MCPB Item No.

Date: 04-11 -13

Preliminary Plan Amendment 12000094A in Response to a Violation – Tomahawk Estates, Lot 109

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Doug Johnsen, Senior Planner, DARC, <u>douglas.johnsen@montgomeryplanning.org</u>, 301-495-4712 Mark Pfefferle, Chief, DARC, <u>Mark.Pfefferle@montgomeryplanning.org</u>, 301-495-4730

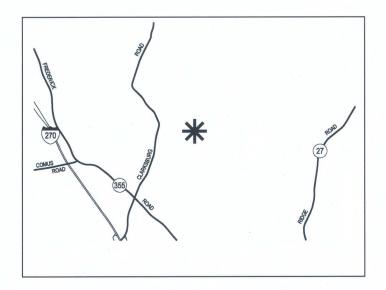
Completed: 3/25/13

Description Limited Amendment, Prelim

Limited Amendment, Preliminary Plan No. 12000094A, Lot 109

- Request to remove and relocate 1.10 acres of Category I conservation easement.
- Request to remove 0.34 acres of Category I conservation easement.
- Located at 24310 Burnt Hill Road, Lot 109
 Clarksburg, MD; 3750 feet northeast of the intersection of Burnt Hill Road & Snowden

 Farm Parkway in Clarksburg, MD
- On 44.71 acres in the Damascus Master Plan 1985.
- Applicant: John and Christine Peeler
- Submitted on October 22, 2012



Summary

- Staff recommendation: Approval with conditions
- Proposal to relocate 1.10 acres of Category I conservation easement on the same property by planting
 0.95 acres of new forest and protecting 0.15 acres of previously unprotected forest.
- Proposal to permanently remove 0.34 acres of Category I conservation easement, without compensation, from the easement located on the dam structure where woody vegetation must be removed for dam safety reasons.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION AND CONDITIONS: Approval of the limited amendment to the Preliminary Plan and associated Forest Conservation Plan, subject to the following conditions:

- Applicant must submit a complete record plat application no later than ninety (90) days from the
 mailing date of the Planning Board Resolution approving the limited amendment to the
 Preliminary Plan that delineates the revised conservation easement. The existing easements
 remain in full force and effect until the revised record plat is recorded.
- 2. Applicant must delineate the Category I conservation easement boundary with permanent easement markers and appropriate signage no later than ninety (90) days from the recordation of the revised plat and the new conservation easements.
- All required afforestation plantings must be installed and accepted by MNCPPC during the first
 planting season following the recordation of the revised plat and the new conservation
 easements.
- 4. Applicant must submit financial security as specified in Forest Conservation Law 22A-12(i) prior to the acceptance of the required afforestation plantings.
- 5. Applicant must submit Maintenance and Management Agreement as specified in 22A-12(h) prior to the acceptance of the required afforestation plantings.
- All other conditions of Preliminary Plan Number 120000940 that were not modified herein, as contained in the Planning Board's Resolution mailed August 9, 2001, remain in full force and effect.

BACKGROUND

The Montgomery County Planning Board approved Preliminary Plan No. 120000940 "William D. Pleasants, Jr. Property" (aka Tomahawk Estates), on July 5, 2001 and issued a written opinion on August 9, 2001. The approval was for nine (9) lots on 126.30 acres of land in the RDT zone including 4 child lots pursuant to Section 59C-9.74(b)(4) of the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance (Exhibit 1). As part of the approval process for the Preliminary Plan of Subdivision the Planning Board approved a Forest Conservation Plan (FCP). The Preliminary Plan of subdivision and the FCP show Category I conservation easements on all lots within the subdivision, with Lot 109 containing 32.20 acres of conservation easement. The Preliminary Plan opinion required that the Category I conservation easements be shown on the record plat. The conservation easements for Lot 109 are shown on Plat 22999.

