 150 people - Friday - Sunday only  
(max 240 trips/event)

d. 125 events up to 100 people - Sunday - Saturday  
(max 200 trips/event)

(This Operational Plan supersedes the Transportation Operational  
Plan dated August 13, 2001)

February 6, 2002

**TRANSPORTATION OPERATIONAL PLAN  
FOR  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY CAREER  
FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION, INC.**

- 1) Open Monday through Friday 7 AM to 5 PM; evening 6 PM to 12 AM.
- 2) Open Saturday and Sunday 10 AM to 12 AM.
- 3) Weekday 7-9 AM and 4-6 PM trips expected to be limited to three peak hour trips for the 5,000 sq.ft. office building to accommodate 3 employees. One time/month up to 14 people could attend a Board Meeting (7:30 AM) (Last Monday each month).
- 4) Monthly membership meeting second Tuesday 20-30 members (60 daily trips).
- 5) One daily event/week (between 9 AM – 5 PM) and one evening function/week (6 PM – 12 AM) up to 100 persons/event (200 daily trips).
- 6) On weekends (non-peak hour conditions) events, parties, functions could occur with up to 120 cars in and 120 cars out (240 persons). It is expected that up to 75 such events could occur annually.
- 7) ADT Weekday 15 trips for office use
- 8) ADT Weekend 240 "function" uses (75 events per year)  
173 trips/day (average weekend day)  $(240 \div 75 \div 104 = 173)$

*The Traffic Group, Inc.*

*8/13/01*

# Derivation of ADT Volume

(A-8)

2/8/02 11:44 AM

## ATTACHMENT 1

Derivation of Average Daily Traffic Volumes  
 Stringtown Road North of Piedmont Road  
 Special Exception Case # S-2482  
 Montgomery County Career Fire Fighters Association, Inc.

REFLECTING APPLICANT'S FEBRUARY 6, 2002 STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS, WITH 200 MEETING CAP EXPANDED TO COVER ALL EVENING MEETINGS

### Daily Trip Generation For individual events

Scheduled Event	employees	trips per employee	Events per Year (see note #1)	Trips per Event	Event Frequency	Average Daily Trips
Daily Office Function						
1. General Office building (ITE Land Use 710) weekdays	3	3.32	10	0.714	7	
Meetings and Events (subject to 200 / year cap)						
2a. Board meeting last Monday per month	14	2	12	28	0.033	1
2b. Monthly membership meeting	30	2	12	60	0.033	2
3a. Weekend function < 240 attendees (25 per year)	240	2	25	480	0.068	33
3c. Weekend function < 150 attendees (50 per year)	150	2	50	300	0.137	41
3d. Other function < 100 attendees (125 per year)	100	2	125	200	0.342	68
Site generated traffic subtotal			224			132

Events per Year (see note #3)	Trips per Event	Event Frequency	Average Daily Trips
12	28	0.033	1
12	60	0.033	2
25	480	0.068	33
50	300	0.137	41
101	200	0.277	55
200			139

### Daily Trip Generation With 200 event cap

(see note #1) (see note #2)

- Notes:
- The event trip generation rates are conservative, assuming:
    - The number of attendees who will carpool will more than offset trips made by event producers (e.g., coordinators, caterers, etc.)
    - All site trips are to and from the south along Stringtown Road
    - All events will have the maximum number of attendees allowed
  - The event frequency is calculated by dividing the number of events per year by 365 days per year. The office function is assumed to occur 5 days out of 7 for an event frequency of 0.714
  - Staff assumes the association will continue to hold both types of monthly meetings. The remaining 178 meeting "slots" are conservatively assumed to be the largest type of meetings permitted.

Rustic Roads Committee  
Letter



(A-9)

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

sra\firefighters.doc



# Clarksburg Planner Memo

A-10

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.

2 November 2001

From: Clarksburg community and surrounding areas

To: Board of Appeals Chairman, Don Spence  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Planning Board Chairman, Art Holmes  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

RECEIVED  
011838  
NOV 28 2001

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Re: Montgomery County Fire Fighters Union Hall

Location: 78 acre lot near corner of Stringtown Road and Kingsley Road

The following Clarksburg community and surrounding area residents are petitioning the Board of Appeals Chairman, Don Spence to deny the proposal of the Montgomery County Fire Fighters Union Hall based on the following main concerns:

- **TRAFFIC** – We feel the increase in the amount of traffic due to number of events and possible magnitude of the events proposed at the site would produce a dangerous element in our community. Stringtown Road is a rural rustic road that we strongly feel could not safely support the large volume of traffic that would result from such a site.
- **LIGHTING** - We also believe that the lighting proposed for this site would be intrusive to the surrounding houses and the community. Many of the residents along Kingsley, Stringtown and in Fountain View have properties that are the same or higher in elevation than the proposed site. Any lighting would be an invading factor to their properties. We value the "country" atmosphere that our community has left us, via the master plan (1994 copy), and the darkness at night is a contributing factor in creating and keeping that atmosphere.
- **NOISE & ISSUANCE OF A LIQUOR LICENSE** – Our community appreciates the quietness of Clarksburg and we fear the events that could be held at the proposed site (i.e., weddings, retirement parties, etc...) could ultimately have the capability to be loud. We are also greatly concerned with the proposal to have the site be issued a liquor license. The potential is there for many unsafe conditions when alcohol is added. The driving conditions alone, (i.e., weather, width of the road, and speed) increase the dangers for the community. When alcohol is factored into this already risky equation the results could be tragic.

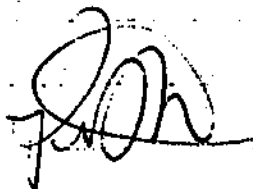
PETITION AGAINST M.C. TUCKER  
UNION HALL

Cecil A. Holsinger Cecil A. Holsinger  
11925 Hawkes Rd  
Clarksburg MD

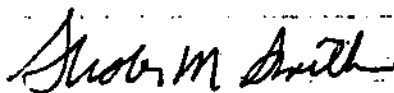
WILLIAM A. ALLEN William A. Allen  
24500 STRINGTOWN RD  
CLARKSBURG MD 20871

Dorlene Allen Dorlene Allen  
24500 Stringtown Rd  
Clarksburg, Md 20871

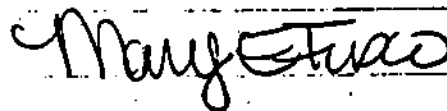
Pine & Lynda Dilullo  
12217 Kingsley Rd  
CLARKSBURG MD 20871



SEAN M. SMITH  
23941 STRINGTOWN ROAD  
CLARKSBURG, MD 20871



MARY E. FUSCO  
23937 STRINGTOWN RD  
CLARKSBURG, MD 20871



PETITION AGAINST M.C. FIREFIGHTERS  
UNION HALL

Linda Pierce  
23932 Janbeall Ct  
Clarksburg MD 20871

Linda Pierce

David S. Roberts  
23936 Janbeall Ct  
Clarksburg MD 20871

David S. Roberts

SUSAN C. ROBERTS  
23936 Janbeall Ct.  
Clarksburg, Md. 20871

Susan C. Roberts

Kirk J. Holub  
23933 Stringtown rd  
Clarksburg, MD 20871

Kirk J. Holub

NAME + ADDRESS:

- 27. Jody Puckett Clarksburg
- 28. ✓ Lin Cavel Clarksburg
- 29. Jesse Herring Hyattstown
- 30. ~~Sueerly Whipp~~ Stringtown Rd Sueerly Whipp

PETITION AGAINST M.C. FIREFIGHTERS  
UNION HALL

MARK AMBUEHL

*Mark Ambuehl*

23910 STRINGTOWN RD

CLARKSBURG

\* Christine Noall

*Christine Noall*

23825 Stringtown Rd.

301-540-1375

Clarksburg, MD 20871

Beth Herring

*Beth Herring*

12211 Kingsley Rd.

Clarksburg, MD 20871

Bill Herring

*Bill Herring*

12211 Kingsley Rd.

~~12211~~ Clarksburg, MD 20871

Mark Myers

*Mark Myers*

24015 Stringtown Rd

Clarksburg, Md 20871

~~Bill Herring~~

PETITION AGAINST M.L. THE TOTTEN  
UNION HALL

Barbara Watkins 1 *Barbara Watkins*  
301-429-0070

11610 Piedmont Rd  
Clarksburg, MD 20871

TARA L. Pumphrey  
24101 Stringtown Rd  
Clarksburg, MD 20871

*Tara L. Pumphrey*  
301-916-1214

KEVIN PUMPHREY  
24101 STRINGTOWN RD  
CLARKSBURG MD

*Kevin Pumphrey*  
301 916 1214

Charles Allen Gorday, Jr.  
23905 Stringtown Rd  
Clarksburg, MD

*Charles Allen Gorday, Jr.*

JANE BRANSKI  
23901 STRINGTOWN RD  
CLARKSBURG MD

*Jane Branski*

FREDO BRANSKI  
23901 STRINGTOWN RD  
CLARKSBURG MD

*Fred Branski*



PETITION AGAINST M.C. FIBERGLASS  
UNION HALL

Jean Davison  
23895 Stringtown Rd  
Clarksburg, Md 20871  
301-601-0151

Karen Wilson  
23813 Stringtown Rd  
Clarksburg, MD 20871  
301-916-2062

James M. Wilson Jr  
23813 Stringtown Road  
Clarksburg MD 20871  
301-916-2062

J. V. Evans

DR. JOHN V. EVANS  
24401 STRINGTOWN RD  
CLARKSBURG, MD 20871  
301-253-1847

Carol A. Evans  
24401 Stringtown Rd  
Clarksburg, MD 20871  
301-253-1847

Carol Evans

## Comments Concerning a Special Exception for Montgomery County Career Firefighters Union Hall in Clarksburg

### November 2001 Community Meeting

A community meeting was held with representatives of the firefighters' union in November to discuss their plans to build a union hall on Stringtown Road in Clarksburg. The union is in the process of applying for a special exception to build a private club on the site. The meeting was held to discuss the impact of the hall on the local community and to see whether local residents and the union could reach some agreement as to the type and use of the proposed facility.

Their initial plan included a two-story structure that would contain a banquet hall with a 240 guest capacity. Operating hours would extend until midnight. The facility would have a liquor license. The discussion of the number of events to be held at the facility was difficult to follow. It seemed that approximately 240 events would be held each year.

The proposed facility would be built in a quiet, residential area. The consensus of the community seemed to be that the facility, as proposed, would fundamentally alter the nature and character of the community – a community that most residents moved to in order to get away from all of the activity closer to Washington DC.

The specific concerns of the community included the following:

**Alcohol** – Stringtown is a single lane road with many turns and bends near the site of the proposed union hall. There are no street lights or shoulder markers near the site. Residents were concerned that the many events (wedding receptions, retirement dinners, etc.) at which alcohol could be served (as many as 225) would lead to hazardous driving and many accidents on a poorly lit, scarcely marked residential roadway. Residents were concerned about the safety of children as they egress from school buses in the afternoon and early evening. Additionally, residents were concerned that beyond specific scheduled events, the facility would be available for members to use as a gathering place and that alcohol consumption could take place at the facility on a daily basis.

**Traffic** – Stringtown has been designated as a "rustic road." With the potential for 249 events a year, the increased traffic on Stringtown road would substantially alter the character of the road. Additionally, the driveway to the facility enters the roadway in a location where Stringtown is only a single lane (i.e. there are no lane markers and the road is not wide enough to accommodate two lanes of traffic). The increased traffic during events would lead to hazardous driving conditions in the vicinity of the union hall.

**Noise** – The facility is designed such that the banquet hall includes a number of French doors opening onto a large patio area. Residents were concerned that during summertime months, these doors could be opened and events would spill onto the patio area. A patio in a quiet, rustic environment during the summer months is quite inviting for guests at a wedding reception or a retirement banquet. The noise generated

by these people in addition to the noise from bands or DJs at wedding receptions or retirement parties would reverberate through the valley in which the proposed facility would be built. This noise would fundamentally change the quiet, rustic atmosphere in the community. Additionally, residents thought that allowing events to extend until midnight was inconsistent with the residential area in which the facility would be built. The area is populated by many families with small children, and nearby residents are often asleep before 11:00 PM.

**Lighting** – The design of the light fixtures was such that the throw of the light was directed sideways as well as towards the ground. Thus, neighbors would be exposed to direct light from the fixtures positioned on the driveway and in the parking lot. The design included trees around the parking lot to shield this light. The deciduous trees called for in the plan, however, would not provide screening in the winter months.

**Number and Size of Events** – Residents were concerned that with the potential for 240 events per year, the facility would be in almost daily operation. Additionally, the 75 event weekend limit would mean that events could be held on three of every four weekend days or evenings. In the opinion of the community, this high operational tempo, in conjunction with the disruptions and potential hazards that each event would bring (as outlined above), would substantively alter the rustic, residential nature of the community.

## 15 January Community Meeting

A second community meeting was held in Clarksburg on 15 January to discuss any proposed changes to the design or use of the facility proffered by the Union and their representatives, and to see whether the Union and the community could reach some agreement about the facility.

The Union representative addressed the community's concerns as follows:

**Alcohol** – The attorney for the Union stated that he understood the community's concern about alcohol and the possibility of intoxicated drivers on the narrow, rustic roads of Clarksburg. He said that people are much more conscious about not driving drunk today than they were 30 years ago. He indicated that therefore, while he understood the concern, drunk driving would not be a big problem. The Union also confirmed that there was never any intention to allow alcohol consumption on the premises outside of specific scheduled events. Members would not be able to use the facility as a social gathering place.

**Traffic** – The Union attorney indicated that they had done a traffic survey of the area. The survey concluded that the additional traffic generated by the union hall would not increase the road usage beyond the limit for a rustic road designation.

are walking home from school and mothers are pushing their strollers would help to ensure that the safe character of our community is maintained. Given that the firefighters have chosen a residential area populated by young children as the site for their hall, this accommodation should be acceptable.

#### **Noise -**

**1. End hours of operation at 9:00 PM.** In other words, the firefighters would have to end their events no later than the noise ordinance says that quiet hours begin in the community. As private residents we are required to ensure that our activities are restrained after quiet hours begin, or be subject to fines and police visits. The firefighters should be able to meet the same requirement. This restriction would be a reasonable accommodation given that the firefighters have chosen a residential area populated by children for their facility.

**2. Incorporate engineering and procedural controls to ensure that events cannot extend onto the proposed patio.** This requirement could be achieved through some simple changes to the facility rules and design. First, the patio itself could be eliminated from the plans. If the firefighters will not eliminate the patio, they could eliminate the French doors leading to the patio. On a nice summer day, the prospect of throwing the French doors open and extending an event onto the patio would be awfully inviting. Replacing the doors with windows extending across the back wall would eliminate the temptation to include the patio in an event, while still not substantially changing the open atmosphere in the hall that the French doors create. Finally, rules and engineering controls could be incorporated to prohibit noise-making equipment or amplification systems (i.e. musical instruments, public address systems, speakers, etc.) from being utilized on the patio or anywhere outdoors. The firefighters chose a site in a quiet, residential community for their hall. It is reasonable for the community to expect that they incorporate some simple controls to limit the noise they will create in the neighborhood they are joining.

#### **Lighting -**

**1. Ensure that none of the residential properties is exposed to direct light.** All light fixtures should be fitted with shades that direct the light towards the ground. No exterior light bulb should be visible from any other property. Choosing to join a community with many small children obligates the firefighters to consider the impact that their design will have on the neighborhood's rest cycle.

**2. Ensure that all exterior lights are turned off no later than a half hour after the end of the last event of the day.** Turning off the lights after events are completed will ensure that residents are not subject to light pollution any more than is necessary to ensure the safety of the firefighters and their guests.

**Size and Number of Events - Restrict the number of non-union events to no more than 150 per year.** The current proposal calls for 231 evening events per year. This amounts to two events in every three days. The firefighters must appreciate that they are moving into a residential area. Residents should be able to expect that the character of the community will not be substantively altered by the addition of the firefighters' hall. Two weekday events and one weekend event per week provides the

**Noise** – The union representative indicated that parties would not extend outside onto the patio. Operating hours would be changed so that weekday events would end at 11:00 PM. Weekend operating hours would still extend until midnight.

**Lighting** – Revised plans showed that the light screening plan had been modified to include evergreens around the facility's parking lot. These evergreens would screen the parking lot lighting year round. There was not a revised lighting plan available for review.

**Number and Size of Events** – The union's representative proposed having 231 events each year. Weekend events would include 25 with a maximum of 240 guests and 50 with a maximum of 150 guests. Again, the numbers presented by the firefighters were difficult to follow and did not seem to add as they suggested.

## **Conclusion**

The undersigned believe that the proposed Union hall will fundamentally alter the nature of the quiet, rustic community in which we live. We chose to live in Clarksburg because it is far away from the types of events that will be held at the proposed hall, and wish that the firefighters would find a site in a community more consistent with their needs. There are many acres of undeveloped commercial real estate throughout Montgomery County, and even in Clarksburg. No one wants to deny the firefighters their union hall. We just do not want to see the changes that it will bring to our quiet, safe community, and hope that they would consider another site in a non-residential area.

