

Item # MCPB 10-21-2010

### **MEMORANDUM**

DATE: October 7, 2010Revised October 13, 2010

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

Catherine Conlon, Supervisor, Development Review Division VIA:

Mark Pfefferle, Acting Chief, Environmental Planning MP

Richard A. Weaver, Planner Coordinator, Development Review Division FROM:

Josh Penn, Senior Planner, Environmental Planning

**REVIEW TYPE:** Limited Amendment to the Preliminary Plan, including associated Final

Forest Conservation Plan (FCP) in response to a Forest Conservation

Violation

**APPLYING FOR:** Amendment to a Preliminary Plan and Final Forest Conservation Plan

(FCP)

**PLAN NAME:** Alvermar Woods, Lot 17

**PLAN NUMBER:** 11999034A

Preliminary Plan and Final Forest Conservation Plan **PLAN TYPE:** 

**REVIEW BASIS:** Forest Conservation Regulations, Section 113.A.(2), Regulation No. 1-

01AM (COMCOR) 18-01AM

ZONE: RE-2

Located at 10410 Riverwood Drive 390 feet south of River Road in **LOCATION:** 

Potomac.

**APPLICANT:** 

Kambiz Kazemi

**ATTORNEY:** 

Michele Rosenfeld

**HEARING DATE:** October 21, 2010

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends denial of the limited amendment to the preliminary plan and associated final forest conservation plan and that the case be scheduled for an enforcement hearing.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Montgomery County Planning Board approved Preliminary Plan 119990340 "Alvermar Woods", on January 28, 1999. The approval created 2 lots (Lots 16 and 17) on 4.17-acres of land in the RE-2 zone located in the southwest corner of the intersection of River Road and Riverwood Drive "Subject Property" or "Property". The application was subject to the Forest Conservation Law (FCL) (Chapter 22A of the County Code) at the time of approval and conservation easements were placed on both of the approved lots. This limited amendment to the Preliminary Plan and associated Final Forest Conservation Plan (FCP) applies only to Lot 17 (90,309 square feet or 2.07 acres), or 10410 Riverwood Drive in Potomac.

The original approved FCP showed 1.61 acres of existing forest on the overall site, with 1.43 acres of forest retained, and 0.18 acres of forest cleared. The original FCP did not generate a planting requirement due to the amount of forest retained on the property. The approved FCP shows 1.1 acres of forest was to be retained within a Category I conservation easement on Lot 17 and 0.33 acres on Lot 16.

The Subject Property is currently in violation of the Category I conservation easement. The property owner/applicant has constructed a shed, a driveway, and a pathway in the Category I conservation easement and removed the entire understory within the 1.1 acre easement area on Lot 17.

The M-NCPPC Inspector issued a Notice of Violation (NOV) on July 14, 2009 (see Attachment A). This NOV required Mr. Kazemi to schedule and meet with M-NCPPC to discuss the violation prior to August 15, 2009. Mr. Kazemi met with the M-NCPPC Inspector, Stephen Peck, in the field on July 29, 2009 to discuss the violation as required by the July 14, 2009 NOV. At the conclusion of this meeting Stephen Peck informed Mr. Kazemi that a notice of hearing for the violation would be issued.

After subsequent discussion between Stephen Peck and the Forest Conservation Program Manager/Acting Chief of Environmental Planning, Mark Pfefferle it was decided that a new NOV should be issued laying out the remedial actions required and the deadline in which to complete them.

The M-NCPPC Inspector issued a second NOV on August 28, 2009 (see Attachment B). The NOV instructed the applicant that the appropriate remedial action was to submit a limited amendment to the preliminary plan to revise the forest conservation plan by December 1, 2009. At a minimum, this plan was to include how areas incompatible with the conservation easement would be mitigated and how other areas of the easement would be restored. The applicant submitted the limited amendment to the preliminary plan on December 11, 2009. A short extension was granted to the applicant to ensure a complete application at time of submission.

On August 10, 2010 Stephen Peck issued a \$500.00 Administrative Citation #EPD000004 to Mr. Kazemi for continued mowing within the Category I conservation easement (see Attachment C). On August 25, 2010 Mr. Kazemi, through his attorney, contested the citation in writing and requested a hearing in front of the Planning Board (see Attachment D).