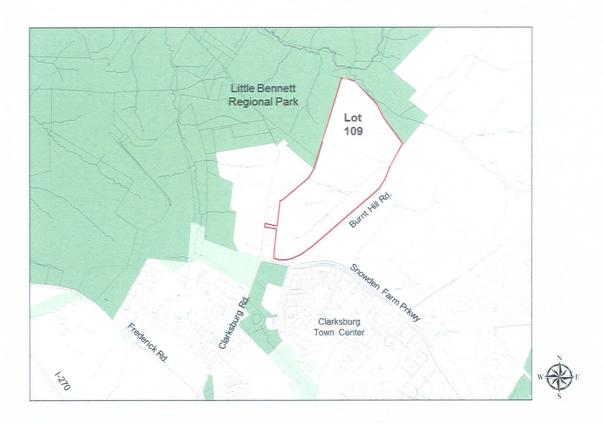


Exhibit 1: Tomahawk Estates Subdivision

An on-site easement inspection was conducted on November 14, 2011 and November 21, 2011 by Staff as part of the requirement to monitor and verify the integrity of each of the conservation easements at least once every 3 years. At this inspection Staff discovered that Lot 109 was not in compliance with the terms of the conservation easement located at Liber 13176 Folio 412 in the Montgomery County Office of Land Records. The Applicant was issued a Notice of Violation (NOV) (Attachment 1) on December 8, 2011 for the encroachments and violations of the terms of the easement agreement. These violations consist of mowing and conducting agricultural activities within the conservation easement. The NOV carries no financial penalty, but does outline the violation and requests particular remedial actions. In this case, the NOV requested that the Applicant cease all activity within the easement not prescribed by the easement agreement and to install permanent conservation easement signage along the boundary of the conservation easement. The Applicant decided to pursue the option of modifying the existing conservation easement and contacted our offices to start the process to amend the Preliminary Plan of Subdivision for forest conservation purposes within the 30 day deadline period stated on the NOV.

SITE DESCRIPTION

Lot 109 of Tomahawk Estates is the location of an existing farm house, which was built in 1982, on the 126.30 acres Pleasants Farm. There are existing forest and streams on the property. The Tomahawk Estates subdivision drains north into the Kingsley Tributary, a tributary to the Middle Little Bennett

Stream. The Countywide Stream Protection Strategy (CSPS) rates the Little Bennett and its tributaries in good condition. Lot 109 is served by both a well and septic systems located in close proximity to the house.

Lot 109: 24310 Burnt Hill Road

The lot subject to the amendment to the Preliminary Plan of Subdivision is located at 24310 Burnt Hill Road (Exhibit 2). The lot is 44.71 acres in size of which 32.20 acres (72%) is encumbered by a Category I conservation easement. Of the 32.20 acre conservation easement area, 26.91 acres is contiguous forest located behind and to the sides of the house. The remaining 5.29 acres of conservation easement is unforested stream buffer including a pond with a surface area of 2.35 acres. This area is located to the south of the entry driveway. The current violations occur within the 5.29 acre conservation easement area south of the driveway and not within the larger 26.91 acre easement area.



Exhibit 2: Lot 109 of Tomahawk Estates Subdivision

The violations involve mowing within the conservation easement area around the western side of the existing pond and agricultural activities on the east side of the pond (Exhibit 3). These violations are located on either side of the pond and away from the pond dam. The easement agreement specifically prohibits these types of activities from occurring within the easement.



Exhibit 3: Tomahawk Estates Subdivision, Lot 109

The pond was installed in 1982 along with the current house. Although originally installed as a farm pond it accepts runoff from the local area and slowly releases it downstream. The height of the dam for this pond is approximately 30-feet from the stream channel outlet to the road surface along the top of the dam. Under current Maryland State law a dam higher than 6-feet is governed by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and typically enforced by Montgomery County Department of the Environment (DEP) and the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). Both of these agencies require that the dam structure and 15-feet out from toe of slope of the dam be free and clear of any woody vegetation which might cause damage to the structure.

PROPOSAL

On October 22, 2012, the Applicant submitted an amendment to Preliminary Plan of Subdivision 120000940 to modify the Category I conservation easement on their lot. The Applicant proposes to remove a total of 1.44 acres of unforested Category I conservation easement. This entails the relocation

of 1.10 acres of conservation easement to other locations on Lot 109 and the permanent removal of 0.34 acres of easement without compensation.

The Applicant proposes to remove 1.10 acres of easement along the western side of the existing SWM pond. The proposed Category I conservation easement would begin approximately 180-feet south of the terminus of the western edge of the dam structure, run 30-feet off of the water's edge for a length of 100-feet and then slowly flare out to meet with the existing easement on the adjacent property.

The Applicant requests to relocate 1.10 acres of unforested stream buffer onsite by planting, in forest, 0.95 acres and protecting a 0.15 acre tree stand. The new easement area is not in the stream buffer but is contiguous to the larger forested easement and the separated 0.15 acre tree stand. The additional planting adjoining the tree stand makes it large enough to meet the legal definition of forest (Exhibit 5).

The Applicant also requests the permanent removal of 0.34 acres of Category I conservation easement, which is situated over the dam structure of the pond itself, without compensation.



