



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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# **Fate Of Nick's Organic Farm Site In Potomac To Be Subject Of Montgomery County Meeting Tonight**

## **Nationally Recognized Experts To Attend**

**Potomac, MD, April 4, 2011**—The site of Nick's Organic Farm in Potomac will be the subject of a public meeting TONIGHT hosted by the Montgomery County Department of General Services, "about the Brickyard Road Soccer Field project," planned for the site where Nick's Organic Farm has operated organically for thirty years.

Amid the controversy surrounding the plan, several nationally recognized figures in the fields of organic agriculture and the environment are expected to attend, bringing their expertise and perspective, including:

- Jay Feldman, Executive Director of Beyond Pesticides, Washington, DC;
- Ferd Hoefner, Policy Director for the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), Washington, DC;
- Mike Tabor, Farmer, Licking Creek Bend Farm, Needmore, PA; and
- Mike Heller, Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Clagett Farm Manager, Upper Marlboro, MD.

The meeting will be held in the wake of protest from the Montgomery Countryside Alliance ([www.mocoalliance.org](http://www.mocoalliance.org)), which in concert with many other environmental, agricultural and food organizations signed a letter urging Montgomery County Executive Isiah Leggett to instead form a County Food and Agriculture Policy Council, with Nick's Organic Farm in Potomac as an anchor for agricultural education. A petition to maintain the farm has already gained hundreds of supporters. ([http://www.change.org/petitions/turn-a-30-year-old-organic-farm-in-maryland-into-a-food-education-hub-not-soccer-fields-2#?opt\\_new=t&opt\\_fb=t](http://www.change.org/petitions/turn-a-30-year-old-organic-farm-in-maryland-into-a-food-education-hub-not-soccer-fields-2#?opt_new=t&opt_fb=t)) (To see the letter, click here: <http://mocoalliance.org/wp-content/upload/Food-Policy-Coalition-letter-april-1.pdf>.)

While more organizations are expected to endorse the Food and Agriculture Policy Council, the list currently includes: Future Harvest-Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture ([www.futureharvestcasa.org](http://www.futureharvestcasa.org)), the Maryland Organic Food and Farming Association ([www.marylandorganic.org](http://www.marylandorganic.org)), the Maryland Independent Consumers and Farmers Association ([www.micfa.net](http://www.micfa.net)), the Weston A. Price Foundation ([www.westonaprice.org](http://www.westonaprice.org)), the Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture ([www.pasafarming.org](http://www.pasafarming.org)), Slow Food DC ([www.slowfooddc.org](http://www.slowfooddc.org)), Audubon Naturalist Society ([www.anshome.org](http://www.anshome.org)), Montgomery Victory Gardens ([www.montgomeryvictorygardens.org](http://www.montgomeryvictorygardens.org)), GrowingSOUL (<http://www.growingsoul.org>), West Montgomery County Civic Association ([www.wmcca.org](http://www.wmcca.org)), the Maryland Small Farm Coop ([www.marylandsmallfarmcoop.org](http://www.marylandsmallfarmcoop.org)) and Beyond Pesticides ([www.beyondpesticides.org](http://www.beyondpesticides.org)).

Nick's Organic Farm is a unique asset to the County for many reasons, including:

- NOF is a successful, long-established model for agriculture on the urban fringe, the type of farm that is increasingly gaining attention as the farm-of-the-future, because it can help ensure the safety, availability and affordability of our food as populations rise and transportation/fuel costs increase;
- It is uniquely isolated from other farms generating genetically modified (GMO) pollen, so it can produce organic GMO-free seed that is especially adapted to the local climate and weather conditions, a highly unusual resource;
- Having been tended by a nationally renowned organic farmer who has been appointed by USDA Secretary Vilsack to the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), the farm would be a perfect down-County anchor for agricultural education for public school children and adults, in the tradition of Montgomery County's Ag Reserve, and in the vision of the USDA "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food" initiative; and
- The site could serve as a mentoring and incubator facility for the next generation of farmers.

The County Food and Agriculture Policy Council would be in line with the County's existing efforts to advance food and agriculture policy through the Green Economy Task Force, the Small Farm Incubator Initiative, the Sustainable Community Food Initiative, and the long tradition of preserving agriculture in the County as exemplified in the nationally recognized Agricultural Reserve.

**The County meeting TONIGHT is schedule to be from 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm at Potomac Elementary School, 10311 River Road, Potomac, MD 20854.** Click here to go to the County's announcement of the meeting:

[http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/DGS/DBDC/Resources/brickyard\\_rd\\_4-4-11\\_pub\\_mtg.pdf](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/DGS/DBDC/Resources/brickyard_rd_4-4-11_pub_mtg.pdf).

Nick's Organic Farm LLC ([www.nicksorganicfarm.com](http://www.nicksorganicfarm.com)) is a certified organic farm with operations in Potomac and near Buckeystown, MD. Nick Maravell, owner of Nick's Organic Farm, is a nationally recognized organic farmer who is often called upon as a speaker, is quoted in the national media, and is called to testify at federal and state levels. Maravell has farmed organically since 1979. He has been active at the national and state level in the development of organic legislation and standards, organic research priorities, and organic marketing issues.

The Montgomery Countryside Alliance ([www.mocoalliance.org](http://www.mocoalliance.org)) is a nonprofit organization that promotes and protects farm land and open space in Montgomery County, specifically the County's 93,000-acre Agricultural Reserve. MCA educates about the environmental, economic and recreational benefits of local farmland, supports local farms to strengthen our economy and conserves the economic value and rural landscape of the Ag Reserve for current and future generations of the region

Attachment: Speaker Bios

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