

Denise Ferguson - County Noise Ordinance Amendment

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Subject: County Noise Ordinance Amendment

To The County Commissioners:

Somehow I missed the notice of the July 27 public hearing concerning an amendment to Charles County's noise ordinance, so I am appreciative that the record has been left open until September 7, giving county residents the opportunity to respond.

My husband and I definitely believe that the County's ordinances concerning all types of noise disturbances need to be much broader than they currently seem to be.

Our home is not in a development but, rather, is situated among other homes with 3+ acres each. Some are situated close to the property liens, so there are not necessarily vast amounts of property between the homes.

Living in an area like this, of course, provides homeowners with more freedom in how they wish to utilize their property, as opposed to developments that have established 'homeowner association rules.'

Unfortunately, the lack of some rules allows some homeowners to make choices that infringe on the reasonable peace and quiet that surrounding neighbors seek to enjoy.

Therefore, we believe the County's noise ordinances should be expanded to include regulations for four-wheeler (ATV) use in residential areas, regardless of whether the "residential" area is a "town center-type development" or acreaged homes; the ordinances should include barking dog nuisance regulations, and teen curfew guidelines.

We currently have 16-and-under teens riding muffler-free ATVs (which means they are very loud) as late as midnight, one, two a.m. In some instances the parents are home, but don't care or know of their juvenile's whereabouts, and in other cases, these kids are just not supervised. The speeds at which the kids race the ATVs are upwards of 30-40+ mph, in the dark, without helmets. These same kids also ride their ATVs on the main road. Two kids have already been injured.

One night at 11:30 pm we had no choice but to call the police to see what could be done to stop the noise. The officer advised that there were no laws pertaining to our specific complaint but said that she would go over and speak to the kids. She did so and the noise stopped.

We have spoken to the parents of these kids, with some results. One parent won't discuss it.

Regarding barking dog nuisance ordinances, we love dogs, we've had a dog and we leash and supervise our dog 100%. One neighbor has two dogs that are left outside all day and all night every day of the year. There are many times when the owner is gone all weekend and the dogs are left to bark all night. One particular night the dog started barking at 6:30-7:00 pm and barked constantly until

about 2 or 2:30 am. And, this occurs frequently. We have also asked the police about this and were told that Charles County has no dog nuisance ordinances or laws. These are but a few examples that a noise ordinance could and should address, especially in view of the increasing growth in the county. Residents should be able to enjoy their homes without having to listen to neighbor's overly loud music, barking dogs, unleashed dogs, racing ATVs, etc.

Thank you.
Earl and Jan Redden