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## Development Draws Fire In Calvert

Sewage Treatment Would Pose Risks, Group Says

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Some Dunkirk residents are fighting what they fear will be an environmental and public health threat to their neighborhood.

The Apple Greene Civic Association is trying to persuade developers of the Shoppes at Apple Greene, as well as county officials, to change portions of the sewage treatment system and storm water management plans for the proposed commercial development.

The Shoppes at Apple Greene, a joint development between Marrick Properties and Howlin Investment Properties, is a nearly 42-acre project that would stretch from Ward Road to Apple Way along Route 4. Early plans describe 100,000 square feet of commercial space.

"This is shaping up to be the poster child of poor planning in the state. It is the worst project I've seen in 20 years," said Richard D. Klein, president of Community and Environmental Defense Services, who was hired by the Apple Green Civic Association.

At issue is a drip-irrigation sewage treatment system that would treat wastewater onsite and filter it through fields surrounding the shopping center. One field is about 30 feet from residents' property lines on Jonathan Drive and Winesap Court in Apple Greene, according to planning documents.

The community is worried about "poorly treated sewage coming to the surface grounds in fields where kids could be playing," Klein said.

Jim Ehrig, a Jonathan Drive resident whose back yard abuts the project, said he is worried about the odor and disease.

"I'm also worried about rodents, mosquitoes," Ehrig said. "We've seen how poorly they do upkeep on other [drip irrigation systems] in the area."

Of the nine drip-irrigation systems permitted by [Maryland Department of the Environment](#), two are in [Calvert County](#) -- one behind Dunkirk's Calvert Gateway shopping center, and the other at Huntingtown's Marley Run, a Marrick development.

A July 29 inspection by MDE of Calvert Gateway's system found that the development's state permit had expired, that broken pipes existed in the drip field and that discharge ponds had resulted from the treatment center. The Marley Run facility was inspected on the same day, and state officials also found ponding that had been occurring for a year, according to the MDE report.

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Both are "under active investigation and/or enforcement" by the Office of the Attorney General, said Kim Lamphier, MDE spokeswoman.

MDE guidelines for land treatment of wastewater require a minimum 50-foot buffer zone from the edge of the drip irrigation site to property lines, housing structures and public roads, and 100 feet from streams and potable wells, Lamphier said.

But Klein and civic association representatives said that is not enough. The group has met with Marrick officials to push for a 700-foot buffer, among other requests. They are also asking the county to enact legislation that would expand the required buffer areas. An Aug. 5 letter from county commissioners responding to the group's request for a meeting said: "The responsibility of requirements for wastewater treatment systems used in Calvert County rests with the Maryland Department of the Environment." The letter said the county forwarded the group's requests to MDE.

Commissioner [Gerald W. Clark](#) (R-Lusby), vice president of the Calvert Board of County Commissioners, said that any individual or group can request a text amendment or zoning change, but "at this point, [the board has] had absolutely no discussion about doing that."

He invited members of the Apple Greene Civic Association to comment regarding code changes during the open comment period held during regular board meetings.

The county planning commission approved a preliminary site plan in 2003 for the shopping center. But Clark said residents can still express their opposition before a final plan is adopted.

Mighel Jackson, a project engineer for the county's Department of Public Works, said the Shoppes at Apple Greene project has not submitted a storm water management plan for review. He said, like all proposed projects, the plan must meet county and state storm water management rules.

"We have received correspondence from the community. Whenever we receive the site plan for review, we will take their comments under consideration," Jackson said.

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