On September 1, 2010 a meeting was held with the applicant's attorney and M-NCPPC staff to discuss the citation and when the hearing before the Planning Board would occur as requested in the August 25<sup>th</sup> letter. The applicant was informed at this time that the Limited Amendment to the Preliminary Plan would be heard prior to the hearing on the citation. The applicant was also informed at this time that Staff's recommendation on the Limited Amendment to the Preliminary Plan would be one of denial and a request to have the case scheduled for a violation hearing.

The M NCPPC Inspector issued a Notice of Violation (NOV) on August 28, 2009 (see Attachment A). The NOV instructed the applicant to submit a limited amendment to the preliminary plan to revise the forest conservation plan and bring the property into compliance by December 1, 2009. The applicant submitted the limited amendment to the preliminary plan on December 11, 2009. An extension was granted to the applicant to ensure a complete application at time of submission.

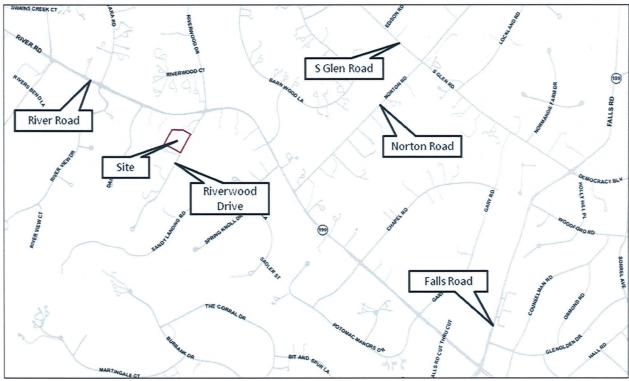


Figure 1: Vicinity Map

### SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject property is located at 10410 Riverwood Drive, 390 feet south of River Road in the Potomac Subregion Master Plan area. The subject property is developed with a single family residence. The property is relatively level and has no streams, wetlands, floodplains or buffers on site.



Figure 2: Aerial Photograph of Lot 17 (10410 Riverwood Drive)

#### PLANNING BOARD REVIEW AUTHORITY

The Forest Conservation Regulations require Planning Board action on certain types of modifications to an approved FCP. COMCOR 22A.00.01.13 A (2), the Forest Conservation Regulations, state:

Major amendments which entail more than a total of 5000 square feet of additional forest clearing must be approved by the Planning Board or the Planning Director (depending on who approved the original plan).

The applicant proposes to modify the entire category I conservation easement on the subject site, which is approximately 1.1 acres (49,000 square feet), therefore; the plan must be reviewed by

the Planning Board. Additionally, the Planning Board has requested to review all plans that remove or significantly change a conservation easement.

### **PROPOSAL**

### **Applicant's Position**

The applicant is requesting the Planning Board to approve the removal of a portion of the existing conservation easement where a shed and driveway have been constructed, and replacement of the remaining Category I conservation easement with a Category II conservation easement. The proposed amendment will remove approximately 0.08 acres (3,500 square feet) of Category I conservation easement and replace 1.05 acres (45,738 square feet) of Category I conservation easement with Category II easement with no mitigation.

#### **REVIEW**

### Staff Analysis/Position

The Alvermar Woods subdivision property originally had 1.61 acres of forest. The approved forest conservation plan shows that 0.18 acres of forest was to be removed and that 1.43 acres of forest would be retained. All preserved forest requires long-term protection measures according to COMCOR 22a-12(h)(2). A Category I conservation easement was placed on the property as the required long-term protection measure to protect the existing forest and ensure that it remained a naturally regenerating forest. The Category I easements are shown on the record plat for the Subject Property.

The record plat for Lot 17, of the Alvermar Woods subdivision contains 49,262 square feet (1.13-acres) of Category I conservation easement (Attachment BE). The record plat references the Category I Conservation Easement and shows it as recorded in the land records as the standard Category I conservation easement language at Liber 13178 folio 412. The record plat's owner certificate is signed by Kambiz and Azar Kazemi and dated April 29, 1999. The approved FCP shows that the Category I conservation easements on the plat were forested when the plat was recorded. At this time, no areas left on-site meet the definition of forest as defined in Section 22A-3 of the Montgomery County Code. This section defines a forest as,

"Forest means a biological community dominated by trees and other woody plants (including plant communities, the understory, and forest floor) covering a land area which is 10,000 square feet or greater and at least 50 feet wide\*. However, minor portions of a forest stand which otherwise meet this definition may be less than 50 feet wide if they exhibit the same character and composition as the overall stand. Forest includes:

- (1) areas that have at least 100 live trees per acre with at least 50 percent of those trees having a 2 inch or greater diameter at 4.5 feet above the ground; and
- (2) forest areas that have been cut but not cleared."