We do understand, however, that there is a possibility of their special exception being granted. We would like to ensure that if the hall is built, it changes the basic character of our community as little as is reasonably possible. We appreciate the firefighters' latest proposal to use evergreens for light screening, reduce their hours of operation by one hour on weekdays, and slightly reduce the number of events. We are disappointed, however, that the Union has not done more to try to allay our concerns. We still believe that even with this revised proposal, the union hall would disrupt the quiet, safe, and peaceful character of our community in an unacceptable way. We hope the firefighters understand that they are asking to join our community. As a good neighbor, they are obliged to consider the character of the community in planning the design and operation of their facility.

In an attempt to be constructive, we would like to offer some suggestions for changes that we think would reduce the negative impact on the neighborhood:

**Alcohol** – Prohibit alcohol use on weekdays (except holidays) before 6:00 pm. This restriction would help to ensure that the many small children in the neighborhood could get home from school and that school buses will have cleared the area before alcohol is served in the proposed hall. Mothers could continue to walk their children in strollers on the narrow roads without worrying about whether the oncoming driver was drinking at a daytime hall event. Ensuring that guests who have consumed alcoholic beverages are not negotiating the narrow, winding roads at the same time that children

firefighters with many opportunities to raise revenue while not unduly burdening the community with daily noise and events.

We believe that these would be reasonable accommodations for the firefighters to make considering the quiet, residential community that they have asked to join. Accepting these suggestions would be a showing of good faith by the firefighters, and would help in getting their relationship with their new community moving in the right direction.

If these modifications are unacceptable to the Union, we hope that they will consider finding another site – a site in a community whose character is more amenable to the type of facility and the types and numbers of events that they envision. Additionally, if the Union will not accept these suggestions, we ask that their request for a special exception be denied, for their current proposal would change the character of the community in a way that we think is unreasonable. Their refusal would indicate that they are not willing to make reasonable accommodations to maintain the quiet, residential character of the community that they have asked to join. It would demonstrate that they are not the kind of neighbor who would fit into our community, and certainly not the kind of resident for which we would make a special exception.

(A-13)

From: Paul and Mary Majewski [pmajewski@att.net]  
Sent: Thursday, November 29, 2006 11:02 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](mailto:pmajewski@att.net)

CCa

Clarksburg Civic Association  
P.O. Box 325  
Clarksburg, Maryland 20871-0325

12/6  
#3

(11-14)

December 1, 2001

Chairman Arthur Holmes  
Montgomery County Planning Board  
Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning  
The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

RECEIVED  
DEC 04 2001

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Chairman Holmes:

This is the testimony from the Clarksburg Civic Association (CCA) concerning Board of Appeals Petition No. S-2482 (Special Exception).

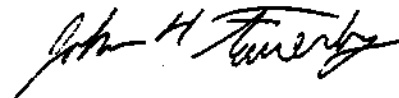
The CCA held its November members meeting on Monday November 26, 2001. At this meeting we held a lengthy discussion about the Montgomery County Career Fire Fighters Association, Inc. proposal about a Private Club special exemption to be located on the 75 acre property on the corner of Stringtown Road and Kingsley Road. 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 Roads,  
Whereas Stringtown Road is a rural rustic road,  
Whereas Kingsley Road is an exceptional rural rustic 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 for the above resolution was 10 for and 9 against.

John H. Fauerby



Vice President of the CCA





Clarksburg Civic Association  
P.O. Box 325  
Clarksburg, Maryland 20871-0325

cc: Honorable Nancy Dacek, Montgomery County Council  
Judy Daniel, MNCPPC Area 7 Rural Montgomery Team Leader  
Steve Howie, CCA President  
Karen Kumm, MNCPPC Interim Clarksburg Planner  
Paul Majewski, CCA Secretary  
Malcolm Shaneman, MNCPPC Development Review  
Richard Strombotne, CCA Executive Committee

January 16, 2002

From: Clarksburg Residents and Community

To: Planning Board Chairman, Art Holmes  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

Board of Appeals Chairman, Don Spence  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Montgomery County Fire Fighters Union Hall

Location: 78-acre lot on corner of Stringtown Road and Kingsley Road

Ref (a) Petition submitted November 2, 2001

In our continued support of the petition for denial submitted on November 2, 2001, reference (a), we clearly and strongly object to the M.C. Fire Fighters Union Hall proposal based on the following:

• INTENDED USE:

In as much as the M.C. Fire Fighters have applied for a special exception to attain approval of their proposal it is certainly not consistent with the intended use of this agriculture site in question according to the Rural Area Master Plan and the Clarksburg Master Plan.

• TRAFFIC, SAFETY, AND ALCOHOL ISSUES:

The increase in traffic produced from this proposed site would be too great in respect to the rural/rustic character of Stringtown Rd and Kinsley Rd., which would intensify the safety issues not only for motorists but for

pedestrians as well. We as residents want to protect the categorization of these roads and keep unsafe traffic possibilities to a minimum.

We question the results of the recent traffic survey that was conducted. The overall pattern of the flow of traffic, in conjunction with the Clarksburg Master Plan, regarding alternate routes to Ridge Rd indicate that the optimal route for traffic resulting from Terrabrook, would be Piedmont Rd. not Stringtown Rd.

Furthermore, the policy of the Clarksburg Master Plan regarding traffic is that the growing community is to be a comprehensive transit system, which would reduce dependence on the automobile therefore reducing some concerns on Stringtown Rd.

Thus our conclusion that the majority of traffic from Terrabrook and other proposed developments would choose the route via Piedmont which would leave the increase in traffic a direct result of the Union Hall.

The Union Hall is not transit serviceable, which is clearly against the policy of the Master Plan. Considering the results of the current traffic census stating that the Union Hall traffic is within the "number" allowed does not convince the community that this statistic is a safe assumption based on the character of Stringtown Rd and Kingsley Rd.

With the above mentioned concerns brought forth by the community one additional item of great worry is that of the Fire Fighter's request for an alcohol license.

Traffic issues stand alone as far as safety goes for our community and to add alcohol to the equation only amplifies our objection. With the number of events that could include alcohol and the number of attendees proposed the possibilities of unsafe driving conditions resulting from this Union Hall are unacceptable.

- **LIGHTING AND NOISE:**

**Lighting** - The lighting proposed for this site and from the vehicles would be intrusive to the surrounding houses and the community. Many of the residents along Kingsley, Stringtown and in Fountain View have properties that are the same or higher in elevation than the proposed site. Any lighting would be an invading factor to their properties. We value the "country" atmosphere that our community has left us, via the Clarksburg Master Plan (1994), and the darkness at night is a contributing factor in creating and keeping that atmosphere.

**Noise** - Our community appreciates the quietness in our area and we fear the events that are proposed (i.e., weddings, retirements, parties, etc.) could ultimately have the capability to be loud and disturbing. Given the lay of the land noise pollution is a relative concern. The noise ordinance for our area is no noise after 9:00pm enforced by the Montgomery County Police Department. We are only asking that the Fire Fighters abide by the same laws as the community is held to.

All of the issues stated above were brought to the attention of the M.C. Fire Fighters at the meeting of November 1, 2001. The Fire Fighters and their representatives were given an opportunity to present a revised proposal that would address and provide compromises regarding our concerns. The subsequent meeting of January 15, 2002 resulted with no significant compromises from the Fire Fighters at all. The community discussed a variety of reasonable suggestions and presented them to the Fire Fighters and their representatives to no avail.

Therefore, we submit our request that the M.C. Fire Fighter's Union Hall proposal be denied.

If the Board chooses to proceed against the policies of the Master Plan(s) and the concerns of the community we request the following conditions be enforced upon approval of the Fire Fighter's proposal in regards to:

**PROPOSED ENFORCABLE CONDITIONS -**

**INTENDED USE:**

**BUILDING STRUCTURE** - We propose that the structure itself is oversized (i.e., a full second floor is not necessary based on the number of employees and usage) therefore we request the condition be set forth to downscale the existing 12,000 structure significantly to include reduction in size of the ball/dining room.

**NUMBER OF EVENTS - Annually – No more than:**

**Weekdays – (Monday through Thursday)**

12 Weekday Events of up to 14 people

12 Weekday Events of up to 30 people

26 Weekday Events of up to 50 people

**Weeknights – (Monday through Thursday)**

26 Weeknight Events of up to 50 people

**Weekends – (Friday through Sunday) -**

35 Weekends (Days or Nights) Events of up to 100 people

**HOURS OF OPERATION:**

**Weekdays (Monday through Thursday)**

7:00am to 8:00pm

**Weekends (Friday through Sunday)**

7:00am to 9:00pm

**ALCOHOL USAGE:**

We strongly object to an alcohol license being issued but if approved -  
No alcohol until after 6:00pm weekdays (Mon – Thur)  
No alcohol until after 5:00pm weekends (Fri – Sun)

**PARKING:**

Lot size be decreased to 60 parking spaces

**LIGHTS:**

Lights be diminished from driveway – (Stringtown has no lights – vehicle lights are ample enough to drive on the road they are ample enough to drive up the driveway)

Parking lot area lights be reduced in number and previous light pollution concerns met (wattage, light spread, etc.).

Lights to be a timer if need be to insure “lights out” by designated time  
**NOISE:**

Absolutely no outside events and stipulations regarding noise level at events

**LANDSCAPING:**

Increase in number of Evergreens and meet previous concerns addressed.

In conclusion we ask for your understanding in our position. We do value the Fire Fighters and all they have done and can appreciate their desire to have such a site but agree that there are much more suitable areas for this proposed Union Hall than in an agriculture preserve located in a residential community.

With all sincerity,

The Clarksburg Community

March 18, 2002

Park & Planning Chairman  
8787 Georgia Ave  
Silver Spring, Md 20910

RECEIVED  
0399  
MAR 25 2002

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

To whom it may concern:

I am writing this letter in regards to the special exception the Firefighters Association has requested for the property located at 24701 Stringtown Road in Clarksburg. I live at 23933 Stringtown Road and have done so for 18 years.

I am very much opposed to the special exception request for several reasons. I moved to Clarksburg because of its rural atmosphere, quiet neighborhood and lack of congestion. I realized once I moved there what a beautiful place Clarksburg turned out to be. There has been very little change in Clarksburg during my 18 years living there. I now have a 5-year-old daughter and she too loves Clarksburg very much. Just today she said to me, "daddy listen to the sheep across the field". That is priceless the fact that we can hear sheep from across the way from our house. Her and I often sit on our deck, which faces this property that the fire department bought, and listen to the horses, cows, chickens and sheep make their beautiful sounds. We have often walked down the street to watch the cows, horses and sheep as they graze in this open field. My daughter and I are going to loose all those beautiful sights and sounds if this exception is granted. I am also concerned for my daughter's welfare if this HUGE building goes in and alcohol will be served at the large functions they will be holding there. The roads are very narrow and people will be utilizing this hall and they are not familiar with the area, they will have had alcohol to drink and will be driving on our roads from the proposed hall everyday.

I am a Police Officer for Montgomery County and have been so for 25 years, I am familiar with what alcohol; driving and unfamiliar roads will bring to the quiet rural neighborhood of Clarksburg if this exception is granted. This building is too large for the area, not to mention the fact this is rural and residential.

Please for the town of Clarksburg, its many families and in particular my little 5-year-old daughter; do not grant this exception that the Firefighters Association is requesting.

Sincerely Yours



Kirk J Holub

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0429  
MAR 29 2002

March 26, 2002

Office of the Clerk of the Board  
Parks and Planning Board  
Silver Spring, Maryland

✓ Mr. Art Holmes  
Chairman  
Parks and Planning Board  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

and

Mr. Don Spence  
Chairman  
Zoning Board of Appeals  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD 20850

**Re: The Montgomery County Firefighters Union proposed hall on Stringtown Road in Clarksburg**

Gentlemen:

Given the size and scope of the operation the Montgomery County Firefighters have proposed for their potential union hall on Stringtown Road, as a resident, I submit to you my concerns about the impact such a facility would have on the historic, rustic, and rural nature of our small community.

Prior to purchasing our home, my husband and I researched the master plan to be certain we knew to whom the proposed site belonged and what restrictions were placed on development of that land, should it ever change hands. Armed with that information, we, along with the other Fountain View residents, made the most significant purchases of our lives and bought a home in this neighborhood. Few places remain in the county where the kind of peace we enjoy in our community can be found, where the quiet is calming and the nighttime is still. We have made significant lifestyle changes and sacrifices, such as a long commute to work, to remove our family from the type of commercial activity the firefighters are proposing.

As you know, the building site in question is directly at the bottom of a valley and the majority of homes are situated on the surrounding hillside. Sound travels well and echoes throughout this neighborhood. The background noise and music from events, especially those utilizing the patio in the summer months, would travel into the open bedroom windows of children, who nap at least once during the day and are generally in bed by 7:30pm. The vibrations from a band or the large speakers of a DJ providing entertainment for a party will ricochet throughout the valley as the sound bounces back and fourth between the hills.

Hartings @ 23945 Stringtown Road, Clarksburg, MD 20871 @ 301.916.6511



In addition to noise disturbances, evening events at such a facility would shine lights into bedroom windows well into the wee hours of the morning. The outdoor illumination necessary to adequately light such a structure will be substantial and will certainly create a glow this area that is still so rural, it doesn't have streetlights, a curb, or even a divider line painted on the road.

Wanting to be far from this sort of noise and light pollution, we picked up our family and moved out here to the farmland to avoid the hassles this kind of operation presents.

In accordance with the Montgomery County Code Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 59, Article 59-G), a "private club" is a permissible exception in this zone, but I would suggest that a "private club" of this scale, with the number of events and hours of operation the Union envisions, is more adequately termed a "banquet facility," and, therefore:

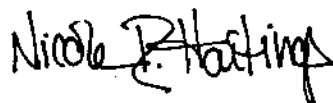
- is not "consistent with the general plan for development," as it is removed from the commercial district and located on an Agricultural Preserve. (3)
- is not "in harmony with the general character of the neighborhood, considering...scale and bulk of...[the] proposed new structure...[and] intensity of activity...", as it will be 10+ times larger than the average home in the surrounding area and be host to some 200 events per year, with hours of operation as late as midnight. This doesn't account for clean-up and close-up time, during which the outdoor lights would remain illuminated. (4)
- would be "detrimental to the...peaceful enjoyment of the surrounding properties," especially when it is bedtime for the neighborhood's children. (5)
- would be "objectionable [because of] noise, vibrations, ....illumination, [and] glare...the site" would impose on it's neighbors. Noise and vibration in the valley would be especially problematic if a party event has a band or DJ, utilizes the patio, or lasts into the early morning hours. (6)
- would essentially "alter the nature of the area," due to the aforementioned, and set a dangerous precedent for allowing other special exceptions which would further change our rural community into a quasi-commercial zone. (7)
- would "adversely affect the ...safety, security, morals [and] general welfare of residents...." if party-goers drink to excess and attempt to navigate Stringtown Road in the dark. Our street is a narrow, winding road that is unlit, unmarked, and barely wide enough for two cars to pass safely. If alcohol consumption occurs during the daylight hours, the safety of mothers strolling their children, people walking their dogs, cyclists, and joggers could be in danger, as well. (8)

The residents of Clarksburg are appreciative of the unique role firefighters play in the community, as we are of all public servants. We have attempted, in good faith, to negotiate some substantial changes in their plan, but the Union's concessions have been minimal. This sort of non-negotiation demonstrates what kind of neighbor the Union might be. Given their cavalier attitude about what an operation of this magnitude would do to the character of our residence, I believe they would not fit well into our quiet, rural community. Consequently, they are not the type of group for whom I would make a special exception.

I am hopeful that the Montgomery County Firefighters Union will be encouraged to find another location for their hall, one that is more suitable to the kind of facility they envision. Given the scale and scope of the operation they foresee, they clearly need a spot in a more commercial district, which caters to the needs of businesses. A structure which is ten times larger than the average home in the neighborhood, which is on a designated Agricultural Preserve in a rural zone, and which will operate as a de-facto banquet facility will most certainly change the very quiet and rustic nature of our small, close-knit community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,



Nicole R. Hartings

RECEIVED  
0458  
APR 03 2002

Carol A. Evans  
24401 Stringtown Rd.  
Clarksburg, MD 20871

March 27, 2002

OFFICE OF THE SUPERVISOR  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Planning Board Chairman, Art Holmes  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to express my objection to the construction of a Private Club proposed by the Fire Fighters' Union on Stringtown Road in Clarksburg, Maryland.

As homeowners, we selected Stringtown Rd. in which to invest our small fortunes in no small part because we were looking for a rural community and entrusted the County to uphold its Plan to keep the road a rural rustic road. Concern is now being raised throughout the neighborhood about the proposed Private Club that the Fire Fighters' Union wishes to build.


The character of the club being proposed appears to be little better than a beer hall/banquet facility/up-county events facility with members using a private bar when the facility is rented. The number of events proposed per year is far, far too excessive! More than a club, it appears to be a business in a residential area – and, a mechanism to bring in money for the Union.

