

Washington Glenn ZMA13-48

Public Hearing Response

David C Gardiner, Port Tobacco River Conservancy (PTRC) Past Executive Director, and/or Technical Director for fourteen years

I request that the Planning Commission reject the developer's zoning amendment request because subject property where the dense development is proposed would place dwellings over Port Tobacco River headwaters.

I am a life-long resident of Charles County, have lived on the Port Tobacco River at 8451 Potobac Shores Road for the past 43 years, works at the Chapel Point Park during the late 50's and was a founder of the PTRC in 2001.

PTRC was founded by 10 land owners living on or near the river due to the concern for the public health of our family members and friends who enjoyed swimming and fishing in the river. Our first act was to establish a water quality monitoring program to determine if the river met State of MD standards for the levels of bacteria considered safe for recreation. The Charles County Commissioners approved the monitoring program in 2002; MDE trained our team of volunteer samplers; and DHMH and County Health Department processed and funded the analyses of the samples. Since 2002, PTRC has collected over 1500 water samples from 50 river and stream locations in the 42 square mile watershed beginning just north of Billingsley Rd. to the point where the Port Tobacco River enters the Potomac River south of Goose Bay.

The data and analyses from PTRC's water quality program show the levels and sources of harmful bacteria. This information has been used as justification for requesting federal; state and foundation grant funds initiated by the PTRC and the Charles County government to restore pollution sources from failing septic systems, storm water deficiencies, and agriculture/cattle in streams pollution. An estimated over \$3M has funded initiatives included providing home owners' funds to replace failing septic systems with nitrogen and bacteria reducing "best available technology" systems, rain gardens at local middle and high schools, a bio-retention facility in a developer's commerce center to filter toxic materials from a parking lot (with developer contributions), planting of over 10,000 trees in stream buffers by PTRC volunteer boy and girl scouts and high school students, and the recent in-progress stream restoration and wetland reconnect project. Additional, PTRC members and our volunteers have contributed over \$1M of in kind labor in support of our monitoring, general public and student education, restoration and advocacy programs. PTRC has also received no-cost support from Johns Hopkins. Bloomberg School review of has our validated PTRC's water quality data. USDA soil scientist's surveys provided soil conditions affecting the suitability of septic systems throughout the watershed.

The Washington Glenn development in the Port Tobacco River watershed in the area of its headwaters could reverse the gains in the water quality improvements that the County and PTRC have made over the past fourteen years. Cost to mitigate this increased pollution source will compete with projects that are in the Charles County WIP to meet TDML requirements.