(\*Note: The definition of forest was changed in 2001, the minimum width was increased from 35 feet to 50 feet.)

At a meeting with the Applicant on February 26, 2010, staff proposed options to address the violation that the staff would support. Those options were: 1) restore the Category I easements to a state which meets the definition of forest and has no activities or objects in conflict with the

recorded Category I Conservation easement; or 2) revise the limited amendment to the preliminary plan to remove the Category I Conservation easement and provide off-site mitigation acceptable to staff and the Planning Board. The applicant chose an alternative route and is proposing to replace the Category I conservation easement with Category II conservation easement without any mitigation. This proposal not only changes the classification of the easement but also reduces it in size by removing the area with the driveway and shed completely from the easement.

Replacing a Category I conservation easement with a Category II conservation easement is in conflict with long term protection methods for conservation areas. Page 51 of the "Trees: Approved Technical Manual (September 1992)" defines the long-term protection measures for conservation areas as required by 22A-12(h)(2) of the Montgomery County Forest Conservation Law. The trees technical manual states "Category I conservation easements will be applied to "forest" retention areas, reforestation areas, and afforestation areas that involve establishing forest cover." Additionally, it is stated that "Category II conservation easements will be applied to "trees" saved outside forest areas which are determined to be significant." Long term protection measures for areas to meet retention, reforestation, and afforestation requirements must be consistent with conservation and management practices for forest. Category II conservation easements allow for activities, such as mowing, which prevent a forest from naturally regenerating. In general, Category I conservation easements protect naturally regenerating forest and all forest layers including understory which helps ensure natural forest succession. Category II easements are only for the protection of trees 6 inches in diameter and greater, and do not ensure long term canopy or natural forest growth. Category II conservation easements allow for the removal of understory, ground maintenance (such as mowing), removal of small trees, and are generally used to protect larger trees and the existing canopy of an area.

Furthermore, COMCOR 22A.00.01.03.B(19) defines forest clearing as the cutting or destruction of any trees or <u>understory</u> which are part of an existing forest. At the time of the approved final forest conservation plan there were 1.13 acres of existing forest saved in a Category I conservation easement on Lot 17. There are no areas left on the lot that meet the definition of forest due to removal of understory, erection of a shed, and the placement of a driveway through the easement. The Category I conservation easement area is now comprised of canopy trees and landscaping but does not meet the legal definition of forest. Thus, 1.13 acres of forest that existed upon approval of the preliminary plan of subdivision in 1999 has been lost.

The Applicant's amendment proposes the permanent loss of a protected forest in exchange for a tree save area of lesser size. The permanent loss of forest on the subject lot results in the FCP not being in compliance with the Forest Conservation Law because, under Chapter 22A of the County Code, when an applicant removes forest below a certain percentage (called the conservation threshold) that forest must be compensated by planting 2 acres of forest for each acre removed (2:1 ratio). Forest that is removed above the conservation threshold is compensated at a ratio of ½:1. In this particular two-lot subdivision, the conservation threshold is 1.04 acres. If the 1.1 acres of forest retention is permanently removed from Lot 17, forest retention for the overall subdivision will be reduced to the 0.33 acres that was retained on Lot 16. Thus, total forest clearing for the overall subdivision would increase from 0.18 acres to 1.28 acres. According to the law, to make that change, the applicant must compensate for the removal of forest both above and below the conservation threshold. According to the forest conservation worksheet, the removal of the 1.1 acre Category I conservation easement on Lot 17 generates a

1.57-acre planting requirement (0.14 acres from clearing above the conservation threshold and 1.43 acres from clearing below the conservation threshold). Due to this, the applicant's proposal does not meet the minimum standards set forth under Chapter 22A of the County Code.