From a safety perspective, I object to this club on Stringtown Road as it puts more traffic on our narrow, winding, up and down steep rustic road, which has no sidewalks. In addition, I strongly object to the proposed serving of alcohol which will cause a safety problem on our narrow road. Local bars should not be located in residential areas on rural rustic roads – shopping areas or major roads are more appropriate. The serving of alcohol is also a safety concern of the community – particularly the fact that those who drink will be traveling on a narrow, winding road frequented with walkers, children, cyclists, farm equipment, school buses, etc. The number of events planned per year only adds to our concerns.

I have not been able to locate the nearest police or fireman's club approximating this size (900 members) on a road similar to Stringtown. This proposed building clearly threatens the peace and tranquility of the neighborhood. Currently the neighbors enjoy the quiet of the evening and the agricultural community – and the lack of glaring lights, commercial signage (advertising) and noise. We remain unaware of any proposed photometric or landscaping plans, septic or water run off plans.

Again, as a concerned resident and a taxpayer, I ask for your help in opposing the construction of the proposed Firemen's Hall so we can preserve our road, community and environment. It does not belong here!

Sincerely,

  
Carol A. Evans

March 28, 2002

RE: Special Exception for the Firefighter's Union Hall on Stringtown Road

RECEIVED  
0442  
APR 02 2002

Mr. Art Holmes  
Chairman, Panning Board  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Mr. Holmes,

I am writing in regard to the special exception for the Montgomery County Fire-fighters Union Hall proposed for constructed in the agricultural reserve on Stringtown Road. I very firmly oppose this exception, as I understand my neighbors do as well. My reasons are listed below:

1. **Protection of Open/Green Space:** The agricultural reserve is supposed to be a reserve of green and open space. I doubt if the construction of this hall would improve the agricultural qualities of the area. In contrast, it would destroy the very nature of the land by covering it in asphalt. Doesn't Montgomery County have enough asphalt already? Part of the reason why my family moved to Clarksburg was the many qualities of a rural residential life such as less light pollution at night, cleaner air, and less noise and traffic.
2. **Light Pollution:** Outdoor lighting is already a growing problem here in Clarksburg. The lighting requirements of facilities such as a union hall would diminish the night-time tranquility and greatly worsen light pollution.
3. **Noise from events:** Noise from events and traffic to and from the union hall is going to be a nuisance. We want our neighborhood to be quiet and peaceful. More noise is only going to make people unhappy and move away.
4. **Safety:** Stringtown is already a speedway for drivers. The road is narrow, unmarked, and winding in many places. The turn from needle onto Stringtown is already problematic because people speed over the hill as you turn out. More traffic would worsen the problem.
5. **Environmental:** Many of the concerns that I brought up can be consider environmental, but wetlands do exist in the area and should be protected. Construction on or near the existing slopes would pollute the surrounding streams with run-off. The asphalt will heat the water going into the local streams. In addition, landscapers are most likely going to over-fertilize the soil thus adding to the problem in the Chesapeake. All of these are valid concerns. You might also consider the septic issues involved with steep slopes and wetlands.

I realize that I might sound like a NIMBY, but we selected our home in an old quiet and established neighborhood with great consideration for the rural residential life. My family would like to keep it that way as much as possible. I suggested putting a moratorium on any more construction east of Piedmont Rd to protect our green and open spaces and preserve the rural character of the area. Please help us in accomplishing this goal.

Sincerely,

  
Rick Candell

12520 NEEDLE DRIVE  
CLARKSBURG, MD 20871

DICKERSON COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, INC.  
22030 BIG WOODS RD. DICKERSON, MD 20842

March 28, 2002

Planning Board Chairman, Art Holmes  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

Board of Appeals Chairman, Don Spence  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD 20850

RECEIVED  
0436  
APR 01 2002

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Mr. Holmes and Mr. Spence,

I am writing on behalf of the Dickerson Community Association to urge you to deny the special exception S-2482, which is the Montgomery County Career Fire Fighters Union's application for a private club/hall on a 75-acre agricultural site on Stringtown Road near Kingsley Road in Clarksburg.

We oppose S-2482 and, in general, any other unessential undermining of the agricultural reserve. We do not want to see our precious agricultural reserve eaten away acre by acre.

In this particular case, I've also found the following argument [presented by Paul Majewski of the Clarksburg Residential Alliance and Clarksburg Civic Association] to be quite persuasive. The area is surrounded by RDT zoning and is covered by the "Master Plan for Preservation of Agriculture and Open Space". The club is not in harmony with the general character of that Stringtown/Kingsley rural rustic roads area because of the size, number, and late hours of events, the unsafe mixture of the alcohol, the extra traffic, and the narrow, dark, curving, rustic roads. These drastic changes in the atmosphere violate general condition 5 of Special Exception Requirements 59-F-1.21. Therefore, the Planning Board, Board of Appeals, and Hearing Examiner are obliged to deny the applicant completely or to accept it with severe conditions. The applicant has communicated to the neighboring residents that it cannot accept severe conditions. It needs to have a substantial number of large events to make the club financially feasible. The applicant further maintained that they could not expect to hold the events it wants without alcohol and late hours. Therefore the most reasonable option is denial of the request.

We support fire fighters every chance we get, but we know and trust that all parties will be treated equally in these important matters concerning citizens rights.

Sincerely,

  
Carol Oberdorfer

President, Dickerson Community Association, Inc.

RECEIVED  
0443  
APR 08 2002

Dr. John V. Evans  
24401 Stringtown Rd.  
Clarksburg, MD 20871

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

March 29, 2002

Planning Board Chairman, Art Holmes  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

Subject: Proposed Firemen's Hall on Stringtown Rd., Clarksburg, MD

Dear Mr. Chairman:

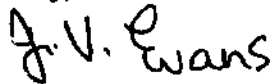
I wish to object in the strongest possible way to the proposal to allow a "Private Club" to be built and operated by the Firemen's Union on Stringtown Rd., Clarksburg, MD.

We selected our house on Stringtown Road in 1989, because the road was designated a "rural route," and the adjoining land was designated (in the Damascus Master Plan) as "agricultural." The construction of this "Private Club" threatens to change all this. Stringtown Road is narrow and windy. The increased traffic generated by the Club, together with a likely increase in accidents (the "Club" will serve alcohol) will create a demand to widen the road. This would completely change the character of the neighborhood we have come to know and love.

The Club will essentially be a money-making business for the Union, which plans to lease it for banquets, weddings, etc. It will see considerable use and draw large crowds since no similar facility is available in upper Montgomery County.

I feel that any such facility should be sited where there is better access and would not threaten the peace and tranquility of Stringtown Road.

Sincerely,



John V. Evans

Theodore Palmer  
12317 Dancrest Dr  
Clarksburg, Maryland 20871  
March 29, 2002

RECEIVED  
0461  
APR 03 2002

Mr. Art Holmes  
Chairman  
Planning Board  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PLANNING BOARD

Dear Mr. Art Holmes:

Montgomery County Professional Firefighters Union Hall.

I would like to express my concerns about the MC Professional Firefighters Union Hall to be located in the Agricultural Preserve on Stringtown Road. Located near the new development of Clarksburg, plans are being made to encroach into the preserve. This is just the first step into opening this area for future development. The site in question has at least 10 times the land necessary for a union hall. How long will it be before lawyers approach the board again to sub-divide this tract of land for further business or real estate development? How long will it be before more land is stripped from the preserve for development? I think we owe it to future generations to save some of our land from developers. We need to be careful that Montgomery County doesn't have the sort of unchecked growth that Northern Virginia has. We need to maintain our quality of life here.

Stringtown Road is a small, winding country road. It is not designed to handle large amounts of traffic. Event goers will be traveling unlit, winding, narrow, unmarked roads late at night after consuming alcohol. The area in question also has a large deer population. The locals are well aware of these hazards, but people attending events will not be. This will impose a safety risk to the residents of this community and the people participating in these events as well. My 14 year old daughter will be driving in a couple of years. I would hope these roads will be safe for her to drive on.

Two hundred and forty events are planned for this facility. Two out of three nights every day of every year. This is extremely excessive. These events will last until midnight. This is a quiet community, the sounds of hundreds of drunken revelers departing at midnight 4 or 5 nights a week will be very disruptive. A wedding reception is almost always accompanied by the Bride and Groom departing with tin cans dragging and horns blowing. The area is surrounded by hills, which will cause the sound to echo. Noise from these events will travel very well.

The positioning of the driveway will almost guarantee that headlights will shine into my home almost nightly. Lighting from this very large building will forever destroy the tranquility of this area.

We need to protect the Agricultural Preserve. Developers will see this development as a foot in the door. Soon they will come with more variances. It will be easier to grant a variance once this one is granted. Soon what little green we have will be turned over to developers.

I respect our county firemen and firewomen, I believe they need a place to relax. However, I suspect this hall is intended not for their use, but to be rented out for events to raise money for the union. I doubt no more than a few firefighters will ever enter this hall that is planned to be built in their name. There must be more suitable locations for this type of facility. An entire city is being built down the road in Clarksburg. Certainly a more suitable site can be found there. Roads within the new planned City of Clarksburg will be better suited for this kind of traffic. Noise and light will be less of a concern.

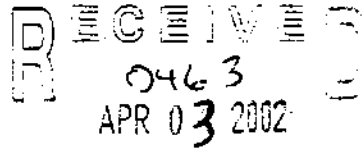
Please contact me at the above address if you have any questions or need additional information. I can also be contacted by phone at (301)528-7093 or (301)738-5259. An e-mail can be sent to [tpal@x-press.net](mailto:tpal@x-press.net).

Sincerely,

Theodore Palmer



March 30, 2002



Mr. Art Holmes  
Chairman, Planning Board  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARKWAY PLANNING BOARD

Re: Case Number S-2482 Career Firefighters Association Union Hall

Dear Mr. Holmes,

I have lived in Clarksburg for 25 years and I oppose the proposed use of the land on Stringtown Road to build the Montgomery County Professional Firefighters Union Hall. I support the concerns listed below of the Clarksburg Residential Alliance and the Clarksburg Civic Association.

- Protecting the Agriculture Preserve
- Outdoor lighting
- Noise from the events (up to 240)
- Traffic increases
- Safety issues
- Serving alcohol throughout the week and weekend
- Hours of operation (Sunday through Saturday 7 am - 12 am)
- Environmental issues
- Proposed structure of over 20,000 square feet
- Well and septic concerns

Thank you for considering these important concerns of our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda Pierce".

Linda Pierce  
23932 Janbeall Ct.  
Clarksburg, MD

RECEIVED  
APR 04 2002

1 April 2002

Art Holmes  
Chairman, Planning Board  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

**Re: Case Number S-2482 Montgomery County Career Firefighters Association Union Hall**

Dear Chairman Holmes,

I write to ask that you please deny the applicant's special exception request in the above referenced case. My family has lived on Stringtown Road for three years. We bought our home when my wife and I had our first child. We were careful to try to find a house that was in a safe, quiet neighborhood, and were delighted to find a peaceful, rustic environment when we looked at the Stringtown Road property that we ultimately bought. Please do not let a union hall ruin the rural, family-friendly environment that my family has come to love.

Considering the development that was ongoing in the I-270 corridor, we knew when we bought our home that some development in Clarksburg was inevitable. So before we settled on our property, we took the time to research the zoning and the master plans governing our neighborhood. We did not want to buy the property if the 75-acre farm across the street was scheduled for major development. We quickly learned that the farm was in an agricultural preserve, zoned RDT-25, and governed by the Agricultural and Rural Open Space Master Plan. A review of the Clarksburg Master Plan revealed that intense residential and commercial development were to be limited to the center of Clarksburg, near public facilities and major transportation arteries, and not sprawl around the edge of the community. Given these findings, we purchased our property feeling secure in our belief that any development of the area around our home would neither result in a substantial increase in the level of activity in the neighborhood nor change the fundamentally quiet, rural character of our community.

Master plans serve a number of important functions in a community. They guide public officials and developers in planning land use. They codify the values of a community by protecting the resources they wish to preserve. They serve as a resource for private citizens trying to make well informed decisions about where to live. As such, they represent a bond of trust between citizens and their public officials.

If the applicants were proposing to build a single-family home sized facility to house their offices, hold meetings, and engage in charitable activities, I would have no objection to their proposal. The facility they propose is much larger in scale, however, and the level of activity is much greater than anything I could have envisioned after reading the master plans. Their facility would be more than ten times the size of the average nearby residence, and their operational plan calls for up to 200 events each year, some with as many as 240 guests and extending as late as midnight. Their operational plan and building structure would be more appropriate for a commercial banquet hall, which is for all practical purposes how they plan to operate their facility.

I ask you to consider whether an average citizen using the due diligence I used in checking the local zoning and reading the Clarksburg and Agricultural and Rural Open Space Master Plans would reasonably conclude that the use the applicants propose would be permitted. I do not believe a reasonable person would draw such a conclusion. Permitting a use such as the applicants propose would violate the trust that the plan represents and that we place in you as a public official. Citizens have a right to expect their public officials to abide by and enforce existing master plans, even when those seeking to violate it are public servants whose work we all appreciate. I respectfully ask that you enforce the master plan and maintain the integrity of the agricultural reserve. Please deny the applicant's special exception request.

Respectfully,



Justin M. Hartings  
23945 Stringtown Road  
Clarksburg, MD 20871

;

Mr. Art Holmes  
Chairman, Planning Board  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

RECEIVED  
APR 04 2002

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

April 2, 2002

Dear Mr. Holmes,

I am really against the special exceptions request by the MC Professional Firefighters to build a union hall in the Agricultural Preserve on Stringtown Road. I have lived here in Fountain View since 1974 and I can tell you that the safety issues will be serious. That many cars cannot safely navigate the unmarked, unlit and winding Stringtown Road, especially after a late night party serving alcohol. The local residents know to watch for cars turning left onto Stringtown Road from Piedmont Road because they cannot see each other until they are very close. And that is just one intersection to watch - Needle Drive and the individual driveways are dangerous also.

I just can't believe it is possible to change the zoning laws so much. Why do we have zoning laws when they can be bent so far from the purpose of the zoning? Once you add that size of a building with all the noise, lighting, environmental issues, etc - why do you have Agricultural zoning at all?

Clarksburg is growing very fast as it is - can't we leave the countryside alone?

Sincerely,



Bonnie Sakmar  
12309 Needle Drive  
Clarksburg, MD 20871

Dr. and Mrs. Erik and Brenda Storm  
23931 Janbeall Court  
Clarksburg, MD 20871  
April 2, 2002

RECEIVED  
APR 04 2002

Mr. Art Holmes  
Chairman, Planning Board  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Mr. Holmes,

We are writing to you in support of the Clarksburg Residential Alliance challenge to the special exception request by the Montgomery County Professional Firefighters to build a union hall on the Agricultural Preserve on Stringtown Road.

First of all naturally we are concerned about protecting the agricultural preserve. Obviously it is important which is why this area was deemed a preserve long ago. We are glad that the county has a Parks and Planning Commission and Zoning Board to see to it that such specially designated land remains protected as it is meant to be.

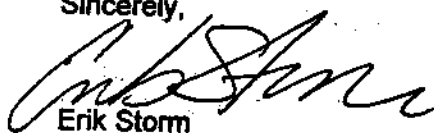
We just recently moved here to the Fountain View section of Clarksburg because it is such lovely area. We love to look out from our porch and see the natural beauty of Montgomery County, and we chose to buy this house only six months ago largely because of the quiet, peaceful neighborhood. We knew it would be the perfect place for us to start and raise our family. Now with the threat of having a 20,000 square foot banquet facility put directly in ear shot we feel a bit disillusioned. We did check the master plans for the area before deciding to purchase our home and from what we could tell the area out on Stringtown Road was not zoned for anything of the sort.

We very much enjoy the wildlife we have experienced since moving here, including a deer running across our lawn! We know that a full banquet facility will undoubtedly lead to increased lighting in the area in addition to all of the noise that will follow. No doubt we will lose the "country" sense that we sought and now cherish here in our home.

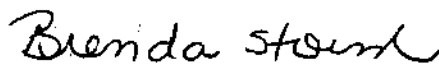
Protecting the land, sustaining the natural habitat, and upholding the neighborhood's ambiance is very important to us. Still, one more fear rings loud and clear, and that is the threat to our safety. Stringtown is a narrow, winding road that does not particularly lend itself to increased traffic volume. We feel we should not encourage needless accidents that would no doubt result from impatient drivers leaving the banquet facility, not to mention the worry of how they will act after they have been drinking all night at the facility before returning to their cars.

We feel that this particular location is an unsafe and irresponsible proposal for the desired facility type. We very much protest it and hope that we will be supported in denying their request for a special exception to build a private club on protected Agricultural Preserve ground in an otherwise residential community. Thank you very much for your time and consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,



Erik Storm



Brenda Storm

RECEIVED  
APR 04 2002

April 2, 2002

Mr. Art Holmes  
Chairman, Planning Board  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Mr. Holmes,

The purpose of this correspondence is to register my opposition to the proposed special exception request by the Montgomery county Professional Firefighters to build a union hall in the Agricultural Preserve area on Stringtown Road. I live on Needle Drive near the proposed site and feel my family will be severely impacted by this facility. The reasons for my objection are numerous, but the top three are as follows.

