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What office are you seeking?: Montgomery County Council, at large
Where can voters learn more about your positions?: seth@sethgrimes.org

2 Someone new to Montgomery County may ask, "What's the Ag Reserve and why is it important?" What's your answer?

I would start by quoting the Countryside Alliance: "The Agricultural Reserve is 93,000 acres of farms, fields and forests just 30 minutes from downtown DC." I would add, the Ag Reserve is spread across northern and western Montgomery County. It preserves farms and farming and a way of life in Montgomery County, and it helps us ensure that dense development in the county appropriately occurs in transit-rich corridors that welcome and provide infrastructure to support it.

3 What are your priorities regarding stewardship of the County's natural resources (water, forests, open spaces) and parkland?

I am an environmentalist with a record unique among candidates for Montgomery County Council at large: I have written and won passage of significant environmental legislation. As a Takoma Park City Council member, I wrote or co-wrote my city's lawncare pesticide ban, polystyrene food serviceware ban, and business recycling ordinance. I aggressively promoted Takoma Park's city's environmental sustainability agenda -- we ranked third nationally in the Georgetown Energy Prize competition, our food-waste composting program, stormwater management efforts, and tree planting. My stewardship priorities are conservation, restoration, and protection, and expansion of parkland in areas where it is lacking such as downtown Bethesda. I have taken active steps to promote protection, for instance, winning a Takoma Park City Council resolution last fall opposing creation of a new Potomac bridge and highway corridor that would have crossed the Ag Reserve (<http://montgomeryatlarge.org/157-2>).

4 What is your vision for the future of the County's Agricultural Reserve? Briefly, how would you achieve that vision?

The future of the Ag Reserve? Preservation, expansion of farming and economic vitality, and openness to other uses of appropriate scale and type. I would achieve this vision via work with community organizations and residents, in keeping with environmental best practices.

5 Can you identify some of the top challenges to the Reserve's local agriculture and what actions you would take, if elected, to address them?

- People: retaining and attracting especially younger individuals and families.
- Environmental improvement: Maintaining water quality, minimizing use of pesticides and other threats.
- Building the farm sector.
- Warding off the encroachment of development, by maintaining buffers and opposing inappropriate uses.
- Denying inappropriate uses such as the recent attempt to open an out-of-scale restaurant and banquet hall.

My approach is to work with community stakeholders and organizations and my Council colleagues to further our shared goals.

6 What more can be done to support our local farm businesses and rural communities?

I am open to suggestions from the Montgomery Countryside Alliance and from farm businesses and community members!

7 How should our County manage its solid waste? What role should incineration, composting and recycling play?

Priority number one is waste reduction and number two is waste recovery, with zero-waste as local goal on an aggressive timeframe. A strong zero-waste initiative will allow us to shut down the Dickerson incinerator without simply sending even more to landfill.

As a Takoma Park Councilmember, I promoted food-waste and organics collection for composting. (Composting guru Brenda Platt is a supporter.) The city now offers curbside food-waste collection from all single-family homes. I wrote Takoma Park's business recycling bill and the 2013 ban of polystyrene food serveware, and I advanced Takoma Park's ban on disposable plastic bags.

The County should move toward broad composting and push for much-higher recycling participation. I would consider a provision that was part of my first draft of the 2013 Takoma Park polystyrene bill: A requirement that food-service establishment use only compostable disposables and collect all disposables and food waste for composting.

8 How can we expand the role the County's schools play in the support of a healthy local food system and the success of local agriculture? Do you support a rural schools' policy that provides equity for Reserve cluster schools acknowledging the unique nature of schools in region set aside for farmland and open space preservation?

Two elements of my background: First, I am a Real Food for Kids-Montgomery advisor. RFKM promotes higher school nutrition standards and local, in-school food preparation using fresh ingredients, preferably local. Efforts such as this create visibility and markets for the local healthy food system. Second, I spent two years going to weekly meetings to develop, plan, and raise funds for the TPSS Community Kitchen, a partnership of the Takoma Park Presbyterian Church and the Crossroads Community Food Network, focusing on processing of local food for local sale. And also, I admire the Brickyard Farm initiative -- that it arose out of the community and educated school kids.

A Rural Schools Policy makes sense, acknowledging the unique nature of schools in the County's rural zones.

9 Currently the County is exploring how best to support a strong agricultural economy through agritourism and new farming enterprises such as on farm breweries and wineries. What are your thoughts about how best to advance on farm activities within the context of the master plan?

My own economic development focus is on encouraging enterprise creation county-wide with conditions that will nurture growth and retention. We should continue to build a strong agricultural economy within

this framework, but here I would defer to experts within the farm sector, to inform our County policy-making. I am running at large, and I will make every effort to solicit expert advice and community views and turn them into sound, sensible policy.

10 **What are your regional transportation priorities? Do you support M83 and an additional Potomac bridge and outer beltway through the Reserve or adjacent rural zones?**

My top priority is to fix Metro, via dedicated, bondable regional funding. Next, bus rapid transit will mean faster and more reliable travel and fewer drivers on the road. I support the Corridor Cities Transitway -- €BRT for up-county -- and bi-directional, all-day MARC Brunswick Line service. Finally, walkability and bicycle infrastructure -- multi-modal options -- will strengthen our transportation network, reducing congestion and vehicle-linked pollution.

I oppose M83 and an additional Potomac bridge and highway -- see "An additional Potomac River bridge is a lousy transportation option" (<http://montgomeryatlarge.org/157-2>) -- and I won a Takoma Park City Council stand against the project.

I am the only nonincumbent at-large candidate who has actually won funding for: Crosswalks, sidewalks and pedestrian improvements, bike lanes, Bike Share, green streets, and stormwater treatments, including as a member of the Transportation Planning Board.