The Applicant's proposal does not meet the requirements of the Forest Conservation Law and is in conflict with Planning Board policy, as adopted in November of 2008 and supported in other forest conservation plan amendments, which sets the minimum replacement ratio for removal for any conservation easement at 2:1, in-kind, regardless of whether the forest removal is above or below the conservation threshold.

In Staff's opinion, the amendment to the preliminary plan, as proposed by the Applicant, is a retroactive response to address the violation and not a proactive attempt to bring the site into compliance. The proposed plan does not comply with Chapter 22A, the forest conservation regulations, the Trees Technical Manual, or Planning Board policy.

### Notification and Outreach

The Subject Property was appropriately signed with notification of the upcoming preliminary plan amendment prior to the December 11, 2009 submission in accordance with established procedures. All adjoining and confronting property owners and people who have expressed an interest will be notified of the upcoming hearing on the proposed amendment. As of the date of this report, staff has received no inquiries regarding this application. Any comments received hereafter will be forwarded to the Board.

#### RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends denial of the limited amendment to the preliminary plan and associated final forest conservation plan and further recommends that the case be scheduled for an enforcement hearing.

# Attachment A: July 14, 2009 Notice of Violation



### MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910 Environmental Planning Division 301.495.4540 Fax: 301.495.1303

### NOTICE OF VIOLATION

FOR	MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND, the undersigned issuer, being duly authorized, states that:
On,_	on 14/09 the recipient of this NOTICE, Kambiz & A Kazemi  Recipient's Name
who	represents the property owner, Kambil A Kalemi
	Property Owner's Name
is not	ified that a violation of the Montgomery County Forest Conservation Law (Chapter 22-A) exists at the
follov	ving location: 10410 Riverwood Drive Potomac MD 20854
	10. 19990340 Explanation: Maintenance of structural improvements, impeding natural plant regeneration and drainage and cutting of grass within a category I consideration:
	VIOLATION.
	VIOLATION:
	Failure to hold a required pre-construction meeting.
,	Failure to have tree protection measures inspected prior to starting work.
	Failure to install or maintain tree protection measures per the approved Forest Conservation or Tree Save plan.
X	Failure to comply with terms, conditions and/or specifications of an approved Forest Conservation plan or Tree Save plan, or as directed by Forest Conservation Inspector.
	Failure to obtain an approved Forest Conservation plan or Tree Save plan prior to cutting, clearing, or grading 5,000 square feet on
•	a property of 40,000 square feet or greater.  Failure to comply with reforestation or afforestation requirements of a Forest Conservation Plan.
	i and to comply with reforestation of antorestation requirements of a rolest conservation rian.
	Failure to obtain written approval for a fence permit prior to installing a fence that passes through or around a conservation easement.
X	Other: Violations of the category I conservation casement agreement
Order Action	re to comply with this NOV by $03/15/09$ may result in i) issuance of a citation, ii) issuance of a Stop Work and/or iii) issuance of a Notice of Hearing to appear before the Planning Board for appropriate Administrative a. Recipient is to call the inspector at $30/-495-4564$ when the corrective action is complete. The following extive action(s) must be performed as directed and within any timeframes specified below:  Stake out limits of disturbance (LOD) and contact Forest Conservation Inspector for a pre-construction meeting:
	Stake out mints of disturbance (LOD) and contact Potest Conservation inspector for a pre-construction meeting.
	Install tree protection measures and/or tree care as directed by Forest Conservation Inspector.
	Submit required application for compliance with Chapter 22A of the County Code. Contact Environmental Planning at 301-495-4540.
	Cease all cutting, clearing, or grading and/or land disturbing activity. Approval from Forest Conservation Inspector is required to resume work.
	Schedule a pre-planting meeting with the Forest Conservation Inspector prior to the reforestation of afforestation planting.
	Schedule and attend a meeting with staff to determine appropriate corrective action to be performed by a date certain. Failure to
$\times$	complete the corrective action by the date assigned may result in i) issuance of a citation, ii) issuance of a Stop Work Order, and/or
/ )	iii) issuance of a Notice of Hearing to appear before the Planning Board for appropriate Administrative Action.
MNCP: Inspect	
DECEI	ved by: Sent centified mast
NEC EI	Printed Name Signature Date

# Attachment B: August 28, 2009 Notice of Violation and Attached Letter



### MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION 8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
Environmental Planning Division 301.495.4540 Fax: 301.495.1303
www.MontgomeryPlanning.Org