First, the types of events to be held at this location will increase traffic on a road which is unlit, unmarked, winding, and difficult to negotiate in its current state. The number of families with children who travel this road to and from school, local events, and even to shop in Damascus on a daily basis will now be joined by union members, event attendees, and their guests. The fact that a private bar is being installed to serve alcohol to members, much like an American Legion Post or other union halls, will only add to the potential dangers which will be inflicted on the families who live and travel in this area every day. Add in the mix of visitors who are unfamiliar with the area and attending the larger weddings, retirement parties and other major events being targeted by the union and the financing institution, and Stringtown and the through roads in this neighborhood and the new developments will become very hazardous to those who choose to live here.

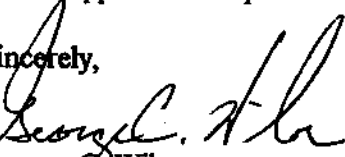
Secondly, the houses in this neighborhood, almost without exception, all contain children and teenagers. The people who live in these neighborhoods moved here to escape the noise and light pollution from other areas of the county. We ourselves chose this neighborhood for the quiet summer evenings and the ability to leave our windows open and enjoy the fresh air. Even the construction of homes to the West of us does not threaten to damage the rural setting of this area as much as this facility will. From the events will be occurring almost three out of every four weekend nights per year based on the projected number of events, and the noise from the traffic and bands or DJ's will certainly affect the neighborhood. This same type of noise pollution will also potentially occur three nights per week under the proposed operating hours spelled out in the special exception! Our two children will not be able to play outside without being impacted by this noise, and we will be forced to close our windows several times per year just to get some sleep or peace and quiet. The fact they want to be able to operate until midnight seven nights per week shows a disregard for the community's right to quiet enjoyment of their homes.

Finally, I fail to understand the need for a 20,000 square foot facility. A facility of this type and size will need to have an extremely large septic field in an area of the County that percolates poorly. The well and septic division of Montgomery County notified us recently, while investigating a problem at our home, that this area is marginal for septic fields and under today's rigid standards, many of the homes now on septic fields could not have been built. This calls into question the size of the septic field that will be required and the potential for serious impact on the existing plants and wildlife in this area when it is constructed. Also, a creek and wetlands exist on this site, and the obvious environmental impact could be severe should the system fail. The size of the facility is also much larger than necessary for the size and type of events planned. The event rooms themselves could handle up to 500 people, maybe more. This is much higher than the proposed 250-person limit and begs the question of a future request for a revision to the special exception. It seems the facility is being built as an event hall that also serves as a union hall for firefighters, as opposed to a union hall with event facilities.

The firefighters deserve a place to gather and discuss the issues which affect them or to just gather together in camaraderie and support of each other. However, to place this facility in a residential community and impose upon the same community the quantity of events, the late hours of operation, and the potential hazards of serving alcohol at these events inflicts a hardship on the very community they serve. No one disputes the bravery and commitment these men show during their careers, especially in light of recent events, but this type of facility should be placed in a light industrial/commercial area, or, at the very least, in the new town center, not in an agricultural area in the midst of houses and families with children.

Please oppose this request for a special exception.

Sincerely,



George C. Wilson

April 2, 2002

RECEIVED  
APR 04 2002

Mr. Art Holmes  
Chairman, Planning Board  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Mr. Holmes,

The purpose of this correspondence is to register my opposition to the proposed special exception request by the Montgomery county Professional Firefighters to build a union hall in the Agricultural Preserve area on Stringtown Road. I live on Needle Drive near the proposed site and feel my family will be severely impacted by this facility. The reasons for my objection are numerous, but the top three are as follows.

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Secondly, the houses in this neighborhood, almost without exception, all contain children and teenagers. The people who live in these neighborhoods moved here to escape the noise and light pollution from other areas of the county. We ourselves chose this neighborhood for the quiet summer evenings and the ability to leave our windows open and enjoy the fresh air. Even the construction of homes to the West of us does not threaten to damage the rural setting of this area as much as this facility will. From the events will be occurring almost three out of every four weekend nights per year based on the projected number of events, and the noise from the traffic and bands or DJ's will certainly affect the neighborhood. This same type of noise pollution will also potentially occur three nights per week under the proposed operating hours spelled out in the special exception! Our two children will not be able to play outside without being impacted by this noise, and we will be forced to close our windows several times per year just to get some sleep or peace and quiet. The fact they want to be able to operate until midnight seven nights per week shows a disregard for the community's right to quiet enjoyment of their homes.



Finally, I fail to understand the need for a 20,000 square foot facility. A facility of this type and size will need to have an extremely large septic field in an area of the County that percolates poorly. The well and septic division of Montgomery County notified us recently, while investigating a problem at our home, that this area is marginal for septic fields and under today's rigid standards, many of the homes now on septic fields could not have been built. This calls into question the size of the septic field that will be required and the potential for serious impact on the existing plants and wildlife in this area when it is constructed. Also, a creek and wetlands exist on this site, and the obvious environmental impact could be severe should the system fail. The size of the facility is also much larger than necessary for the size and type of events planned. The event rooms themselves could handle up to 500 people, maybe more. This is much higher than the proposed 250 person limit and begs the question of a future request for a revision to the special exception. It seems the facility is being built as an event hall that also serves as a union hall for firefighters, as opposed to a union hall with event facilities.

The firefighters deserve a place to gather and discuss the issues which affect them or to just gather together in camaraderie and support of each other. However, to place this facility in a residential community and impose upon the same community the quantity of events, the late hours of operation, and the potential hazards of serving alcohol at these events inflicts a hardship on the very community they serve. No one disputes the bravery and commitment these men show during their careers, especially in light of recent events, but this type of facility should be placed in a light industrial/commercial area, or, at the very least, in the new town center, not in an agricultural area in the midst of houses and families with children.

Please oppose this request for a special exception.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephanie B. Wilson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Stephanie B. Wilson

I MAILED  
A COPY OF THIS  
TO HOLMES &  
SPENCE

April 2, 2002

1/2

Bill Patton

Dear Sir:

As long time residents of Clarksburg, 29 years, we are very concerned about the proposed Firefighters Union Hall on Stringtown Rd. We mention the length of time we have lived in Clarksburg to emphasize that we are not "Johnny come latelies" to the open spaces of the country and now expect no one else to move out here. We expect growth but hope it will be compatible with life style.

For one thing, we like our nights to be dark and quiet. We like to see the stars, planets, and satellites such as the Space Lab. Encroaching light pollution makes this difficult.

Traffic is a concern. Three years ago we moved 2 miles from busy Frederick Rd (Rt 355) to Stringtown Rd. Our part of Stringtown Rd. has been designated as Rustic Road and we would like to see it stay that way. Traffic caused by a Firefighters Hall will make that difficult.

Our main concern is alcoholic consumption at the hall. We have seen what happens (not just on tv news or newspapers). On 355 we experienced it first hand. Drunk drivers shearing off telephone poles and fire hydrants. Cars wrapped around power poles. Its not just young males out partying at night, sometimes its people falling asleep driving. Like the man driving home from work late at night hitting a power pole. His pick up truck caught fire and we were awakened by him screaming for help.

Firefighters and rescue people have seen this too, so its hard for us to understand why they want a meeting hall out on a rural road. It makes more sense to build a hall further down county, on main roads to reduce travel time to events.

In the 1970s almost every weekend saw a drunk driving accident in Clarksburg. Around 1980 there was a dramatic reduction in the drunk driving situation on route 355. Several things happened to cause this: 1. A Montgomery County police station was opened in Germantown.

2. Mothers against drunk drivers got underway. 3. Pete and Bennys tavern on 355 near the Monocacy River closed and The Blue Moon tavern on 355 at Middlebrook closed.

There is a definite correlation between taverns/beer halls and drunk driving accidents. One way to reduce this problem is sobriety tests for everyone leaving the hall after a party. Another way is to not allow the beer hall to be built in the first place.

We are against the Firefighters Union Hall.

Yours truly,

*William A. Allen*

William A. Allen

Darlene Allen

*Darlene Allen*

24500 Stringtown Rd.  
Clarksburg Md 20871

11  
April 4, 2002

Planning Board Chairman, Art Holmes  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

Re: Case Number S-2482 (Montgomery County Career Fire Fighters Private Club)

Dear Chairman Holmes,

I am writing to express my concern and objection with the applicant's proposal. I would first like to relay the need for the Board to understand that the public, myself included, takes great interest and action in researching an area before they choose to purchase a home and trust that the documents they research are trustworthy.

My husband and I went to great lengths to ensure the "stability" of the area of Clarksburg before we bought our home just a year ago – which we consider a life long investment.

We chose our home's location especially due to the Agriculture Preserve across the street, which is home to sheep, cows, horses and lambs. This 75-78 acre of agriculture preserve was ensured by the Master Plan and Zoning Plan to provide us, our community, a quiet peaceful atmosphere, dark skies at night, low activity level and safe environment.

Knowing change is inevitable we understood that the property was zoned RDT (1 home for every 25 acres) and accepted the fact that one day there could be 3 residential homes across from our property, which would be fine.

The applicant's proposal is completely out of character for the intent of the Open Space and Clarksburg Master Plan, which the Open Space Plan was built upon. If the applicant's proposal is approved it will RADICALLY change the character of the surrounding area and the residents who have decided to live and raise their families here.

The proposed building alone is OVER SEVEN TIMES THE SIZE of the adjacent and nearby homes. The proposed lights will be intrusive to all surrounding properties due to the bowl effect of the land, as well as the noise factor, thus destroying the peaceful atmosphere and dark skies enjoyed by not only my family but others as well.

My family has enjoyed listening to the sheep, cows and horses and shudder to think of those peaceful country noises being replaced with slamming car doors, horns, car alarms, party noise, people being loud from alcohol, etc.

Alcohol is a major concern with my family as well. Stringtown Road is a narrow winding rural road, no lights, and no sidewalks. We believe the potential safety issues are not worth the risk. We have heard of many accidents that have occurred on Stringtown Road that have not been reported and fear the presence of alcohol will only

increase this possibility and bring possible tragedy to those of us who travel this road on a regular basis.

I also believe that this proposal is far more than a private club from the documentation presented from the applicants and feel it is not appropriate for a residential neighborhood. The Fire Fighters made a poor choice in location and were even encourage by Park and Planning to choose a different site. We as a community and the Board as a key element in protecting and enforcing the intent and goals of the Master Plans, should not have to compromise our families or community values for the applicants non-compliance.

Understanding the Board has hard decisions to make I ask that you not only consider my family's future but consider if this was to be proposed in your back yard.

We are not just "letters", we are families with a strong community tie that encourage you to DENY this proposal for the sake of our families, our children and our community.

Sincerely,



Mary E. Fusco  
23937 Stringtown Rd  
Clarksburg, MD 20871

April 4, 2002

Planning Board Chairman, Art Holmes  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

RE: Case # S-2482 (Montgomery County Fire Fighters Private Club)

Dear Chairman,

As a resident who recently moved to Clarksburg, I am greatly displeased with the issue of this proposal even being considered for approval by the Board. Before my wife and I bought our home we carefully researched items of concern in respect to our choice and the surrounding area.

We studied the Master Plan and Zoning Plan, which resulted in our decision to purchase our home, and felt we could trust the documentation that we reviewed. Our decision included the Master Plan's information and our desire to live in a rural community. To me rural is quiet, dark skies at night, farms and residential properties, low activity level and a safe environment for families.


This proposal is completely against what is of rural nature. The proposed site is too big, too many events are proposed, too many people at these events, ANY lighting out in this area – other than residential – is too much, and alcohol included is a definite factor that is not worth the risk in my opinion.

I myself am a life time member of a volunteer station and have been a career Fire Fighter for 12 years and can understand their desire in wanting a private club BUT I feel it needs to be in a more appropriate area. A commercial area would not be impacted in the least from the applicant's proposal but it would RADICALLY change the character of our neighborhood and those who've chosen the rural lifestyle.

Inasmuch as we all support the Fire Fighters, we need to look at each applicant equally (i.e., would I or a fellow neighbor be able to get this proposal approved vs. the Fire Fighters?). I believe the Board needs to focus on the big picture and support the goals of the Master Plans with the intent on the existing communities needs and desires.

I request that the Board DENY this proposal in effort to protect and maintain an important part of the Agriculture Reserve.

Sincerely,

  
Joseph P. Fusco, Jr.  
23937 Stringtown Rd  
Clarksburg, MD 20871

CC: Board of Appeals Chairman, Don Spence

LAW OFFICES OF  
**KNOFF & BROWN**  
1050 SEVENTEENTH STREET, N.W.  
SUITE 1200  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036  
(202) 785-8200

E-MAIL LAWFIRM@KNOFF-BROWN.COM

FAX: (202) 331-0174

April 5, 2002

DELIVERY BY FAX AND MAIL

Arthur Holmes, Chairman  
Montgomery County Planning  
Board  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: Firefighters Association  
Special Exception S-2482

Dear Chairman Holmes and Members  
of the Board:

This firm represents the Clarksburg Residential Alliance, comprised of residents in the immediate vicinity of the proposed Special Exception. We urge the Board to recommend **DENIAL** of the project. This letter contains a brief outline of some of the reasons for denial. Each, plus others, will be explained by testimony and submissions at the hearing.

1. It is Not a Private Club. The operations and the 20,000 sq. ft. size and design of the structure reflect a meeting hall/catering hall commercial business. The facilities are to be used by members and their "guests" which include renting the facilities to non-affiliated groups. Traditional club use is only about one meeting per month by its Board (up to 14 people) and one membership meeting per month (for up to 30 people). The principal use is for rentals for meetings and catering affairs totaling 200 per year; 125 events - 100 people; 50 events - 150 people; and 25 events - 240 people. A meeting hall/catering hall use is not a Special Exception permitted in this zone.

2. It is Inconsistent with the Master Plans. The property lies within the Agricultural and Rural Open Space Master Plan, the goal of which is to preserve and protect the rural open space character. Accordingly, the property is not proposed for public sewer, and this project will be served by septic. The Clarksburg Master Plan area is adjacent to this site and calls for low residential density as an edge to transition to the rural

- 2 -

character of the agricultural preserve. Karen Kumm Morris correctly has concluded that this proposal is incompatible with the Clarksburg Master Plan. (K. Morris, memo of November 28, 2001 to Judy Daniel.)

The large structure, the intensity of use - an average of four major meetings/catering activities per week - are inconsistent with the intent of both Master Plans. Moreover, the intense use of the property, including adverse environmental impacts, are likely to be even greater than the present proposal suggests as the parking area will need to be expanded since the 120 spaces would not accommodate the 240 guests at a large function, no less all of the employees of the caterer, his trucks, the musicians, etc.

3. The Size and Intense Use of the Facility will Adversely Affect the Residents' Use, Enjoyment and Value of Their Homes. The site is located at the bottom of a "bowl." Ringing the "bowl" are numerous residents' homes which will have a direct view of the facility. The "bowl" effect will exacerbate the noise generated by cars, delivery trucks, people leaving, and music. (The functions will be held until midnight on Fridays, Saturdays and 10:00 p.m. on Sundays.) The quiet rural residential character of this area will be altered to the detriment of the adjoining property owners, including property values. The topography precludes adequate screening of the building, its noise, and lighting, from the building, parking lot and exiting cars.

4. The Volume of Traffic Generated by the Intense Use is Incompatible with the Narrow and Rustic Roads of the Area and Cannot Safely be Accommodated. The project will be principally served by Stringtown Road, a Rustic Road. This road, like others in the area, is narrow, 18 feet, and winding. Placing a large volume of traffic on such roads, especially late at night, such as at midnight after a 240-person social affair, is inconsistent with the present character of the area sought to be preserved by the Master Plans, and the Rustic Road designation. There is a safety problem with the handling of this concentrated volume of traffic late at night on such substandard roads, in addition to the compatibility issue.

The staff (majority?) recommendation has not assigned great weight to the citizens' concerns apparently due to the fact that there are other uses nearby which are also incompatible with the rural character of the area sought to be preserved. Those uses, however, are uses as a matter of right. The law is clear, Schultz v. Pritts, that Special Exceptions are to be governed by a different standard. A Special Exception use may

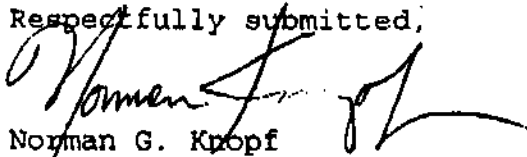


- 3 -

be denied for the adverse effects it causes even though the identical adverse effects would be generated by a matter of right use.

We thank the Board for consideration of our comments.

