

What is the best and highest use of the land?

Diverse perspectives on the meaning of “the highest and best use of the land”

Economic

“All the developers are from elsewhere and probably from bigger places elsewhere or, you know this is the place for them to make money and I don’t think they have the feeling of needing to or wanting to preserve some of it.”

Aesthetics

“I live here, I don’t want it (residential and industrial growth). In the past I’ve had the advantage of living in a small town, an uncrowded county, and easy access to a huge metropolis just 10 miles away. But now the metropolis is threatening to engulf where I live and I’m not going to find myself being in favor of that. And the money, the more money I might make is not worth it and you’ll find a lot of the more successful developers, after they finish doing what they’re doing, they’ll move somewhere else, on the ocean somewhere or something like that where it’s not so crowded.”

“I feel like some of the people who are in the development business here, I think come from maybe a city of 25,000 or they’ve come from a city of 100,000 and what’ three or four or five thousand more people to them? That’s not really growth to them. But when you double the population of Versailles and Woodford County in 15, 20 years, it’s a big change to somebody like myself.”

Environmental

“When I was a child, I frequently accompanied my father on his daily trips around the farm and he would take the opportunity every day to teach me something new. And I remember after WWII, of course most farms were in pretty poor shape because of the community effort here was toward the war, and there was a lot of stewardship that needed to be done in order to get the land back in full production. There was some tremendous ditches from soil erosion where the water had washed the best soil away and he kept laboriously filling those ditches with – every time we had a cutting of hay, if there was some hay that was, for example, spoiled, it would go in the ditch. Anything organic went in the ditch. And slowly, those ditches filled back up. That was the kind of stewardship example that he taught me on a daily basis.”

Moral

“I think when you grow up on the land you learn, very early on, a deep respect for it and its capabilities. And my family, my parents, both of them, were very instrumental in teaching me about the importance of taking care of the land. I

remember my father used to say that none of us really owned the land, that we simply hold it in trust as long as we care for it and manage it, and we are stewards of the land. But philosophically, he really believed and taught me to believe that the land doesn't belong to us; it belongs to the community, to the world, to the people of the world, and we are the stewards of it and it is our obligation to care for it and to leave it better than we found it."