Press Release

Montgomery County Planning and Zoning will begin a major undertaking on July 13, 2021, as the Planning and Zoning Board of seven and the Zoning Administrator will host the first of several Open Group Meetings to revisit the Master Plan, Master Map and work on a renewable energy solar overlay district. The Master Plan outlines community goals and aspirations in terms of community development and both expresses and regulates public policies on transportation, utilities, land use, recreation, and housing. “Part of the planning process is to engage the community, ask for their input, because this is their county, it effects the way they live their everyday life,” says Zoning Administrator, Donna Viehmann. The Master Plan needs to be revisited every ten to twenty years to determine the direction of growth the County is headed. “The Master Plan has not been changed since the implementation of Montgomery County Planning and Zoning in 1998. In 2010, it was revisited but nothing changed. The same with the Master Map, not much has changed in the 20 plus years it has been in existence. It’s time to look at it again” Viehmann said.

“Solar Farms are becoming more prevalent in the surrounding counties and Montgomery needs to be ahead of the curve,” explains Administrator Viehmann. “I get calls every day concerning solar panels.” The proposed solar overlay would require a minimum of 50 contiguous acres of land to be permitted in an Agricultural Zoned district only. Paperwork for the permit would require number, location and spacing of the solar panels, maximum amount of megawatts that may be generated, a security fence of six feet tall with warning signs and a decommissioning plan with estimated life span of panels plus decommission costs posted by a performance bond, surety bond or irrevocable letter of credit. Viehmann states, “the timing works well; having the citizens give their input on the Master Plan and Master Map, as well as, their thoughts on the solar overlay. This is a work in progress.” Citizen input can be given through a survey on-line at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DWWQPND, attend the open group meetings, stop by the booth at the fair, to let their opinions be heard. The survey will close on August 22, 2021. The first reveal of the surveys and the proposal to be taken to the Planning and Zoning Board will be held at Valentine’s Hall, in Starkenburg, at 12 noon on September 21,2021. The goal is to have all three items on the County Commissioners desk no later than December 31, 2021.