Respectfully submitted,



Norman G. Knopf  
for Clarksburg Residential  
Alliance

cc: Francois Carrier, Director  
Office of Zoning and  
Administrative Hearings  
Mary Fusco, President  
Clarksburg Residential  
Alliance



**TRANSPORTATION OPERATIONAL PLAN  
FOR  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY CAREER  
FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION, INC.**

- 1) Open Monday through Friday 7 AM to 5 PM; evening 6 PM to 12 AM.
- 2) Open Saturday and Sunday 10 AM to 12 AM.
- 3) Weekday 7-9 AM and 4-6 PM trips expected to be limited to three peak hour trips for the 5,000 sq.ft. office building to accommodate 3 employees. One time/month up to 14 people could attend a Board Meeting (7:30 AM) (Last Monday each month).
- 4) Monthly membership meeting second Tuesday 20-30 members (60 daily trips).
- 5) One daily event/week (between 9 AM – 5 PM) and one evening function/week (6 PM – 12 AM) up to 100 persons/event (200 daily trips).
- 6) On weekends (non-peak hour conditions) events, parties, functions could occur with up to 120 cars in and 120 cars out (240 persons). It is expected that up to 75 such events could occur annually.
- 7) ADT Weekday 15 trips for office use
- 8) ADT Weekend 240 "function" uses (75 events per year)  
173 trips/day (average weekend day)  $(240 \div 75 \div 104 = 173)$

*The Traffic Group, Inc.*

*8/13/01*

# Derivation of ADT Volume

(A-8)

2/8/02 11:44 AM

## ATTACHMENT 1

Derivation of Average Daily Traffic Volumes  
 Stringtown Road North of Piedmont Road  
 Special Exception Case # S-2482  
 Montgomery County Career Fire Fighters Association, Inc.

REFLECTING APPLICANT'S FEBRUARY 6, 2002 STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS, WITH 200 MEETING CAP EXPANDED TO COVER ALL EVENING MEETINGS

### Daily Trip Generation For individual events

Scheduled Event	employees	trips per employee	Events per Year	Trips per Event	Event Frequency	Average Daily Trips
Daily Office Function					(see note #1) (see note #2)	
1. General Office building (ITE Land Use 710) weekdays	3	3.32		10	0.714	7
Meetings and Events (subject to 200 / year cap)						
2a. Board meeting last Monday per month	14	2	12	28	0.033	1
2b. Monthly membership meeting	30	2	12	60	0.033	2
3a. Weekend function < 240 attendees (25 per year)	240	2	25	480	0.068	33
3c. Weekend function < 150 attendees (50 per year)	150	2	50	300	0.137	41
3d. Other function < 100 attendees (125 per year)	100	2	125	200	0.342	68
Site generated traffic subtotal						152

Daily Trip Generation With 200 event cap	Events per Year	Trips per Event	Event Frequency Ratio	Average Daily Trips
(see note #3)			(see note #1) (see note #2)	
	12	28	0.033	1
	12	60	0.033	2
	25	480	0.068	33
	50	300	0.137	41
	101	200	0.277	55
	200			139

#### Notes:

- The event trip generation rates are conservative, assuming:
  - The number of attendees who will carpool will more than offset trips made by event producers (e.g., coordinators, caterers, etc.)
  - All site trips are to and from the south along Stringtown Road
  - All events will have the maximum number of attendees allowed
- The event frequency is calculated by dividing the number of events per year by 365 days per year. The office function is assumed to occur 6 days out of 7 for an event frequency of 0.714
- Staff assumes the association will continue to hold both types of monthly meetings. The remaining 176 meeting "slots" are conservatively assumed to be the largest type of meetings permitted.

Rustic Roads Committee  
Letter



(A-7)

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

srn\firefighters.doc

# Clarksburg Planner Memo

A-10

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

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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.

2 November 2001

From: Clarksburg community and surrounding areas

To: Board of Appeals Chairman, Don Spence  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Planning Board Chairman, Art Holmes  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

RECEIVED  
011838  
NOV 28 2001

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Re: Montgomery County Fire Fighters Union Hall

Location: 78 acre lot near corner of Stringtown Road and Kingsley Road

The following Clarksburg community and surrounding area residents are petitioning the Board of Appeals Chairman, Don Spence to deny the proposal of the Montgomery County Fire Fighters Union Hall based on the following main concerns:

- **TRAFFIC** – We feel the increase in the amount of traffic due to number of events and possible magnitude of the events proposed at the site would produce a dangerous element in our community. Stringtown Road is a rural rustic road that we strongly feel could not safely support the large volume of traffic that would result from such a site.
- **LIGHTING** - We also believe that the lighting proposed for this site would be intrusive to the surrounding houses and the community. Many of the residents along Kingsley, Stringtown and in Fountain View have properties that are the same or higher in elevation than the proposed site. Any lighting would be an invading factor to their properties. We value the "country" atmosphere that our community has left us, via the master plan (1994 copy), and the darkness at night is a contributing factor in creating and keeping that atmosphere.
- **NOISE & ISSUANCE OF A LIQUOR LICENSE** – Our community appreciates the quietness of Clarksburg and we fear the events that could be held at the proposed site (i.e., weddings, retirement parties, etc...) could ultimately have the capability to be loud. We are also greatly concerned with the proposal to have the site be issued a liquor license. The potential is there for many unsafe conditions when alcohol is added. The driving conditions alone, (i.e., weather, width of the road, and speed) increase the dangers for the community. When alcohol is factored into this already risky equation the results could be tragic.



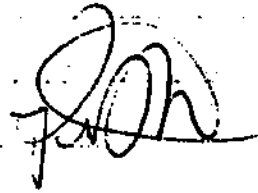
UNION HALL

Cecil A. Holsinger Cecil A. Holsinger  
11925 Hawkes Rd  
Clarksburg MD

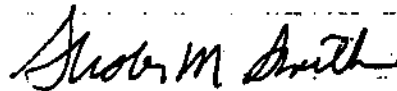
WILLIAM A. ALLEN William A. Allen  
24500 STRINGTOWN RD  
CLARKSBURG MD 20871

Dorlene Allen Dorlene Allen  
24500 Stringtown Rd  
Clarksburg, Md 20871

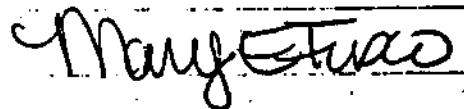
PINE & LYNDIE DILULLO  
12217 KINGSLEY RD  
CLARKSBURG MD 20871



SEAN M. SMITH  
23941 STRINGTOWN ROAD  
CLARKSBURG, MD 20871



MARY E FUSCO  
23937 STRINGTOWN RD  
CLARKSBURG, MD 20871



PELITON AGAINST M.C. FIREFIGHTERS  
UNION HALL

Linda Pierce  
23932 Janbairl Ct  
Clarksburg MD 20871

Linda Pierce

David S. Roberts  
23936 Janbairl Ct  
Clarksburg MD 20871

David S. Roberts

SUSAN C. ROBERTS  
23936 Janbairl Ct.  
Clarksburg, MD. 20871

Susan C. Roberts

Kirk J. Holub  
23933 STRINGTOWN rd  
CLARKSBURG, MD 20871

Kirk J. Holub

NAME + ADDRESS:

27

Joey Puckett CLARKSBURG

28

Chir Cavell CLARKSBURG

29

Jose Herring Hyattstown

30

Sewerly Whipper Stringtown Rd

Sewerly Whipper

PETITION AGAINST M.C. THOMPSON  
UNION HALL

MARK AMBUEHL

*Mark Ambuehl*

23910 STRINGTOWN RD

CLARKSBURG

\* Christine Noall

*Christine Noall*

23825 Stringtown Rd.

301-540-1375

Clarksburg, MD 20871

Beth Herring

*Beth Herring*

12211 Kingsley Rd.

Clarksburg, MD 20871

Bill Herring

*Bill Herring*

12211 Kingsley Rd.

~~Bill~~ Clarksburg, MD 20871

Mark Myers

*Mark Myers*

24015 Stringtown Rd

Clarksburg, Md 20871

~~Beth Herring~~

PETITION NORTH UNION HALL

Barbara Watkins L. Barbara Watkins  
301-429-0070

11610 Piedmont RD  
Clarksburg, MD 20871

TARRA L. Pumphrey  
24101 Stringtown Rd  
Clarksburg, MD 20871

Tara L. Pumphrey  
301-916-1214

KEVIN PUMPHREY  
24101 STRINGTOWN RD  
CLARKSBURG MD

Kevin Pumphrey  
301 916 1214

Charles Alley Godday, Jr.  
23905 Stringtown Rd  
Clarksburg, MD

Charles Alley Godday, Jr.

JANE BRANSKI  
23901 STRINGTOWN RD  
CLARKSBURG MD

Jane Branski

FRED BRANSKI  
23901 STRINGTOWN RD  
CLARKSBURG MD

Fred Branski

PETITION AGAINST M.C. FLETCHER'S  
UNION HALL

Jean Davison  
23805 Stringtown Rd  
Clarksburg, Md 20871  
301-601-0151

Karen Wilson  
23813 Stringtown Rd  
Clarksburg, MD 20871  
301-916-2062

James M. Wilson  
23813 Stringtown Road  
Clarksburg MD 20871  
301-916-2062

J. V. Evans

DR. JOHN V. EVANS  
24401 STRINGTOWN RD  
CLARKSBURG, MD 20871  
301-253-1847

Carol A. Evans  
24401 Stringtown Rd  
Clarksburg, MD 20871  
301-253-1847

Carol Evans

# Comments Concerning a Special Exception for Montgomery County Career Firefighters Union Hall in Clarksburg

## November 2001 Community Meeting

A community meeting was held with representatives of the firefighters' union in November to discuss their plans to build a union hall on Stringtown Road in Clarksburg. The union is in the process of applying for a special exception to build a private club on the site. The meeting was held to discuss the impact of the hall on the local community and to see whether local residents and the union could reach some agreement as to the type and use of the proposed facility.

Their initial plan included a two-story structure that would contain a banquet hall with a 240 guest capacity. Operating hours would extend until midnight. The facility would have a liquor license. The discussion of the number of events to be held at the facility was difficult to follow. It seemed that approximately 240 events would be held each year.

The proposed facility would be built in a quiet, residential area. The consensus of the community seemed to be that the facility, as proposed, would fundamentally alter the nature and character of the community – a community that most residents moved to in order to get away from all of the activity closer to Washington DC.

The specific concerns of the community included the following:

**Alcohol** – Stringtown is a single lane road with many turns and bends near the site of the proposed union hall. There are no street lights or shoulder markers near the site. Residents were concerned that the many events (wedding receptions, retirement dinners, etc.) at which alcohol could be served (as many as 225) would lead to hazardous driving and many accidents on a poorly lit, scarcely marked residential roadway. Residents were concerned about the safety of children as they egress from school buses in the afternoon and early evening. Additionally, residents were concerned that beyond specific scheduled events, the facility would be available for members to use as a gathering place and that alcohol consumption could take place at the facility on a daily basis.

**Traffic** – Stringtown has been designated as a "rustic road." With the potential for 249 events a year, the increased traffic on Stringtown road would substantially alter the character of the road. Additionally, the driveway to the facility enters the roadway in a location where Stringtown is only a single lane (i.e. there are no lane markers and the road is not wide enough to accommodate two lanes of traffic). The increased traffic during events would lead to hazardous driving conditions in the vicinity of the union hall.

**Noise** – The facility is designed such that the banquet hall includes a number of French doors opening onto a large patio area. Residents were concerned that during summertime months, these doors could be opened and events would spill onto the patio area. A patio in a quiet, rustic environment during the summer months is quite inviting for guests at a wedding reception or a retirement banquet. The noise generated

by these people in addition to the noise from bands or DJs at wedding receptions or retirement parties would reverberate through the valley in which the proposed facility would be built. This noise would fundamentally change the quiet, rustic atmosphere in the community. Additionally, residents thought that allowing events to extend until midnight was inconsistent with the residential area in which the facility would be built. The area is populated by many families with small children, and nearby residents are often asleep before 11:00 PM.

**Lighting** – The design of the light fixtures was such that the throw of the light was directed sideways as well as towards the ground. Thus, neighbors would be exposed to direct light from the fixtures positioned on the driveway and in the parking lot. The design included trees around the parking lot to shield this light. The deciduous trees called for in the plan, however, would not provide screening in the winter months.

**Number and Size of Events** – Residents were concerned that with the potential for 240 events per year, the facility would be in almost daily operation. Additionally, the 75 event weekend limit would mean that events could be held on three of every four weekend days or evenings. In the opinion of the community, this high operational tempo, in conjunction with the disruptions and potential hazards that each event would bring (as outlined above), would substantively alter the rustic, residential nature of the community.

## 15 January Community Meeting

A second community meeting was held in Clarksburg on 15 January to discuss any proposed changes to the design or use of the facility proffered by the Union and their representatives, and to see whether the Union and the community could reach some agreement about the facility.

The Union representative addressed the community's concerns as follows:

**Alcohol** – The attorney for the Union stated that he understood the community's concern about alcohol and the possibility of intoxicated drivers on the narrow, rustic roads of Clarksburg. He said that people are much more conscious about not driving drunk today than they were 30 years ago. He indicated that therefore, while he understood the concern, drunk driving would not be a big problem. The Union also confirmed that there was never any intention to allow alcohol consumption on the premises outside of specific scheduled events. Members would not be able to use the facility as a social gathering place.

**Traffic** – The Union attorney indicated that they had done a traffic survey of the area. The survey concluded that the additional traffic generated by the union hall would not increase the road usage beyond the limit for a rustic road designation.



are walking home from school and mothers are pushing their strollers would help to ensure that the safe character of our community is maintained. Given that the firefighters have chosen a residential area populated by young children as the site for their hall, this accommodation should be acceptable.

#### **Noise –**

**1. End hours of operation at 9:00 PM.** In other words, the firefighters would have to end their events no later than the noise ordinance says that quiet hours begin in the community. As private residents we are required to ensure that our activities are restrained after quiet hours begin, or be subject to fines and police visits. The firefighters should be able to meet the same requirement. This restriction would be a reasonable accommodation given that the firefighters have chosen a residential area populated by children for their facility.

**2. Incorporate engineering and procedural controls to ensure that events cannot extend onto the proposed patio.** This requirement could be achieved through some simple changes to the facility rules and design. First, the patio itself could be eliminated from the plans. If the firefighters will not eliminate the patio, they could eliminate the French doors leading to the patio. On a nice summer day, the prospect of throwing the French doors open and extending an event onto the patio would be awfully inviting. Replacing the doors with windows extending across the back wall would eliminate the temptation to include the patio in an event, while still not substantially changing the open atmosphere in the hall that the French doors create. Finally, rules and engineering controls could be incorporated to prohibit noise-making equipment or amplification systems (i.e. musical instruments, public address systems, speakers, etc.) from being utilized on the patio or anywhere outdoors. The firefighters chose a site in a quiet, residential community for their hall. It is reasonable for the community to expect that they incorporate some simple controls to limit the noise they will create in the neighborhood they are joining.

#### **Lighting –**

**1. Ensure that none of the residential properties is exposed to direct light.** All light fixtures should be fitted with shades that direct the light towards the ground. No exterior light bulb should be visible from any other property. Choosing to join a community with many small children obligates the firefighters to consider the impact that their design will have on the neighborhood's rest cycle.

**2. Ensure that all exterior lights are turned off no later than a half hour after the end of the last event of the day.** Turning off the lights after events are completed will ensure that residents are not subject to light pollution any more than is necessary to ensure the safety of the firefighters and their guests.

**Size and Number of Events – Restrict the number of non-union events to no more than 150 per year.** The current proposal calls for 231 evening events per year. This amounts to two events in every three days. The firefighters must appreciate that they are moving into a residential area. Residents should be able to expect that the character of the community will not be substantively altered by the addition of the firefighters' hall. Two weekday events and one weekend event per week provides the

**Noise** – The union representative indicated that parties would not extend outside onto the patio. Operating hours would be changed so that weekday events would end at 11:00 PM. Weekend operating hours would still extend until midnight.

**Lighting** – Revised plans showed that the light screening plan had been modified to include evergreens around the facility's parking lot. These evergreens would screen the parking lot lighting year round. There was not a revised lighting plan available for review.

**Number and Size of Events** – The union's representative proposed having 231 events each year. Weekend events would include 25 with a maximum of 240 guests and 50 with a maximum of 150 guests. Again, the numbers presented by the firefighters were difficult to follow and did not seem to add as they suggested.

## **Conclusion**

The undersigned believe that the proposed Union hall will fundamentally alter the nature of the quiet, rustic community in which we live. We chose to live in Clarksburg because it is far away from the types of events that will be held at the proposed hall, and wish that the firefighters would find a site in a community more consistent with their needs. There are many acres of undeveloped commercial real estate throughout Montgomery County, and even in Clarksburg. No one wants to deny the firefighters their union hall. We just do not want to see the changes that it will bring to our quiet, safe community, and hope that they would consider another site in a non-residential area.

We do understand, however, that there is a possibility of their special exception being granted. We would like to ensure that if the hall is built, it changes the basic character of our community as little as is reasonably possible. We appreciate the firefighters' latest proposal to use evergreens for light screening, reduce their hours of operation by one hour on weekdays, and slightly reduce the number of events. We are disappointed, however, that the Union has not done more to try to allay our concerns. We still believe that even with this revised proposal, the union hall would disrupt the quiet, safe, and peaceful character of our community in an unacceptable way. We hope the firefighters understand that they are asking to join our community. As a good neighbor, they are obliged to consider the character of the community in planning the design and operation of their facility.

