



Wednesday, November 02, 2011

Mr. Brian Traugott, Chairman
Woodford County Comprehensive Plan Review Committee
Woodford County Courthouse
Suite 204
103 South Main Street
Versailles, KY 40383
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Dear Chairman Traugott,

The Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation was incorporated in 1955 and, since the time of its formation, has endeavored to promote the public recognition and preservation of buildings, structures, neighborhoods, districts, areas and objects which form the foundation of the Bluegrass region's historic fabric. The built and natural environments of the Bluegrass region have an equal value to the citizens of the Commonwealth.

With respect for the value of the built and natural environments, the Bluegrass Trust for Historic Preservation, Inc. ("BGT") files this letter to memorialize our concern about removal of the Agricultural/Equine District and further concern regarding limited low-density residential in the Rural District.

Your community web site opens with the following description: *"Versailles' reputation as a "quaint community" is the result of our entire community's vision and thoughtful planning and participation. As a community, we value our small town atmosphere settled among the rich rural landscape around us and the local historical districts that take us back in time. To preserve our heritage, we seek to encourage diversified opportunities and at the same time, enhance community character and the quality of life for all our citizens. We continually strive to establish a strong, well-integrated city that fosters local businesses and industries, maintain a clean and safe environment, as well as an overall fiscally sound and pleasant community. This strong sense of community and vision will be achieved through the will and vested interest of our citizens. The community's motto of "moving forward to revitalize the downtown Versailles community to meet the challenge of the future, while celebrating and preserving our past" is a prime example of what we are all about in this wonderful community."* <http://www.versaillesky.com>

Further to your website is the 2005 Comprehensive Plan which describes the Agricultural/Equine District as: *"those portions of the Rural Service Area that can be characterized as prime agricultural and equine lands based on soil conditions, subsurface geology, topography and other factors. The use of such lands should be primarily reserved for agricultural and equine operations, and agricultural tourism activities."*

The BGT believe it is important to remind you of the comments on the opening page of your web site and the 2005 Comprehensive Plan because the Planning Commission seems headed in a direction which is contrary to the spirit of your “quaint community.”

While indications point to a 2020-2030 growth in population, opening up rural land for development will not help you achieve the goal to “revitalize the downtown area of Versailles.” Protection of rural land and the resulting natural forced infill development and adaptive reuse of buildings will bring people into the city. Across the country studies cite the positive aspects of rural land protection and infill development. And, those studies cite other added benefits, walkability, traffic reduction, downturns in crime and development of mixed neighborhoods – places where race, age and even pets mingle happily. You promote many good ideas within your land use plan, but act counter to those ideas by eliminating the Agricultural/Equine District and allowing “limited low-density residential” in the Rural District.

You need only look to the Lexington Fayette Urban County Government where such limited low density residential existed in the rural boundary and boom growth of one to five acre tracts with limited low-density residential sprung up across the rural landscape. Yes, they are low-density (single family) mega houses with a false nod to colonial architecture. The LFUCG and the wisdom of the Council stopped such development and put a 40 acre limit on any rural division of land. And, here we are in 2011 with no movement on our urban services boundary and visible evidence our downtown is not only surviving, but thriving.

The Blue Grass Trust respectfully implores the Planning Commission to give consideration to reinstating the Agricultural/Equine Preserve District in the Comprehensive Plan and continuing to place restrictions on residential development in the Rural District. Think beyond the challenge of a population increase by giving those new citizens an opportunity to experience a quality of life in an urban environment. Versailles is a “quaint community” and protection of its rural land is of vital importance its future.

Sincerely,

Linda Carroll, President

Copy to: Pattie Wilson via email pwilson@woodfordcountyky.org