

The Express-Times

10-acre zoning brings McMansions

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In his recent letter to the editor, Jack Bozzuffi encouraged Mansfield Township to continue rejecting the Highlands Regional Master Plan and instead pursue natural resource protection through 10-acre rezoning.

He supports such a rezoning effort to stop the destruction of the agricultural landscape occurring at the hands of developers without noting that such rezoning and the regional master plan share the same objective of curbing sprawl.

Much of Mansfield has been zoned as agricultural conservation zone by the Highlands Council, because the body recognizes the importance of maintaining the rural character of the community and preserving the high-value agricultural soils of the area. With this goal in mind the regional master plan has regulations that preserve agricultural land while allowing growth that is consistent with the plan if approved by a conforming municipality.

Under the Highlands regulations, developers must conserve 80 percent of any project area for agricultural purposes.

Ten-acre zoning will result in McMansions, not farming. Only the Highlands option achieves agricultural preservation and resource conservation, while conformance to the regional master plan will ensure landowner compensation with transfer of development credits and priority access to farmland preservation acquisition funding.

Conformance would not only uphold Mansfield's rural character but also compensate residents who do so.

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