In an attempt to be constructive, we would like to offer some suggestions for changes that we think would reduce the negative impact on the neighborhood:

**Alcohol** – Prohibit alcohol use on weekdays (except holidays) before 6:00 pm. This restriction would help to ensure that the many small children in the neighborhood could get home from school and that school buses will have cleared the area before alcohol is served in the proposed hall. Mothers could continue to walk their children in strollers on the narrow roads without worrying about whether the oncoming driver was drinking at a daytime hall event. Ensuring that guests who have consumed alcoholic beverages are not negotiating the narrow, winding roads at the same time that children

firefighters with many opportunities to raise revenue while not unduly burdening the community with daily noise and events.

We believe that these would be reasonable accommodations for the firefighters to make considering the quiet, residential community that they have asked to join. Accepting these suggestions would be a showing of good faith by the firefighters, and would help in getting their relationship with their new community moving in the right direction.

If these modifications are unacceptable to the Union, we hope that they will consider finding another site – a site in a community whose character is more amenable to the type of facility and the types and numbers of events that they envision. Additionally, if the Union will not accept these suggestions, we ask that their request for a special exception be denied, for their current proposal would change the character of the community in a way that we think is unreasonable. Their refusal would indicate that they are not willing to make reasonable accommodations to maintain the quiet, residential character of the community that they have asked to join. It would demonstrate that they are not the kind of neighbor who would fit into our community, and certainly not the kind of resident for which we would make a special exception.

(A-13)

From: Paul and Mary Majewski [pmajewski@att.net]  
Sent: Thursday, November 29, 2001 11:08 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](mailto:pmajewski@att.net)

CCa

Clarksburg Civic Association  
P.O. Box 325  
Clarksburg, Maryland 20871-0325

12/6  
#3

(17-14)

December 1, 2001

Chairman Arthur Holmes  
Montgomery County Planning Board  
Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning  
The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

RECEIVED  
DEC 04 2001

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Chairman Holmes:

This is the testimony from the Clarksburg Civic Association (CCA) concerning Board of Appeals Petition No. S-2482 (Special Exception).

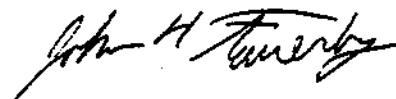
The CCA held its November members meeting on Monday November 26, 2001. At this meeting we held a lengthy discussion about the Montgomery County Career Fire Fighters Association, Inc. proposal about a Private Club special exemption to be located on the 75 acre property on the corner of Stringtown Road and Kingsley Road. 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 Roads,  
Whereas Stringtown Road is a rural rustic road,  
Whereas Kingsley Road is an exceptional rural rustic 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 for the above resolution was 10 for and 9 against.

John H. Fauerby



Vice President of the CCA



Clarksburg Civic Association  
P.O. Box 325  
Clarksburg, Maryland 20871-0325

cc: Honorable Nancy Dacek, Montgomery County Council  
Judy Daniel, MNCPPC Area 7 Rural Montgomery Team Leader  
Steve Howie, CCA President  
Karen Kumm, MNCPPC Interim Clarksburg Planner  
Paul Majewski, CCA Secretary  
Malcolm Shaneman, MNCPPC Development Review  
Richard Strombotne, CCA Executive Committee

January 16, 2002

From: Clarksburg Residents and Community

To: Planning Board Chairman, Art Holmes  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

Board of Appeals Chairman, Don Spence  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Montgomery County Fire Fighters Union Hall

Location: 78-acre lot on corner of Stringtown Road and Kingsley Road

Ref (a) Petition submitted November 2, 2001

In our continued support of the petition for denial submitted on November 2, 2001, reference (a), we clearly and strongly object to the M.C. Fire Fighters Union Hall proposal based on the following:

- **INTENDED USE:**

In as much as the M.C. Fire Fighters have applied for a special exception to attain approval of their proposal it is certainly not consistent with the intended use of this agriculture site in question according to the Rural Area Master Plan and the Clarksburg Master Plan.

- **TRAFFIC, SAFETY, AND ALCOHOL ISSUES:**

The increase in traffic produced from this proposed site would be too great in respect to the rural/rustic character of Stringtown Rd and Kinsley Rd., which would intensify the safety issues not only for motorists but for

pedestrians as well. We as residents want to protect the categorization of these roads and keep unsafe traffic possibilities to a minimum.

We question the results of the recent traffic survey that was conducted. The overall pattern of the flow of traffic, in conjunction with the Clarksburg Master Plan, regarding alternate routes to Ridge Rd indicate that the optimal route for traffic resulting from Terrabrook, would be Piedmont Rd. not Stringtown Rd.

Furthermore, the policy of the Clarksburg Master Plan regarding traffic is that the growing community is to be a comprehensive transit system, which would reduce dependence on the automobile therefore reducing some concerns on Stringtown Rd.

Thus our conclusion that the majority of traffic from Terrabrook and other proposed developments would choose the route via Piedmont which would leave the increase in traffic a direct result of the Union Hall.

The Union Hall is not transit serviceable, which is clearly against the policy of the Master Plan. Considering the results of the current traffic census stating that the Union Hall traffic is within the "number" allowed does not convince the community that this statistic is a safe assumption based on the character of Stringtown Rd and Kingsley Rd.

With the above mentioned concerns brought forth by the community one additional item of great worry is that of the Fire Fighter's request for an alcohol license.

Traffic issues stand alone as far as safety goes for our community and to add alcohol to the equation only amplifies our objection. With the number of events that could include alcohol and the number of attendees proposed the possibilities of unsafe driving conditions resulting from this Union Hall are unacceptable.



- **LIGHTING AND NOISE:**

**Lighting** - The lighting proposed for this site and from the vehicles would be intrusive to the surrounding houses and the community. Many of the residents along Kingsley, Stringtown and in Fountain View have properties that are the same or higher in elevation than the proposed site. Any lighting would be an invading factor to their properties. We value the "country" atmosphere that our community has left us, via the Clarksburg Master Plan (1994), and the darkness at night is a contributing factor in creating and keeping that atmosphere.

**Noise** - Our community appreciates the quietness in our area and we fear the events that are proposed (i.e., weddings, retirements, parties, etc.) could ultimately have the capability to be loud and disturbing. Given the lay of the land noise pollution is a relative concern. The noise ordinance for our area is no noise after 9:00pm enforced by the Montgomery County Police Department. We are only asking that the Fire Fighters abide by the same laws as the community is held to.

All of the issues stated above were brought to the attention of the M.C. Fire Fighters at the meeting of November 1, 2001. The Fire Fighters and their representatives were given an opportunity to present a revised proposal that would address and provide compromises regarding our concerns. The subsequent meeting of January 15, 2002 resulted with no significant compromises from the Fire Fighters at all. The community discussed a variety of reasonable suggestions and presented them to the Fire Fighters and their representatives to no avail.

Therefore, we submit our request that the M.C. Fire Fighter's Union Hall proposal be denied.

If the Board chooses to proceed against the policies of the Master Plan(s) and the concerns of the community we request the following conditions be enforced upon approval of the Fire Fighter's proposal in regards to:

**PROPOSED ENFORCABLE CONDITIONS -**

**INTENDED USE:**

**BUILDING STRUCTURE** - We propose that the structure itself is oversized (i.e., a full second floor is not necessary based on the number of employees and usage) therefore we request the condition be set forth to downscale the existing 12,000 structure significantly to include reduction in size of the ball/dining room.

**NUMBER OF EVENTS - Annually – No more than:**

**Weekdays – (Monday through Thursday)**

12 Weekday Events of up to 14 people  
12 Weekday Events of up to 30 people  
26 Weekday Events of up to 50 people

**Weeknights – (Monday through Thursday)**

26 Weeknight Events of up to 50 people

**Weekends – (Friday through Sunday) -**

35 Weekends (Days or Nights) Events of up to 100 people

**HOURS OF OPERATION:**

**Weekdays (Monday through Thursday)**

7:00am to 8:00pm

**Weekends (Friday through Sunday)**

7:00am to 9:00pm

**ALCOHOL USAGE:**

We strongly object to an alcohol license being issued but if approved - No alcohol until after 6:00pm weekdays (Mon – Thur)  
No alcohol until after 5:00pm weekends (Fri – Sun)

**PARKING:**

Lot size be decreased to 60 parking spaces

**LIGHTS:**

Lights be diminished from driveway – (Stringtown has no lights – vehicle lights are ample enough to drive on the road they are ample enough to drive up the driveway)

Parking lot area lights be reduced in number and previous light pollution concerns met (wattage, light spread, etc.).

Lights to be a timer if need be to insure “lights out” by designated time

**NOISE:**

Absolutely no outside events and stipulations regarding noise level at events

**LANDSCAPING:**

Increase in number of Evergreens and meet previous concerns addressed.

In conclusion we ask for your understanding in our position. We do value the Fire Fighters and all they have done and can appreciate their desire to have such a site but agree that there are much more suitable areas for this proposed Union Hall than in an agriculture preserve located in a residential community.

With all sincerity,

The Clarksburg Community

March 18, 2002

Park & Planning Chairman  
8787 Georgia Ave  
Silver Spring, Md 20910

RECEIVED  
0309  
MAR 25 2002

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

To whom it may concern:

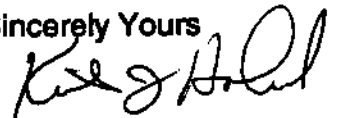
I am writing this letter in regards to the special exception the Firefighters Association has requested for the property located at 24701 Stringtown Road in Clarksburg. I live at 23933 Stringtown Road and have done so for 18 years.

I am very much opposed to the special exception request for several reasons. I moved to Clarksburg because of its rural atmosphere, quiet neighborhood and lack of congestion. I realized once I moved there what a beautiful place Clarksburg turned out to be. There has been very little change in Clarksburg during my 18 years living there. I now have a 5-year-old daughter and she too loves Clarksburg very much. Just today she said to me, "daddy listen to the sheep across the field". That is priceless the fact that we can hear sheep from across the way from our house. Her and I often sit on our deck, which faces this property that the fire department bought, and listen to the horses, cows, chickens and sheep make their beautiful sounds. We have often walked down the street to watch the cows, horses and sheep as they graze in this open field. My daughter and I are going to loose all those beautiful sights and sounds if this exception is granted. I am also concerned for my daughter's welfare if this HUGE building goes in and alcohol will be served at the large functions they will be holding there. The roads are very narrow and people will be utilizing this hall and they are not familiar with the area, they will have had alcohol to drink and will be driving on our roads from the proposed hall everyday.

I am a Police Officer for Montgomery County and have been so for 25 years, I am familiar with what alcohol; driving and unfamiliar roads will bring to the quiet rural neighborhood of Clarksburg if this exception is granted. This building is too large for the area, not to mention the fact this is rural and residential.

Please for the town of Clarksburg, its many families and in particular my little 5-year-old daughter; do not grant this exception that the Firefighters Association is requesting.

Sincerely Yours



Kirk J Holub

RECEIVED  
0429  
MAR 29 2002

March 26, 2002

Office of the Sheriff  
25000 Rockledge Drive  
P.O. Box 10000  
Baltimore, MD 21288

✓ Mr. Art Holmes  
Chairman  
Parks and Planning Board  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

and

Mr. Don Spence  
Chairman  
Zoning Board of Appeals  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: The Montgomery County Firefighters Union proposed hall on Stringtown Road in Clarksburg

Gentlemen:

Given the size and scope of the operation the Montgomery County Firefighters have proposed for their potential union hall on Stringtown Road, as a resident, I submit to you my concerns about the impact such a facility would have on the historic, rustic, and rural nature of our small community.

Prior to purchasing our home, my husband and I researched the master plan to be certain we knew to whom the proposed site belonged and what restrictions were placed on development of that land, should it ever change hands. Armed with that information, we, along with the other Fountain View residents, made the most significant purchases of our lives and bought a home in this neighborhood. Few places remain in the county where the kind of peace we enjoy in our community can be found, where the quiet is calming and the nighttime is still. We have made significant lifestyle changes and sacrifices, such as a long commute to work, to remove our family from the type of commercial activity the firefighters are proposing.

As you know, the building site in question is directly at the bottom of a valley and the majority of homes are situated on the surrounding hillside. Sound travels well and echoes throughout this neighborhood. The background noise and music from events, especially those utilizing the patio in the summer months, would travel into the open bedroom windows of children, who nap at least once during the day and are generally in bed by 7:30pm. The vibrations from a band or the large speakers of a DJ providing entertainment for a party will ricochet throughout the valley as the sound bounces back and fourth between the hills.

Hartings @ 23945 Stringtown Road, Clarksburg, MD 20871 @ 301.916.6511

In addition to noise disturbances, evening events at such a facility would shine lights into bedroom windows well into the wee hours of the morning. The outdoor illumination necessary to adequately light such a structure will be substantial and will certainly create a glow this area that is still so rural, it doesn't have streetlights, a curb, or even a divider line painted on the road.

Wanting to be far from this sort of noise and light pollution, we picked up our family and moved out here to the farmland to avoid the hassles this kind of operation presents.

In accordance with the Montgomery County Code Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 59, Article 59-G), a "private club" is a permissible exception in this zone, but I would suggest that a "private club" of this scale, with the number of events and hours of operation the Union envisions, is more adequately termed a "banquet facility," and, therefore:

- is not "consistent with the general plan for development," as it is removed from the commercial district and located on an Agricultural Preserve. (3)
- is not "in harmony with the general character of the neighborhood, considering...scale and bulk of...[the] proposed new structure...[and] intensity of activity...", as it will be 10+ times larger than the average home in the surrounding area and be host to some 200 events per year, with hours of operation as late as midnight. This doesn't account for clean-up and close-up time, during which the outdoor lights would remain illuminated. (4)
- would be "detrimental to the...peaceful enjoyment of the surrounding properties," especially when it is bedtime for the neighborhood's children. (5)
- would be "objectionable [because of] noise, vibrations, ....illumination, [and] glare...the site" would impose on it's neighbors. Noise and vibration in the valley would be especially problematic if a party event has a band or DJ, utilizes the patio, or lasts into the early morning hours. (6)
- would essentially "alter the nature of the area," due to the aforementioned, and set a dangerous precedent for allowing other special exceptions which would further change our rural community into a quasi-commercial zone. (7)
- would "adversely affect the ...safety, security, morals [and] general welfare of residents....," if party-goers drink to excess and attempt to navigate Stringtown Road in the dark. Our street is a narrow, winding road that is unlit, unmarked, and barely wide enough for two cars to pass safely. If alcohol consumption occurs during the daylight hours, the safety of mothers strolling their children, people walking their dogs, cyclists, and joggers could be in danger, as well. (8)

The residents of Clarksburg are appreciative of the unique role firefighters play in the community, as we are of all public servants. We have attempted, in good faith, to negotiate some substantial changes in their plan, but the Union's concessions have been minimal. This sort of non-negotiation demonstrates what kind of neighbor the Union might be. Given their cavalier attitude about what an operation of this magnitude would do to the character of our residence, I believe they would not fit well into our quiet, rural community. Consequently, they are not the type of group for whom I would make a special exception.

I am hopeful that the Montgomery County Firefighters Union will be encouraged to find another location for their hall, one that is more suitable to the kind of facility they envision. Given the scale and scope of the operation they foresee, they clearly need a spot in a more commercial district, which caters to the needs of businesses. A structure which is ten times larger than the average home in the neighborhood, which is on a designated Agricultural Preserve in a rural zone, and which will operate as a de-facto banquet facility will most certainly change the very quiet and rustic nature of our small, close-knit community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,



Nicole R. Hartings

RECEIVED  
0458  
APR 03 2002

Carol A. Evans  
24401 Stringtown Rd.  
Clarksburg, MD 20871

March 27, 2002

OFFICE OF THE CLERK  
THE BOARD OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Planning Board Chairman, Art Holmes  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to express my objection to the construction of a Private Club proposed by the Fire Fighters' Union on Stringtown Road in Clarksburg, Maryland.

As homeowners, we selected Stringtown Rd. in which to invest our small fortunes in no small part because we were looking for a rural community and entrusted the County to uphold its Plan to keep the road a rural rustic road. Concern is now being raised throughout the neighborhood about the proposed Private Club that the Fire Fighters' Union wishes to build.


The character of the club being proposed appears to be little better than a beer hall/banquet facility/up-county events facility with members using a private bar when the facility is rented. The number of events proposed per year is far, far too excessive! More than a club, it appears to be a business in a residential area – and, a mechanism to bring in money for the Union.

From a safety perspective, I object to this club on Stringtown Road as it puts more traffic on our narrow, winding, up and down steep rustic road, which has no sidewalks. In addition, I strongly object to the proposed serving of alcohol which will cause a safety problem on our narrow road. Local bars should not be located in residential areas on rural rustic roads – shopping areas or major roads are more appropriate. The serving of alcohol is also a safety concern of the community – particularly the fact that those who drink will be traveling on a narrow, winding road frequented with walkers, children, cyclists, farm equipment, school buses, etc. The number of events planned per year only adds to our concerns.

I have not been able to locate the nearest police or fireman's club approximating this size (900 members) on a road similar to Stringtown. This proposed building clearly threatens the peace and tranquility of the neighborhood. Currently the neighbors enjoy the quiet of the evening and the agricultural community – and the lack of glaring lights, commercial signage (advertising) and noise. We remain unaware of any proposed photometric or landscaping plans, septic or water run off plans.