NOTICE OF VIOLATION : Corrective Action

SP2 EDPNOV 0001

FOI	R MON	TGOMERY C	OUNTY	Y, MARYLAND, tl	he undersigned	issuer, being duly	authorized	i, states that:	
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is no	tified t	hat a violation	of the M	fontgomery Count 名でといいのかん	ty Forest Conse	ervation Law (Cha	pter 22 <sub>5</sub> A)	exists at the	
follo	wing lo	cation:							
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		1990340	િક વૃદ	eneration and di	rainage and	cutting of gras	s within	a rategory 1 &	conservation.
					VIOLATION:			<del></del>	
	Failu	re to hold a requir	red pre-co	onstruction meeting.					
	Failu	e to have tree pro	otection m	neasures inspected pr	ior to starting wor	·k.			
	Failu	e to install or ma	intain tree	e protection measures	per the approved	Forest Conservation	or Tree Save	e plan.	
X	Failur direct	e to comply with ed by Forest Con	terms, co	onditions and/or speci Inspector	fications of an ap	proved Forest Conse	rvation plan	or Tree Save plan	, or as
	Failur a prop	e to obtain an apperty of 40,000 sq	proved Fo	orest Conservation pla or greater.	n or Tree Save pl	an prior to cutting, c	learing, or gr	ading 5,000 squar	re feet on
				tion or afforestation r	equirements of a	Forest Conservation	Plan.		
			n approva	al for a fence permit p	prior to installing	a fence that passes th	rough or arou	ınd a concervatio	n
V	easem Other:	ent.	<u>^</u>	the cate		<u> </u>	A		
Failu	re to co	mply with this	NOV by	y 12/01/09 ma	y result in i) iss	uance of a citation	n, ii) issuan	ce of a Stop Wo	ork
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corre	ctive ac	tion(s) must be	e perfori	med as directed an	ıd within any ti	me frames specifi	ed below:		**6
	Stake	out limits of distu	rbance (L	OD) and contact For	est Conservation	Inspector for a pre-co	onstruction m	eeting:	
	Install	tree protectionem	easures a	nd/or tree care as dire	ected by Forest Co	onservation Inspector	r.		
	Submit 4540.	required applica	tion for c	ompliance with Chap	oter 22A of the Co	unty Code. Contact i	Environmenta	al Planning at 301	-45-
	Cease a	all cutting, clearing work.	ng, or grad	ding and/or land distr	ibuting activity. A	approval from Forest	Conservation	n Inspector is requ	uired to
	Schedu	le a pre-planting	meeting v	with the Forest Conse	rvation Inspector	prior to the reforesta	tion of affore	estation planting.	
	Schedu	le and attend a m	eeting wi	th staff to determine	appropriate correc	tive action to be per	formed by a	late certain. Failu	re to
	iii) issu	ance of a Notice	of Hearin	the date assigned ma	y result in 1) issua e Planning Board	nce of a citation, it is for appropriate Adm	ssuance of a S inistrative Ac	Stop Work Order,	and/or
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### MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

August 28, 2009

Kambiz & A. Kazemi 10410 Riverwood Drive Potomac MD 20854

Dear Mr. Kazemi:

Thank you for meeting with me at your property last month. At our meeting on July 29<sup>th</sup> I described the forest conservation easement violations. I determined that portions of a tennis court, a shed and driveways are within a recorded category 1 conservation easement. These structures are prohibited within the conservation easement areas. In addition much of the category 1 conservation easement is being mowed, also a violation of the conservation easement agreement. This prevents the growth of natural regenerating trees and shrubs. In our field meeting, I stated you would be mailed a notice of hearing for the forest conservation easement violations. Since our field meeting, I have had discussions with my supervisor, Mark Pfefferie and our legal staff.

The required remediation action for the conservation easement violations is the submittal, approval, and implementation of a "limited amendment to the preliminary plan "Alvermar Woods 119990340". This remedial action is also described on the attached notice of violation.

Please note that this limited amendment to the preliminary plan will require Montgomery County Planning Board approval and will include penalties for the forest conservation easement violations. The penalty will include mitigation planting for any conservation easement area approved for removal. Further, this limited amendment is only to remedy forest conservation easement violations on your property. Mr. Mirzaie, owner of 10420 Riverwood Drive, has agreed to a remediation plan to restore the conservation easements on his property.

