Finding a way to provide access to home-based and agriculture-related businesses without upsetting the serenity of a neighborhood is proving to be difficult for Calvert County’s leaders.

During their Jan. 17 meeting the Calvert County Commissioners spent a lengthy amount of time discussing the access issue. During the evening the county commissioners along with members of the Calvert County Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on a proposed amendment to the Calvert County Zoning Ordinance.

Department of Planning and Zoning staff has recommended that a “special exception” be required of the applicant if the proposed use “does not have direct access on a publically-owned and maintained right-of-way.” The proposal could then be forwarded to the Calvert Board of Appeals to determine if the applicant was in compliance with the Calvert County Road Ordinance. That document is in the process of being updated and will be the subject of a public hearing.

The modification of the measure regarding access to home-based and agriculture-related businesses is needed since a circuit court judge ruled in November that a condition regarding access for farm wineries was unlawful since it gave zoning authority to adjacent property owners.

Those property owners—residents of Garner Road in Lusby—rendered comments during the Jan. 17 hearing that indicated they still wanted their privacy protected. Representatives for the agri-business in question—Solomons Island Winery LCC—contend that the business owner’s property rights should be considered as well.

The longtime residents of Garner Road affirm that the winery has brought to the area large tractor trailer trucks and heavy volumes of traffic that the small dirt road was never designed to accommodate and that the increased traffic poses a safety issue.

“Tractor trailers coming onto our road, cars all weekend long, this is not acceptable on a small, private country road,” said Cheryl Jetmore.

Another resident, Victor Garner, questioned whether Solomons Island Winery was indeed an agri-business. “We have to determine what is a farm,” said Garner. “I’ve lived on a farm all my life. That is not a farm. It’s not a vineyard.”

The opposing side held nothing back, either.