

Feb. 22, 2011

2010 MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL (MHC) SAVE THE HORSE FARMS ORIGINAL
STATED OBJECTIVES AND STATUS

The following are as stated in the original "Save the Horse Farms" (STHF) handout at the November 2009 MHC Quarterly Meeting and as posted on the MHC web site STHF section.

A major focus of the MHC Legislative Committee in 2010 will be a new "Save The Horse Farms" campaign. We are enlisting volunteers from each county to help gather stories about the effect of county regulations on horse farms, as well as to gather local ordinances and recruit local committees who want to work for reform at the county level. The committee has outlined the following objectives for this initiative.

- Ø Draft a detailed survey to inquire into individual farm owners' experience with county level governmental entities and issues with any specific zoning ordinances

STATUS: COMPLETE.

- Ø Name County Coordinator and create County Committees

STATUS: ONGOING.

-STHF now has a good contact list for County Coordinators for the following counties: Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Cecil, Frederick, Hartford, Kent, Montgomery, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's

-The following counties still do not have County Coordinators after repeated requests for volunteers (MHC meetings, e-mail, print (The Equiry), etc.): Allegheny, Calvert, Carroll, Charles, Dorchester, Garrett, Howard, Somerset, Talbot, Washington, Wicomico, Worcester

-Note: Rob Jenner was nominated for Caroline County, but STHF has not contact data for him.

Recommendation: Recommend MHC STHF Committee draft a letter to each of the counties' Planning and Zoning Departments that DO NOT have County Coordinators offering assistance in areas of equine facilities and activities should the need arise. The purpose would be to let them know experts are available, AND that there is an ongoing campaign.

- o Collect and organize data from farm owners, county council, and county park and planning entities

STATUS: For counties with coordinators:

COMPLETE: Frederick, Kent, Prince George's, and Queen Anne's

ONGOING: Baltimore, Cecil, Montgomery, St. Mary's.

BEGINNING: Anne Arundel, Hartford

- Collection of relevant zoning ordinance language

STATUS: Same as above

- Collection of case history of farms having specific issues with governmental entities

STATUS: This objective proved difficult to collect. Instead, this became more of “case studies,” which the STHFs Committee has collected, placed on the web site, and shared with MHC members. These case studies will be included in the overall report to display the varying ways that counties, and individuals within the counties, approached and solved the issues.

- Collection of data on horse farms, non-horse farms, and use of open space at the county level

STATUS: NOT ACCOMPLISHED. *Recommend revising this objective. County Coordinators may collect this information if needed at their local level, but the MHC STHF Campaign should develop a statement regarding the state as a whole to include in the overall report. Recommend gathering data from Maryland Farm Bureau, MD Dept of Agriculture, and the recent Equine Census. Enlisting help here.*

- Collection of data on grain/hay farms that have now been sold for development purposes

STATUS: NOT ACCOMPLISHED. We have some anecdotal stories, and our own historical recollections, but this fact has been elusive. *Recommend deleting this objective and replace with a statement along the lines of: “The number of grain/hay farms has reduced significantly in the past 20 years, many lost to development.” Again, the data collection on the above bullet may help here.*

- Ø Review of federal and other legislation to protect and preserve horse farms

STATUS: ONGOING. Amy Samman leading the effort.

- o Kentucky
- o Washington State
- o New York

- Ø Review of federal and state level legislation for agricultural and open space preservation

STATUS: ONGOING. Amy Samman leading the effort.

- Ø Draft and Release Report

STATUS: COLLECTION BEGUN. *Question: What do we want the report to say?*

ANSWER FROM MHC EXCOM: The purpose of the report is to jump start efforts in more counties and provide awareness across the state of the power in horses as agriculture. The hope is that the final report would be released to the press including problems in counties and the wave going across the state where county governments realize that horses are good for their counties. Changing zoning to help horse farms and horse farmers will hopefully be seen as beneficial. The report should also discuss zoning laws vs. what some zoning inspectors interpret as the laws.

- Ø Implement legislative objective arising from the data collection at the state and local levels

STATUS: NOT BEGUN. *Question: What is the legislative objective?*

ANSWER FROM MHC EXCOM: During discussion, this objective was revised to state: Enforce Legislative Objective. The MHC ExCom encourages STHF County Coordinators, STHF committee members, and ALL MHC members with an interest to meet with county legislators and discuss the legislative objective outlined at the November legislative session. The statement referring to the STHF campaign is included here:

SaveThe Horse Farms by supporting efforts to reform local zoning and land use regulations to make them more horse farm friendly.

Background

The General Assembly passed HB 955 in 2009 stating specifically that equestrian activities on horse farms are agricultural. Some counties have already responded by reviewing zoning and land use laws to ensure that efforts to improve horse farms are not blocked by inappropriate local laws. Members of the Maryland Horse Council are working to have county laws throughout the state reviewed and amended so that more horse farms can be saved at no expense to taxpayers. We need state {and county} legislators to lend their support to these efforts.

If you are not familiar with the Legislative Support Statements, please see the following link, which also provides a link to all the state legislators. Your county web sites will have something similar. <http://www.mdhorsecouncil.org/legislative.htm>

YOUR support for “Enforcing this legislative objective” can be as simple as cutting and pasting the above legislative objective into an e-mail to your local legislators. Include a sentence or two (or more, if you have it!) about happenings in your county and offer to speak to lawmakers. If you REALLY want to talk to them, follow up with a phone call after sending the e-mail and ask to speak to them.

Anyone interested in sharing experiences for this effort or in becoming involved in any way should contact Amy Kregel Samman at ajk@FDALAW.com.

Recommendation: Recommend including contact Valerie Ormond at valerieormond@aol.com, and Erica Lancaster at ericalancaster@championreality.com, or Amy Kregel Samman at aks@fdalaw.com.