You will be given 90 days or December 1, 2009 to submit the limited amendment to the preliminary plan to Environmental Planning Staff. At least, the plan will have to propose how areas incompatible with category 1 conservation easement will be mitigated either onsite or offsite. Areas of the conservation easement that can be restored will need to be restored with detailed plans. I would recommend meeting with Environmental Planning Review Staff once you have decided on a consultant.

Let me know if you have any questions. Please review the attached notice of violation. I can be reached at 301-495-4564 or <a href="mailto:stephen.peck@mncppc-mc.org">stephen.peck@mncppc-mc.org</a>.

Sincerely,

Stephen Peck

Forest Conservation Inspector

**Montgomery County Environmental Planning** 

Attachments: Notice of Violation

## Attachment C: Administrative Citation #EPD000004

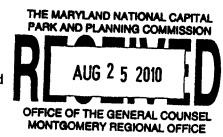
# Administrative Citation Forest Conservation

### The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

Name: Mrs. Kamain_			Kazemi
Company/Position:  Address:  Output  First  Occupied  Oc	WASI Middle	N.A 20859	Last
Phone Number:	Fax Number:	Email:	
Location and Description of Violation: Address/location of site:	port consolvation ex	ement areas	10410 Riversion Ca
Pursuant of the M-NCPPC's authority under Chapter(date) at the stated site location did comm	r 22A of the Montgomery County Code, it is for	mally charged that the above name	ned defendant on OMODE
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	) ( 101134 31 0	10/4/1917 (0) [10	3 DIOVINA YOU
In violation of:  Montgomery County Code, Chapter 22A  Approval of YAW YOUS Plan No  Civil Fine and Compliance:  1. (a) You shall pay a fine of \$  (b) You shall pay a daily fine of \$  In a code of \$  In a c	-00 NO 09/14/2010	complete the remedial action lists	ed below e shall accrue (until the original
fine is paid.  2. □ You shall pay a daily fine of \$  completion of all remedial action.	until the remedial action listed be	low is completed. This fine shall	be paid within 15 days of
Checks should be made payable to M-NCPPC and Office located at 8787 Georgia Avenue, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Sil proceedings and/or issuance of additional citations in you elect to request a hearing, you must notify the M-within 15 days of the citation.	ver Spring, MD 20910, 301-495-4610. Failure cluding additional fines. You may also request	to comply with this citation may to hearing before the Planning Bo	result in further enforcement
	ement by step in the category bearing with Michelle plan of a category bearing a daily fine of the category a daily fine of the category and a category and	nowing indi- sovation existing Soft and in Misoning com	Conscionation of the constitution of the const
2.  You have violated Chapter 22A of the Montgom	nery County Code, and may be subject to an Ad	ministrative Civil Penalty and add	ditional corrective measures.
Acknowledgment: I sign my name as a receipt of a copy of this Citation a request a hearing for the offense(s) charged. If I do not the offense of the offens	and not as an admission of guilt. I will comply	with the requirements set forth in	this Citation   Lhave a right to
Defendant's Signature			Date
Affirmation: I solemnly affirm under the penalties of perjury, and up knowledge, information and belief and that I am composition of the solemnly affirm under the penalties of perjury, and up knowledge, information and belief and that I am composition to the solemnly affirm the solemnl	pon personal knowledge or based on the affidavetent to testify on these matters.	•	
Print Name:	Phone Number:		

## **Attachment D: Letter Contesting Citation**

Michele M. Rosenfeld
The Law Office of Michele M. Rosenfeld
11913 Ambleside Drive
Potomac MD 20854-2107
rosenfeldlaw@verizon.net
301-204-0913



August 24, 2010

Ms. Christina Sorrento, Associate General Counsel MNCPPC 8787 Georgia Avenue Silver Spring MD 20910

RE:

Administrative Citation No. 000004

10410 Riverwood Drive Potomac MD 20854

Dear Ms. Sorrento:

This letter constitutes a written request for a hearing before the Planning Board on the above-referenced Administrative Citation (copy enclosed).

Sincerely,

Michele M. Rosenfeld

**Enclosure** 

Attachment E: Record Plat

