

# Zoning – What’s legal and what’s not?

## (from the May, 2106 Hotline) from Melissa Daston

In the past several months, several neighbors have reached out with questions and complaints about businesses operating in the community and commercial vehicles parking overnight in West Laurel. So I thought it might be helpful to give a short synopsis of the zoning code on both of these issues, then give information on whom to call.

**Businesses.** The Prince George's zoning code identifies the businesses listed below as permissible in the R-80 zone (single family homes). The larger R-R zone (rural residential) allows some additional businesses. In addition, there are some special exceptions and temporary uses permitted, but they require filing paperwork through the county and receiving approval. Note this is not an exhaustive list:

- Accountants, architects, clergymen, engineers, lawyers, medical practitioners, and similar recognized and learned professionals, as an accessory use in a dwelling
- Church or similar place of worship located on a lot between 1 and 2 acres in size; cemetery, accessory to a church, convent, or monastery
- Family day care
- Congregate living facility for NOT more than 8 elderly or physically handicapped residents; group residential facility for more than 8 mentally handicapped dependent persons, or for 5 or more other dependent persons
- Animal Hospital, veterinary office is allowed in the R-R zone with a special permit

The office responsible for enforcing zoning is the Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement. To report a problem call 311 or the D-PIE Enforcement Division at 301-636-2090 or 301-883-6168, or register a complaint on County Click 311 (<http://countyclick.princegeorgescountymd.gov/>).

**Commercial Vehicles Overnight in the the R-80 zone.** There have been an increasing number of complaints about commercial vehicles being parked overnight in West Laurel. It's important to note that the county code divides commercial vehicles into two categories – heavy vehicles like dump trucks and light vehicles such as panel vans. This is what is permissible on a lot in the R-80 residential zone (Prince George's County Code, Subtitle 27):

- Not more than 1 camping trailer
- Not more than 1 commercial vehicle:
  - If it has a manufacturer's gross vehicle weight specification up to 8,500 pounds -- permitted only if no advertising (other than a firm name or similar designation not exceeding 4 inches high); not permitted: vehicles exceeding 300 cubic feet of load space, stake platform trucks, dump trucks, crane or tow trucks, and vehicles with dual rear axles
  - If it has a maximum manufacturer's gross vehicle weight specification of up to 17,000 pounds -- and may include unlimited advertising on the side of the vehicle, but must be parked within a wholly enclosed private parking garage; parking in a side or rear yard is **NOT** permitted.

Parking enforcement is done by the Prince George's County Revenue Authority and may also be enforced by the police. To register a complaint, use County Click 311 (<http://countyclick.princegeorgescountymd.gov/>) or call 301-772-2060.

For full details on either of these topics, go to the Prince George's Zoning code, Subtitle 27, Part 5 (Residential Zones), Division 3 (Uses Permitted) ([https://www2.municode.com/library/md/prince\\_george's\\_county/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=PTIITI17PULOLAPRGECOMA\\_SUBTITLE\\_27ZO](https://www2.municode.com/library/md/prince_george's_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIITI17PULOLAPRGECOMA_SUBTITLE_27ZO)).

*Please note that WLCA is not trying to incite harassment of good neighbors, merely to inform residents of what is legally permitted and not permitted, and how to address the latter.*