



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB
ITEM # 6
March 13, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Gwen Wright, Chief *GW*
Countywide Planning Division

Mark Pfefferle, Supervisor *MP*
Environmental Planning, Countywide Planning Division

FROM: Amy Lindsey, Senior Planner *AL*
Environmental Planning, Countywide Planning Division

DATE: February 29, 2008

REVIEW TYPE: Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan No. 08601-MCPS-1
Northwood High School Mandatory Referral

LOCATION: 919 University Boulevard, Silver Spring

APPLICANT: Montgomery County Public Schools
APPLICANT'S ENGINEER: ADTEK

Staff recommends approval of the preliminary forest conservation plan subject to the following conditions:

Compliance with the conditions of approval for the preliminary forest conservation plan dated February 29, 2008.

DISCUSSION

Northwood High School is a 29.4-acre existing school located in the Kemp Mill/Four Corners planning area on University Boulevard. There is no forest onsite and numerous large and specimen trees. Most of the trees serve as a screen, separating the school from adjacent residences, but some are located in the interior of the subject property. There are no environmental features on the property except for specimen trees. The property is within both the Sligo Creek and Northwest Branch watersheds. The majority of the impervious surfaces are in the Sligo Creek watershed, a Use I/I-P watershed. The playing fields and a small part of the built area are in the Northwest Branch watershed, a Use

IV/IV-P watershed. The proposed plan is to reconfigure the entrance and internal circulation plan, which is within the Sligo Creek watershed.

There are two items for Planning Board review for the Northwood High School project: the mandatory referral and the Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan. This memorandum covers staff's review and recommendations on the Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan for the proposed project.

The Board's action on the Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan is regulatory and binding. The Planning Board must act on the Forest Conservation Plan before it can act on the mandatory referral.

Environmental Guidelines

The applicant submitted and received approval of a Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD) number 420080600 on November 11, 2007. The site does not include any streams, wetlands, or floodplains and there are no environmental buffers on the property. There is no forest on the subject site.

Forest Conservation

This property is subject to the Chapter 22A Montgomery County Forest Conservation Law and a Forest Conservation Plan has been submitted for approval. The site has a 4.41 acre planting requirement. Since there are no priority planting areas or opportunities onsite for creating or connecting to contiguous forest, the planting requirement will be met on-site with tree cover. Staff supports the use tree cover on this property because of the land use and relatively urban location. A mix of native canopy trees will be planted in the parking lot and along the southern property line, adjacent to single-family residences. The trees planted in the parking lot will help mitigate the impervious surface by reducing the heat island effects, stormwater runoff, and ozone formation, as well as removing pollutants from the air. The trees planted along the southern property line will add to the existing screen.

Tree Save

A number of large and specimen trees will be affected by the parking reconfiguration. Some of these trees are within currently existing parking islands, but will be able to be retained with appropriate tree protection measures. A significant number of trees, both on-site and offsite, on the southern property line could be affected by the parking lot reconfiguration. As these trees are on a slope and the disturbance will occur on the uphill side of the critical root zones, it is extremely important that the disturbance be minimized. These trees serve to both screen and separate the school from adjacent single-family residences.

The Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan contains tree protection measures for both on-site and off-site trees. Detailed and specific measures will be required on the Final Forest Conservation Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

Environmental Planning recommends approval of the Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan with the condition above.