

August 15, 2020

Dear Mr. Zoller and Agricultural Preservation Board Members,

I hope this finds you and your family well during these strange, turbulent times. Trying to contain this coronavirus has taken over our lives. It also gives us time to think at home.

I want to thank Jim for taking the time to walk the 1.9 mile path with Karen, my daughter, and me to see the Paternal Gift Farm (PGF) Equestrian Business. Jim, you are the first county official to do so. When we parted months ago, we left significant Farm Preservation Issues for the Scheidt Family and Howard County on the table.

1. How to encourage productive, agricultural businesses in the open space of rural cluster developments in Howard County?

This farm land is a part of a larger parcel named "Paternal Gift" by Alexander Warfield when he deeded a large land parcel to his son Gustavis in 1803. Horse businesses were a part of Paternal Gift's farm income for many years. When Schooley Mill Horse Park was opened, upon request, we added horse boarding to our farm businesses. We always had a waiting list and upon request dedicated a second field for boarding horses. It was the natural agricultural business for a Paternal Gift Farm Cluster Community. My biggest surprise as the developer is that not a single lot was sold to a buyer who owned a horse. All the lots sold quickly to people who fell in love with the opportunity to live in the country with open space views of the sunrise, sunset, stars at night (no street lights) and farm land. Today, we have two ladies and one teenage girl, all first time home buyers, who live in the Paternal Gift Community and have horses.

During PGF's ten years of development, plans were submitted and examined by the county often with AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION stamped on all the open space areas of the plan yet no one informed us, the Scheidt Family, that Howard County's policy for payment of farm land placed into the Howard County Preservation Program would not apply to their 74.110 acre farm in cluster development.

2. When did the Agriculture Preservation Board change their policy that all farm land easements recorded by Howard County's Agricultural Preservation Program received payment?
3. How did the County and the Board communicate this change and why were we, one of the cluster developments under way not informed

I spent the expected Agricultural Preservation Program money because it was needed to build the infrastructure for a Howard County equestrian business preserved in perpetuity.

In trying to understand how this could have happened, I wonder did the Farm Preservation Board know the Paternal Gift Farm Community, not the Scheidt Family, owned the farm? Recently, Joe Rutter was very surprised to learn from me that the Scheidt Family does not now own the farm land. Who would build their beautiful home on a one acre lot adjacent to someone else's farm? No one that I know. The farmer would control the view from your home, too risky. Each Paternal Gift resident has a vote on farm decisions and a say about their precious view of farmland. The Paternal Gift Farm is jointly owned by its 28 new homes owners plus Peter and Susan Scheidt for a total of 29 community members.

Before even considering developing the farm, the Scheidt Family applied for and was in the process of acceptance for Paternal Gift Farm into Howard County's Agricultural Preservation Program. Unfortunately, at this time Howard County's Agricultural Preservation Program ran out of money. The Scheidt Family siblings: Carol Thomas, Highland; Sally Churan, New Mexico; and Peter Scheidt, Highland who jointly owned a 123 acre farm of feeder cattle, crops, and horse boarding since 1979. For family health reasons we needed to resolve the long term disposition of this family asset. Before the land was sold, agricultural preservation funds became available again. However, the family had already settled on an Agricultural Preservation Cluster Development to save the beautiful farm land they loved.

The Scheidt Family's agricultural cluster development plan anticipated the agricultural preservation money to enhance their old style family working farm with barb wire fences and sheds into a productive, upscale community owned horse business. Anticipating that agricultural preservation funds were available, they spent money to develop (seven horse fields - each with electricity, a well, corral, manure composer, * 4 board fencing, * 5 attractive barns and two horse sheds, * a tractor and equipment building complete with a large farm John Deere tractor, small John Deere tractor, * farm wagons, * fencing tools, etc. * fenced storage area for horse trailers, boats, farm's gasoline holding tank * attractive two bedroom new home for the farm manger's house with a separate garage and farm office over the garage, well, septic, electricity * spring fed pond stocked with fish, fishing dock, * gazebo * 1.9 mile solid asphalt walking path around the farm and through the forest preservation areas). Paternal Gift is a working productive farm owned by a community with an income around \$130,000 for operating the farm and is a welcomed part of Howard County's Highland Community. The farm has two part-time employees in addition to contractors providing agricultural services. **The expected Farm Preservation money was well spent establishing an equestrian farm in perpetuity but was not received at the end of the development project when the land was dedicated.**

Twenty plus years and many developments later, there has not been another developer who spent the money that is needed to create a cluster community with open space centered on productive agricultural land, an award winning concept Like Paternal Gift recognized by the following:

- 1996 Goodyear/NACD Conservation Award – Howard SCD
- 1997 Award of Excellence Land Development Council of the Home Builders Association of MD
- 1997 Project of the Year in Recognition of Excellence in Design, Planning and Construction of Paternal Gift Farm by the Land Development Council of the Home Builders Association of MD
- 1998 Finest for Family Living Award.