Again, as a concerned resident and a taxpayer, I ask for your help in opposing the construction of the proposed Firemen's Hall so we can preserve our road, community and environment. It does not belong here!

Sincerely,

  
Carol A. Evans

Carol A. Evans



March 28, 2002

RE: Special Exception for the Firefighter's Union Hall on Stringtown Road

RECEIVED  
0442  
APR 02 2002

Mr. Art Holmes  
Chairman, Panning Board  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

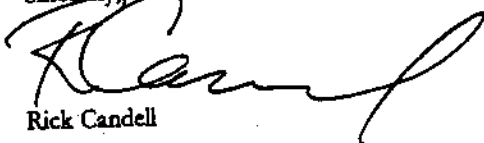
Dear Mr. Holmes,

I am writing in regard to the special exception for the Montgomery County Fire-fighters Union Hall proposed for constructed in the agricultural reserve on Stringtown Road. I very firmly oppose this exception, as I understand my neighbors do as well. My reasons are listed below:

1. **Protection of Open/Green Space:** The agricultural reserve is supposed to be a reserve of green and open space. I doubt if the construction of this hall would improve the agricultural qualities of the area. In contrast, it would destroy the very nature of the land by covering it in asphalt. Doesn't Montgomery County have enough asphalt already? Part of the reason why my family moved to Clarksburg was the many qualities of a rural residential life such as less light pollution at night, cleaner air, and less noise and traffic.
2. **Light Pollution:** Outdoor lighting is already a growing problem here in Clarksburg. The lighting requirements of facilities such as a union hall would diminish the night-time tranquility and greatly worsen light pollution.
3. **Noise from events:** Noise from events and traffic to and from the union hall is going to be a nuisance. We want our neighborhood to be quiet and peaceful. More noise is only going to make people unhappy and move away.
4. **Safety:** Stringtown is already a speedway for drivers. The road is narrow, unmarked, and winding in many places. The turn from needle onto Stringtown is already problematic because people speed over the hill as you turn out. More traffic would worsen the problem.
5. **Environmental:** Many of the concerns that I brought up can be consider environmental, but wetlands do exist in the area and should be protected. Construction on or near the existing slopes would pollute the surrounding streams with run-off. The asphalt will heat the water going into the local streams. In addition, landscapers are most likely going to over-fertilize the soil thus adding to the problem in the Chesapeake. All of these are valid concerns. You might also consider the septic issues involved with steep slopes and wetlands.

I realize that I might sound like a NIMBY, but we selected our home in an old quiet and established neighborhood with great consideration for the rural residential life. My family would like to keep it that way as much as possible. I suggested putting a moratorium on any more construction east of Piedmont Rd to protect our green and open spaces and preserve the rural character of the area. Please help us in accomplishing this goal.

Sincerely,



Rick Candell

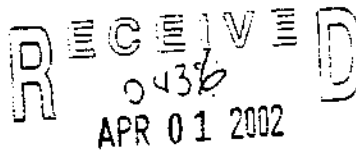
12520 NEEDLE DRIVE  
CLARKSBURG, MD 20871

DICKERSON COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, INC.  
22030 BIG WOODS RD. DICKERSON, MD 20842

March 28, 2002

Planning Board Chairman, Art Holmes  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

Board of Appeals Chairman, Don Spence  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD 20850



OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Mr. Holmes and Mr. Spence,

I am writing on behalf of the Dickerson Community Association to urge you to deny the special exception S-2482, which is the Montgomery County Career Fire Fighters Union's application for a private club/hall on a 75-acre agricultural site on Stringtown Road near Kingsley Road in Clarksburg.

We oppose S-2482 and, in general, any other unessential undermining of the agricultural reserve. We do not want to see our precious agricultural reserve eaten away acre by acre.

In this particular case, I've also found the following argument [presented by Paul Majewski of the Clarksburg Residential Alliance and Clarksburg Civic Association] to be quite persuasive. The area is surrounded by RDT zoning and is covered by the "Master Plan for Preservation of Agriculture and Open Space". The club is not in harmony with the general character of that Stringtown/Kingsley rural rustic roads area because of the size, number, and late hours of events, the unsafe mixture of the alcohol, the extra traffic, and the narrow, dark, curving, rustic roads. These drastic changes in the atmosphere violate general condition 5 of Special Exception Requirements 59-F-1.21. Therefore, the Planning Board, Board of Appeals, and Hearing Examiner are obliged to deny the applicant completely or to accept it with severe conditions. The applicant has communicated to the neighboring residents that it cannot accept severe conditions. It needs to have a substantial number of large events to make the club financially feasible. The applicant further maintained that they could not expect to hold the events it wants without alcohol and late hours. Therefore the most reasonable option is denial of the request.

We support fire fighters every chance we get, but we know and trust that all parties will be treated equally in these important matters concerning citizens rights.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carol Oberdorfer".

Carol Oberdorfer  
President, Dickerson Community Association, Inc.

RECEIVED  
0443  
APR 02 2002

Dr. John V. Evans  
24401 Stringtown Rd.  
Clarksburg, MD 20871

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

March 29, 2002

Planning Board Chairman, Art Holmes  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

Subject: Proposed Firemen's Hall on Stringtown Rd., Clarksburg, MD

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I wish to object in the strongest possible way to the proposal to allow a "Private Club" to be built and operated by the Firemen's Union on Stringtown Rd., Clarksburg, MD.

We selected our house on Stringtown Road in 1989, because the road was designated a "rural route," and the adjoining land was designated (in the Damascus Master Plan) as "agricultural." The construction of this "Private Club" threatens to change all this. Stringtown Road is narrow and windy. The increased traffic generated by the Club, together with a likely increase in accidents (the "Club" will serve alcohol) will create a demand to widen the road. This would completely change the character of the neighborhood we have come to know and love.

The Club will essentially be a money-making business for the Union, which plans to lease it for banquets, weddings, etc. It will see considerable use and draw large crowds since no similar facility is available in upper Montgomery County.

I feel that any such facility should be sited where there is better access and would not threaten the peace and tranquility of Stringtown Road.

Sincerely,

J. V. Evans

John V. Evans

Theodore Palmer  
12317 Dancrest Dr  
Clarksburg, Maryland 20871  
March 29, 2002

Mr. Art Holmes  
Chairman  
Planning Board  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

RECEIVED  
0461  
APR 03 2002

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
OF LOCAL PLANNING COMMISSIONS

Dear Mr. Art Holmes:

Montgomery County Professional Firefighters Union Hall.

I would like to express my concerns about the MC Professional Firefighters Union Hall to be located in the Agricultural Preserve on Stringtown Road. Located near the new development of Clarksburg, plans are being made to encroach into the preserve. This is just the first step into opening this area for future development. The site in question has at least 10 times the land necessary for a union hall. How long will it be before lawyers approach the board again to sub-divide this tract of land for further business or real estate development? How long will it be before more land is stripped from the preserve for development? I think we owe it to future generations to save some of our land from developers. We need to be careful that Montgomery County doesn't have the sort of unchecked growth that Northern Virginia has. We need to maintain our quality of life here.

Stringtown Road is a small, winding country road. It is not designed to handle large amounts of traffic. Event goers will be traveling unlit, winding, narrow, unmarked roads late at night after consuming alcohol. The area in question also has a large deer population. The locals are well aware of these hazards, but people attending events will not be. This will impose a safety risk to the residents of this community and the people participating in these events as well. My 14 year old daughter will be driving in a couple of years. I would hope these roads will be safe for her to drive on.

Two hundred and forty events are planned for this facility. Two out of three nights every day of every year. This is extremely excessive. These events will last until midnight. This is a quiet community, the sounds of hundreds of drunken revelers departing at midnight 4 or 5 nights a week will be very disruptive. A wedding reception is almost always accompanied by the Bride and Groom departing with tin cans dragging and horns blowing. The area is surrounded by hills, which will cause the sound to echo. Noise from these events will travel very well.

The positioning of the driveway will almost guarantee that headlights will shine into my home almost nightly. Lighting from this very large building will forever destroy the tranquility of this area.

We need to protect the Agricultural Preserve. Developers will see this development as a foot in the door. Soon they will come with more variances. It will be easier to grant a variance once this one is granted. Soon what little green we have will be turned over to developers.

I respect our county firemen and firewomen, I believe they need a place to relax. However, I suspect this hall is intended not for their use, but to be rented out for events to raise money for the union. I doubt no more than a few firefighters will ever enter this hall that is planned to be built in their name. There must be more suitable locations for this type of facility. An entire city is being built down the road in Clarksburg. Certainly a more suitable site can be found there. Roads within the new planned City of Clarksburg will be better suited for this kind of traffic. Noise and light will be less of a concern.

Please contact me at the above address if you have any questions or need additional information. I can also be contacted by phone at (301)528-7093 or (301)738-5259. An e-mail can be sent to [tpal@x-press.net](mailto:tpal@x-press.net).

Sincerely,

Theodore Palmer

March 30, 2002

RECEIVED  
0463  
APR 03 2002

Mr. Art Holmes  
Chairman, Planning Board  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARKS FOUNDRY BUILDING

Re: Case Number S-2482 Career Firefighters Association Union Hall

Dear Mr. Holmes,

I have lived in Clarksburg for 25 years and I oppose the proposed use of the land on Stringtown Road to build the Montgomery County Professional Firefighters Union Hall. I support the concerns listed below of the Clarksburg Residential Alliance and the Clarksburg Civic Association.

- Protecting the Agriculture Preserve
- Outdoor lighting
- Noise from the events (up to 240)
- Traffic increases
- Safety issues
- Serving alcohol throughout the week and weekend
- Hours of operation (Sunday through Saturday 7 am – 12 am)
- Environmental issues
- Proposed structure of over 20,000 square feet
- Well and septic concerns

Thank you for considering these important concerns of our community.

Sincerely,

*Linda Pierce*

Linda Pierce  
23932 Janbeall Ct.  
Clarksburg, MD

RECEIVED  
APR 04 2002

1 April 2002

Art Holmes  
Chairman, Planning Board  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

**Re: Case Number S-2482 Montgomery County Career Firefighters Association Union Hall**

Dear Chairman Holmes,

I write to ask that you please deny the applicant's special exception request in the above referenced case. My family has lived on Stringtown Road for three years. We bought our home when my wife and I had our first child. We were careful to try to find a house that was in a safe, quiet neighborhood, and were delighted to find a peaceful, rustic environment when we looked at the Stringtown Road property that we ultimately bought. Please do not let a union hall ruin the rural, family-friendly environment that my family has come to love.

Considering the development that was ongoing in the I-270 corridor, we knew when we bought our home that some development in Clarksburg was inevitable. So before we settled on our property, we took the time to research the zoning and the master plans governing our neighborhood. We did not want to buy the property if the 75-acre farm across the street was scheduled for major development. We quickly learned that the farm was in an agricultural preserve, zoned RDT-25, and governed by the Agricultural and Rural Open Space Master Plan. A review of the Clarksburg Master Plan revealed that intense residential and commercial development were to be limited to the center of Clarksburg, near public facilities and major transportation arteries, and not sprawl around the edge of the community. Given these findings, we purchased our property feeling secure in our belief that any development of the area around our home would neither result in a substantial increase in the level of activity in the neighborhood nor change the fundamentally quiet, rural character of our community.

Master plans serve a number of important functions in a community. They guide public officials and developers in planning land use. They codify the values of a community by protecting the resources they wish to preserve. They serve as a resource for private citizens trying to make well informed decisions about where to live. As such, they represent a bond of trust between citizens and their public officials.

If the applicants were proposing to build a single-family home sized facility to house their offices, hold meetings, and engage in charitable activities, I would have no objection to their proposal. The facility they propose is much larger in scale, however, and the level of activity is much greater than anything I could have envisioned after reading the master plans. Their facility would be more than ten times the size of the average nearby residence, and their operational plan calls for up to 200 events each year, some with as many as 240 guests and extending as late as midnight. Their operational plan and building structure would be more appropriate for a commercial banquet hall, which is for all practical purposes how they plan to operate their facility.

I ask you to consider whether an average citizen using the due diligence I used in checking the local zoning and reading the Clarksburg and Agricultural and Rural Open Space Master Plans would reasonably conclude that the use the applicants propose would be permitted. I do not believe a reasonable person would draw such a conclusion. Permitting a use such as the applicants propose would violate the trust that the plan represents and that we place in you as a public official. Citizens have a right to expect their public officials to abide by and enforce existing master plans, even when those seeking to violate it are public servants whose work we all appreciate. I respectfully ask that you enforce the master plan and maintain the integrity of the agricultural reserve. Please deny the applicant's special exception request.

Respectfully,



Justin M. Hartings  
23945 Stringtown Road  
Clarksburg, MD 20871

;



Mr. Art Holmes  
Chairman, Planning Board  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

RECEIVED  
APR 04 2002

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

April 2, 2002

Dear Mr. Holmes,

I am really against the special exceptions request by the MC Professional Firefighters to build a union hall in the Agricultural Preserve on Stringtown Road. I have lived here in Fountain View since 1974 and I can tell you that the safety issues will be serious. That many cars cannot safely navigate the unmarked, unlit and winding Stringtown Road, especially after a late night party serving alcohol. The local residents know to watch for cars turning left onto Stringtown Road from Piedmont Road because they cannot see each other until they are very close. And that is just one intersection to watch - Needle Drive and the individual driveways are dangerous also.

I just can't believe it is possible to change the zoning laws so much. Why do we have zoning laws when they can be bent so far from the purpose of the zoning? Once you add that size of a building with all the noise, lighting, environmental issues, etc - why do you have Agricultural zoning at all?

Clarksburg is growing very fast as it is - can't we leave the countryside alone?

Sincerely,



Bonnie Sakmar  
12309 Needle Drive  
Clarksburg, MD 20871

Dr. and Mrs. Erik and Brenda Storm  
23931 Janbeall Court  
Clarksburg, MD 20871  
April 2, 2002

RECEIVED  
APR 04 2002

Mr. Art Holmes  
Chairman, Planning Board  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Mr. Holmes,

We are writing to you in support of the Clarksburg Residential Alliance challenge to the special exception request by the Montgomery County Professional Firefighters to build a union hall on the Agricultural Preserve on Stringtown Road.

First of all naturally we are concerned about protecting the agricultural preserve. Obviously it is important which is why this area was deemed a preserve long ago. We are glad that the county has a Parks and Planning Commission and Zoning Board to see to it that such specially designated land remains protected as it is meant to be.

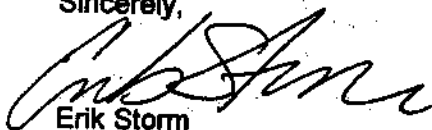
We just recently moved here to the Fountain View section of Clarksburg because it is such lovely area. We love to look out from our porch and see the natural beauty of Montgomery County, and we chose to buy this house only six months ago largely because of the quiet, peaceful neighborhood. We knew it would be the perfect place for us to start and raise our family. Now with the threat of having a 20,000 square foot banquet facility put directly in ear shot we feel a bit disillusioned. We did check the master plans for the area before deciding to purchase our home and from what we could tell the area out on Stringtown Road was not zoned for anything of the sort.

We very much enjoy the wildlife we have experienced since moving here, including a deer running across our lawn! We know that a full banquet facility will undoubtedly lead to increased lighting in the area in addition to all of the noise that will follow. No doubt we will lose the "country" sense that we sought and now cherish here in our home.

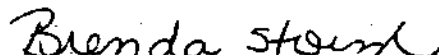
Protecting the land, sustaining the natural habitat, and upholding the neighborhood's ambiance is very important to us. Still, one more fear rings loud and clear, and that is the threat to our safety. Stringtown is a narrow, winding road that does not particularly lend itself to increased traffic volume. We feel we should not encourage needless accidents that would no doubt result from impatient drivers leaving the banquet facility, not to mention the worry of how they will act after they have been drinking all night at the facility before returning to their cars.

We feel that this particular location is an unsafe and irresponsible proposal for the desired facility type. We very much protest it and hope that we will be supported in denying their request for a special exception to build a private club on protected Agricultural Preserve ground in an otherwise residential community. Thank you very much for your time and consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,



Erik Storm



Brenda Storm

RECEIVED  
APR 04 2002

April 2, 2002

Mr. Art Holmes  
Chairman, Planning Board  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Mr. Holmes,

The purpose of this correspondence is to register my opposition to the proposed special exception request by the Montgomery county Professional Firefighters to build a union hall in the Agricultural Preserve area on Stringtown Road. I live on Needle Drive near the proposed site and feel my family will be severely impacted by this facility. The reasons for my objection are numerous, but the top three are as follows.

First, the types of events to be held at this location will increase traffic on a road which is unlit, unmarked, winding, and difficult to negotiate in its current state. The number of families with children who travel this road to and from school, local events, and even to shop in Damascus on a daily basis will now be joined by union members, event attendees, and their guests. The fact that a private bar is being installed to serve alcohol to members, much like an American Legion Post or other union halls, will only add to the potential dangers which will be inflicted on the families who live and travel in this area every day. Add in the mix of visitors who are unfamiliar with the area and attending the larger weddings, retirement parties and other major events being targeted by the union and the financing institution, and Stringtown and the through roads in this neighborhood and the new developments will become very hazardous to those who choose to live here.