It is time for Howard County to examine why cluster development open space too often looks like deserted and neglected land instead of beautiful agricultural land. **I invite you, the board members, to come for a tour of PGF the only way to see how our farm community operates and how our beautiful agricultural land is saved in perpetuity. Please wear your walking shoes.**

For the future of a better Howard County, Cluster Zoning with Agricultural Preservation open space needs the support of the Agricultural Preservation money to be used for the development of productive, beautiful agricultural businesses in perpetuity. Howard County should set the stage by paying the Scheidt Family for the productive horse boarding business they preserved with the Agricultural Preservation money they expected to receive. It is the just and right thing to do.

Sincerely yours,

D. Susan Scheidt

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A LITTLE HISTORY OF PGF DEVELOPMENT

In 1990 I ran for the 5th District County Council representative to promote the concept of cluster zoning. My mantra was that three acre zoning is too much to mow and not enough to farm. Charlie Feaga won the election, but I won too when the County Council voted to include the Cluster Zoning in Howard County the next year. Paternal Gift's residents won too as they enjoy attractive farm views from their homes, walking on the path around their farm and woodlands, and owning productive farmland. The Highland Community members win too as they continue to enjoy views of the farm, especially from Hall Shop Road, a designated Howard County Scenic Road. Consider the future possibilities for Howard County farm communities with homes sited to enjoy the open space agricultural and i.e.; (1) combination of a flock of sheep and a peach orchard farm, (2) combination of feeder cattle, and crops – winter wheat, corn, soybeans etc., (3) combination of horses and vineyard farm. Future Howard County cluster farm community developments will depend upon payment for their agricultural land from the Howard County Agricultural Preservation Program to create an economic positive development venture.

Farm communities in cluster developments is an open ended concept introduced to me by Byron Hanke, Harvard-trained urban planner who was the chief of the land planning division of HUD, an active member of Urban Land Institute (ULI), my consultant for the Paternal Gift Farm Development and my sponsor to become a member of ULI. Introducing cluster development to save beautiful open farmland in Howard County became my passion. Later Randolph Arndt embraced the PGF Development and includes it in his lectures, pamphlets like Natural Land Trust Conservation Design in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and his books. Howard County also embraced the concept of PGF and over the years used it as an example of beautiful preserved farmland in Howard County.

How does a teacher with a master's degree from Johns Hopkins University in Education become a developer?

You go back to school.

Howard Community College

Accounting: PGF Development Accounts on Home Computer

Real Estate: Real Estate - License

GRI Degree – Taxes, Appraisals, etc.

Landscape Design: Grading, Open Spaces, Tree Selection

Home Builders Association of Maryland

Attend all Home Builders Association Development Courses offered for Members

Urban Land Institute

Use the Urban Land Institute Library in Washington, D. C. for members

ULI National 1993 Spring Meeting in Minneapolis – Special Review Session PGF

A.G. Parrott Contractor

You hire your cousin - land grading , road building, walking path

You Find a Sole Mate.

Byron Hanke, who had a passion to create a Cluster Development with Agricultural Preservation that preserves the beauty of the agricultural land, generously offered his consistent support and free advice

You Marry the Right Partner

Peter Scheidt, who believes in you even more than you believe in yourself.

ABOUT THE PGF DOCUMENTS FOR A CLUSTER AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION COMMUNITY

The Homeowner Documents for the Paternal Gift Community were carefully constructed to create a community with an emphasis on people and people-friendly spaces. The Articles of Incorporation; Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions; and the By Laws were drafted and refined by Hyatt & Stubblefield, P.C., attorneys in Atlanta, Georgia who specialized in Designing Community Documents. Wayne Hyatt, an equestrian, was the Keynote Speaker and, most significant, a member of the PGF Plan Analysis Review Session at the ULI National 1993 Spring Meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Wayne Hyatt also served as seminar chair for the ULI Seminar “Designing Master-Planned Communities: “In Search of New Visions” in Reston, Virginia and at the General Session of the Community Associations Institute National Conference in New Orleans. The session addressed the future of associations in the “Information Age.” The PGF Homeowner Documents for the Paternal Gift Community are on file, the Maryland Homeowner Associations, Baltimore City, and in Howard County for future developers to review and use.

The Design Standards were drafted by Neil Lang, architect, LDR International, Inc. Columbia, Maryland. The Community Association Institute, CAI, provided me with the Design Standards from twenty or more prominent communities throughout the United States for guidance. The members of the Paternal Gift Homeowners’ Association will enforce, confirm and as needs evolve change, adapt, delete or add design standards for the Paternal Gift Community.

Richard Talkin, P. A., Columbia, Maryland reviewed the Paternal Gift Farm, Inc. Community Association Documents and with the developer, D. Susan Scheidt, wrote the Initial Sales Disclosure Certificate.