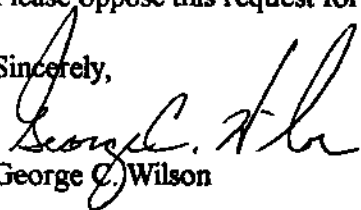
Secondly, the houses in this neighborhood, almost without exception, all contain children and teenagers. The people who live in these neighborhoods moved here to escape the noise and light pollution from other areas of the county. We ourselves chose this neighborhood for the quiet summer evenings and the ability to leave our windows open and enjoy the fresh air. Even the construction of homes to the West of us does not threaten to damage the rural setting of this area as much as this facility will. From the events will be occurring almost three out of every four weekend nights per year based on the projected number of events, and the noise from the traffic and bands or DJ's will certainly affect the neighborhood. This same type of noise pollution will also potentially occur three nights per week under the proposed operating hours spelled out in the special exception! Our two children will not be able to play outside without being impacted by this noise, and we will be forced to close our windows several times per year just to get some sleep or peace and quiet. The fact they want to be able to operate until midnight seven nights per week shows a disregard for the community's right to quiet enjoyment of their homes.

Finally, I fail to understand the need for a 20,000 square foot facility. A facility of this type and size will need to have an extremely large septic field in an area of the County that percolates poorly. The well and septic division of Montgomery County notified us recently, while investigating a problem at our home, that this area is marginal for septic fields and under today's rigid standards, many of the homes now on septic fields could not have been built. This calls into question the size of the septic field that will be required and the potential for serious impact on the existing plants and wildlife in this area when it is constructed. Also, a creek and wetlands exist on this site, and the obvious environmental impact could be severe should the system fail. The size of the facility is also much larger than necessary for the size and type of events planned. The event rooms themselves could handle up to 500 people, maybe more. This is much higher than the proposed 250-person limit and begs the question of a future request for a revision to the special exception. It seems the facility is being built as an event hall that also serves as a union hall for firefighters, as opposed to a union hall with event facilities.

The firefighters deserve a place to gather and discuss the issues which affect them or to just gather together in camaraderie and support of each other. However, to place this facility in a residential community and impose upon the same community the quantity of events, the late hours of operation, and the potential hazards of serving alcohol at these events inflicts a hardship on the very community they serve. No one disputes the bravery and commitment these men show during their careers, especially in light of recent events, but this type of facility should be placed in a light industrial/commercial area, or, at the very least, in the new town center, not in an agricultural area in the midst of houses and families with children.

Please oppose this request for a special exception.

Sincerely,

  
George C. Wilson

April 2, 2002

RECEIVED  
APR 04 2002

Mr. Art Holmes  
Chairman, Planning Board  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Mr. Holmes,

The purpose of this correspondence is to register my opposition to the proposed special exception request by the Montgomery county Professional Firefighters to build a union hall in the Agricultural Preserve area on Stringtown Road. I live on Needle Drive near the proposed site and feel my family will be severely impacted by this facility. The reasons for my objection are numerous, but the top three are as follows.

First, the types of events to be held at this location will increase traffic on a road which is unlit, unmarked, winding, and difficult to negotiate in its current state. The number of families with children who travel this road to and from school, local events, and even to shop in Damascus on a daily basis will now be joined by union members, event attendees, and their guests. The fact that a private bar is being installed to serve alcohol to members, much like an American Legion Post or other union halls, will only add to the potential dangers which will be inflicted on the families who live and travel in this area every day. Add in the mix of visitors who are unfamiliar with the area and attending the larger weddings, retirement parties and other major events being targeted by the union and the financing institution, and Stringtown and the through roads in this neighborhood and the new developments will become very hazardous to those who choose to live here.

Secondly, the houses in this neighborhood, almost without exception, all contain children and teenagers. The people who live in these neighborhoods moved here to escape the noise and light pollution from other areas of the county. We ourselves chose this neighborhood for the quiet summer evenings and the ability to leave our windows open and enjoy the fresh air. Even the construction of homes to the West of us does not threaten to damage the rural setting of this area as much as this facility will. From the events will be occurring almost three out of every four weekend nights per year based on the projected number of events, and the noise from the traffic and bands or DJ's will certainly affect the neighborhood. This same type of noise pollution will also potentially occur three nights per week under the proposed operating hours spelled out in the special exception! Our two children will not be able to play outside without being impacted by this noise, and we will be forced to close our windows several times per year just to get some sleep or peace and quiet. The fact they want to be able to operate until midnight seven nights per week shows a disregard for the community's right to quiet enjoyment of their homes.

Finally, I fail to understand the need for a 20,000 square foot facility. A facility of this type and size will need to have an extremely large septic field in an area of the County that percolates poorly. The well and septic division of Montgomery County notified us recently, while investigating a problem at our home, that this area is marginal for septic fields and under today's rigid standards, many of the homes now on septic fields could not have been built. This calls into question the size of the septic field that will be required and the potential for serious impact on the existing plants and wildlife in this area when it is constructed. Also, a creek and wetlands exist on this site, and the obvious environmental impact could be severe should the system fail. The size of the facility is also much larger than necessary for the size and type of events planned. The event rooms themselves could handle up to 500 people, maybe more. This is much higher than the proposed 250 person limit and begs the question of a future request for a revision to the special exception. It seems the facility is being built as an event hall that also serves as a union hall for firefighters, as opposed to a union hall with event facilities.

The firefighters deserve a place to gather and discuss the issues which affect them or to just gather together in camaraderie and support of each other. However, to place this facility in a residential community and impose upon the same community the quantity of events, the late hours of operation, and the potential hazards of serving alcohol at these events inflicts a hardship on the very community they serve. No one disputes the bravery and commitment these men show during their careers, especially in light of recent events, but this type of facility should be placed in a light industrial/commercial area, or, at the very least, in the new town center, not in an agricultural area in the midst of houses and families with children.

Please oppose this request for a special exception.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephanie B. Wilson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Stephanie B. Wilson

CASE # J-2482

I MAILED  
A COPY OF THIS  
TO HOLMES &  
SPENCE  
Carpenter

April 2, 2002

1/2

Dear Sir:

As long time residents of Clarksburg, 29 years, we are very concerned about the proposed Firefighters Union Hall on Stringtown Rd. We mention the length of time we have lived in Clarksburg to emphasize that we are not "Johnny come latelies" to the open spaces of the country and now expect no one else to move out here. We expect growth but hope it will be compatible with life style.

For one thing, we like our nights to be dark and quiet. We like to see the stars, planets, and satellites such as the Space Lab. Encroaching light pollution makes this difficult.

Traffic is a concern. Three years ago we moved 2 miles from busy Frederick Rd (Rt 355) to Stringtown Rd. Our part of Stringtown Rd. has been designated as Rustic Road and we would like to see it stay that way. Traffic caused by a Firefighters Hall will make that difficult.

Our main concern is alcoholic consumption at the hall. We have seen what happens (not just on tv news or newspapers). On 355 we experienced it first hand. Drunk drivers shearing off telephone poles and fire hydrants. Cars wrapped around power poles. Its not just young males out partying at night, sometimes its people falling asleep driving. Like the man driving home from work late at night hitting a power pole. His pick up truck caught fire and we were awakened by him screaming for help.

Firefighters and rescue people have seen this too, so its hard for us to understand why they want a meeting hall out on a rural road. It makes more sense to build a hall further down county, on main roads to reduce travel time to events.

In the 1970s almost every weekend saw a drunk driving accident in Clarksburg. Around 1980 there was a dramatic reduction in the drunk driving situation on route 355. Several things happened to cause this: 1. A Montgomery County police station was opened in Germantown.

2. Mothers against drunk drivers got underway. 3. Pete and Bennys tavern on 355 near the Monocacy River closed and The Blue Moon tavern on 355 at Middlebrook closed.

There is a definite correlation between taverns/beer halls and drunk driving accidents. One way to reduce this problem is sobriety tests for everyone leaving the hall after a party. Another way is to not allow the beer hall to be built in the first place.

We are against the Firefighters Union Hall.

Yours truly,

*William A. Allen*

William A. Allen

Darlene Allen

*Darlene Allen*

24500 Stringtown Rd.

Clarksburg Md 20871



April 4, 2002

Planning Board Chairman, Art Holmes  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

Re: Case Number S-2482 (Montgomery County Career Fire Fighters Private Club)

Dear Chairman Holmes,

I am writing to express my concern and objection with the applicant's proposal. I would first like to relay the need for the Board to understand that the public, myself included, takes great interest and action in researching an area before they choose to purchase a home and trust that the documents they research are trustworthy.

My husband and I went to great lengths to ensure the "stability" of the area of Clarksburg before we bought our home just a year ago - which we consider a life long investment.

We chose our home's location especially due to the Agriculture Preserve across the street, which is home to sheep, cows, horses and lamas. This 75-78 acre of agriculture preserve was ensured by the Master Plan and Zoning Plan to provide us, our community, a quiet peaceful atmosphere, dark skies at night, low activity level and safe environment.

Knowing change is inevitable we understood that the property was zoned RDT (1 home for every 25 acres) and accepted the fact that one day there could be 3 residential homes across from our property, which would be fine.

The applicant's proposal is completely out of character for the intent of the Open Space and Clarksburg Master Plan, which the Open Space Plan was built upon. If the applicant's proposal is approved it will RADICALLY change the character of the surrounding area and the residents who have decided to live and raise their families here.

The proposed building alone is OVER SEVEN TIMES THE SIZE of the adjacent and nearby homes. The proposed lights will be intrusive to all surrounding properties due to the bowl effect of the land, as well as the noise factor, thus destroying the peaceful atmosphere and dark skies enjoyed by not only my family but others as well.

My family has enjoyed listening to the sheep, cows and horses and shudder to think of those peaceful country noises being replaced with slamming car doors, horns, car alarms, party noise, people being loud from alcohol, etc.

Alcohol is a major concern with my family as well. Stringtown Road is a narrow winding rural road, no lights, and no sidewalks. We believe the potential safety issues are not worth the risk. We have heard of many accidents that have occurred on Stringtown Road that have not been reported and fear the presence of alcohol will only

increase this possibility and bring possible tragedy to those of us who travel this road on a regular basis.

I also believe that this proposal is far more than a private club from the documentation presented from the applicants and feel it is not appropriate for a residential neighborhood. The Fire Fighters made a poor choice in location and were even encourage by Park and Planning to choose a different site. We as a community and the Board as a key element in protecting and enforcing the intent and goals of the Master Plans, should not have to compromise our families or community values for the applicants non-compliance.

Understanding the Board has hard decisions to make I ask that you not only consider my family's future but consider if this was to be proposed in your back yard.

We are not just "letters", we are families with a strong community tie that encourage you to DENY this proposal for the sake of our families, our children and our community.

Sincerely,



Mary E. Fusco  
23937 Stringtown Rd  
Clarksburg, MD 20871

April 4, 2002

Planning Board Chairman, Art Holmes  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

RE: Case # S-2482 (Montgomery County Fire Fighters Private Club)

Dear Chairman,

As a resident who recently moved to Clarksburg, I am greatly displeased with the issue of this proposal even being considered for approval by the Board. Before my wife and I bought our home we carefully researched items of concern in respect to our choice and the surrounding area.

We studied the Master Plan and Zoning Plan, which resulted in our decision to purchase our home, and felt we could trust the documentation that we reviewed. Our decision included the Master Plan's information and our desire to live in a rural community. To me rural is quiet, dark skies at night, farms and residential properties, low activity level and a safe environment for families.


This proposal is completely against what is of rural nature. The proposed site is too big, too many events are proposed, too many people at these events, ANY lighting out in this area - other than residential - is too much, and alcohol included is a definite factor that is not worth the risk in my opinion.

I myself am a life time member of a volunteer station and have been a career Fire Fighter for 12 years and can understand their desire in wanting a private club BUT I feel it needs to be in a more appropriate area. A commercial area would not be impacted in the least from the applicant's proposal but it would RADICALLY change the character of our neighborhood and those who've chosen the rural lifestyle.

Inasmuch as we all support the Fire Fighters, we need to look at each applicant equally (i.e., would I or a fellow neighbor be able to get this proposal approved vs. the Fire Fighters?). I believe the Board needs to focus on the big picture and support the goals of the Master Plans with the intent on the existing communities needs and desires.

I request that the Board DENY this proposal in effort to protect and maintain an important part of the Agriculture Reserve.

Sincerely,

  
Joseph P. Fusco, Jr.  
23937 Stringtown Rd  
Clarksburg, MD 20871

CC: Board of Appeals Chairman, Don Spence

LAW OFFICES OF  
**KNOFF & BROWN**  
1050 SEVENTEENTH STREET, N.W.  
SUITE 1200  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036  
(202) 785-8200

E-MAIL LAWFIRM@KNOFF-BROWN.COM

FAX: (202) 331-0174

April 5, 2002

**DELIVERY BY FAX AND MAIL**

Arthur Holmes, Chairman  
Montgomery County Planning  
Board  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: Firefighters Association  
Special Exception S-2482

Dear Chairman Holmes and Members  
of the Board:

This firm represents the Clarksburg Residential Alliance, comprised of residents in the immediate vicinity of the proposed Special Exception. We urge the Board to recommend **DENIAL** of the project. This letter contains a brief outline of some of the reasons for denial. Each, plus others, will be explained by testimony and submissions at the hearing.

1. It is Not a Private Club. The operations and the 20,000 sq. ft. size and design of the structure reflect a meeting hall/catering hall commercial business. The facilities are to be used by members and their "guests" which include renting the facilities to non-affiliated groups. Traditional club use is only about one meeting per month by its Board (up to 14 people) and one membership meeting per month (for up to 30 people). The principal use is for rentals for meetings and catering affairs totaling 200 per year; 125 events - 100 people; 50 events - 150 people; and 25 events - 240 people. A meeting hall/catering hall use is not a Special Exception permitted in this zone.

2. It is Inconsistent with the Master Plans. The property lies within the Agricultural and Rural Open Space Master Plan, the goal of which is to preserve and protect the rural open space character. Accordingly, the property is not proposed for public sewer, and this project will be served by septic. The Clarksburg Master Plan area is adjacent to this site and calls for low residential density as an edge to transition to the rural

- 2 -

character of the agricultural preserve. Karen Kumm Morris correctly has concluded that this proposal is incompatible with the Clarksburg Master Plan. (K. Morris, memo of November 28, 2001 to Judy Daniel.)

The large structure, the intensity of use - an average of four major meetings/catering activities per week - are inconsistent with the intent of both Master Plans. Moreover, the intense use of the property, including adverse environmental impacts, are likely to be even greater than the present proposal suggests as the parking area will need to be expanded since the 120 spaces would not accommodate the 240 guests at a large function, no less all of the employees of the caterer, his trucks, the musicians, etc.

3. The Size and Intense Use of the Facility will Adversely Affect the Residents' Use, Enjoyment and Value of Their Homes. The site is located at the bottom of a "bowl." Ringing the "bowl" are numerous residents' homes which will have a direct view of the facility. The "bowl" effect will exacerbate the noise generated by cars, delivery trucks, people leaving, and music. (The functions will be held until midnight on Fridays, Saturdays and 10:00 p.m. on Sundays.) The quiet rural residential character of this area will be altered to the detriment of the adjoining property owners, including property values. The topography precludes adequate screening of the building, its noise, and lighting, from the building, parking lot and exiting cars.

4. The Volume of Traffic Generated by the Intense Use is Incompatible with the Narrow and Rustic Roads of the Area and Cannot Safely be Accommodated. The project will be principally served by Stringtown Road, a Rustic Road. This road, like others in the area, is narrow, 18 feet, and winding. Placing a large volume of traffic on such roads, especially late at night, such as at midnight after a 240-person social affair, is inconsistent with the present character of the area sought to be preserved by the Master Plans, and the Rustic Road designation. There is a safety problem with the handling of this concentrated volume of traffic late at night on such substandard roads, in addition to the compatibility issue.

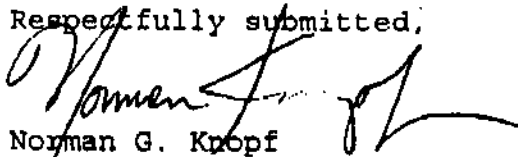
The staff (majority?) recommendation has not assigned great weight to the citizens' concerns apparently due to the fact that there are other uses nearby which are also incompatible with the rural character of the area sought to be preserved. Those uses, however, are uses as a matter of right. The law is clear, Schultz v. Pritts, that Special Exceptions are to be governed by a different standard. A Special Exception use may

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be denied for the adverse effects it causes even though the identical adverse effects would be generated by a matter of right use.

We thank the Board for consideration of our comments.

Respectfully submitted,



Norman G. Knopf  
for Clarksburg Residential  
Alliance

cc: Francois Carrier, Director  
Office of Zoning and  
Administrative Hearings  
Mary Fusco, President  
Clarksburg Residential  
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