Exhibit 4: Lot 109 showing portion of easement removed for relocation

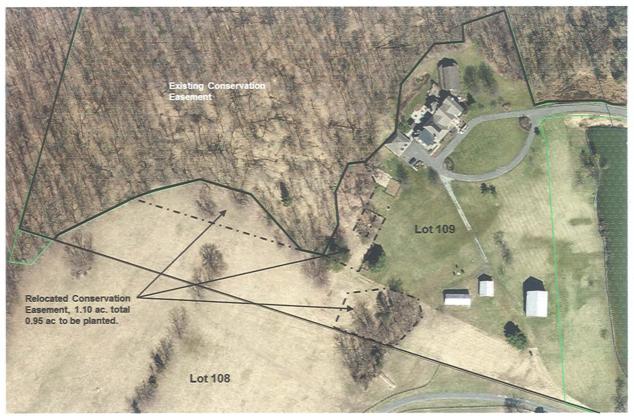


Exhibit 5: Lot 109 showing new easement area

PLANNING BOARD REVIEW AUTHORITY

The Forest Conservation Regulations require Planning Board action on certain types of modifications to an approved FCP. Section 22A.00.01.13(A)(2) of 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 a segment of the Category I conservation easement on the subject site, which is 1.44 acres (62,726 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.

STAFF REVIEW

This limited amendment to the Preliminary Plan is in response to a forest conservation violation. The Planning Department Order allows the Applicant the option to modify the conservation easement.

Lot 109 has environmentally sensitive areas, i.e. stream valley buffers and existing forest within the conservation easements; the easement areas shown on the original forest conservation plan were

created to meet the developer's forest conservation requirements, to protect the stream and to protect forest within the Kinsley Tributary of the Middle Little Bennett watershed.

Staff supports the removal of 1.44 acres and the relocation on-site of 1.10 acres of Category I conservation easement, while keeping the remainder of the Category I over the existing forest and stream valley buffer. The proposal requests the removal of 0.34 acres of conservation easement that currently encompasses the dam of the existing farm pond. Both requests are discussed in more detail below. The Applicant will retain the 26.91 acres of conservation easement located behind and to the sides of the existing house. Exhibit 4 above highlights the easement areas proposed for removal.

Easement removal on the dam structure

The Applicant requests permission to remove 0.34 acres of conservation easement, without compensation. This easement is entirely within the stream buffer and is currently unforested. Staff supports this request for the following reasons:

- 1. The recorded conservation easement, allows for the "maintenance of stormwater structures and/or facilities or other utilities.....if said structures are (i) required to implement the plan, (ii) shown on the approved plan, and (iii) approved by the appropriate governing bodies or agencies in accordance with applicable laws and regulations." Therefore, at any time the property owner could remove the vegetation on the dam without having to compensate for the loss of vegetation.
- 2. The State of Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) both require that all dam structures, and 15 feet below the dam toe-of-slope, must be free and clear of woody growth which might compromise the structure of the dam itself. It is the responsibility of the property owner to keep the dam free and clear of woody vegetation.
- 3. The area on the eastern side of the farm pond would largely remain unchanged except for the removal of 0.12 acres of a narrow strip located between the entry road and the northeast corner of the pond. This area is relatively narrow, steeply sloped and fragmented. This area is approximately 30-feet in width and would currently not be classified as an area to be protected since it doesn't meet the definition of forest.
- 4. In current development applications, the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services prohibits conservation easements on dam structures and staff has adopted the practice not to place conservation easements on such structures.

Strict adherence to the terms of the conservation easement presents a direct conflict to the public safety. Other agencies have determined it is necessary to keep dams and dam embankments free and clear of all woody material to prevent dam failure caused by the root structures of woody vegetation such as trees and shrubs. In the interest of public safety and to eliminate the conflict between two competing laws the 0.34 acres of conservation easement is being removed. This allows appropriate maintenance to occur on the structure maintaining adequate integrity of the dam without the concern of violating Forest Conservation Law. Staff agrees that no compensation should be required for the 0.34

acre area since the applicant is required by State law to keep the dam and embankment free and clear of woody vegetation. At the time of original forest conservation plan approval on 12/27/2001 this area was shown as unforested and did not calculate into the retained forest calculation on the FCP worksheet. As a result, removal of this 0.34 acre area will have no overall impact to the forest conservation requirements for the project as a whole.

Unforested stream buffer easement relocation

The 1.10 acres of conservation easement being removed adjacent to the farm pond is within a stream valley buffer (SVB). Typically, removal of conservation easements over a sensitive environmental feature such as a SVB is not allowed. However, in this particular circumstance staff supports the relocation of the 1.10 acres for two reasons. First, this area was not shown to be planted on the originally approved FCP dated 12/27/2001 and is currently still unforested. Relocating the 1.10 acres adjacent to the existing forest allows for this acreage to be planted and to increase the existing protected forest. Second, the removal of this area adjacent to the farm pond allows access by the property owners for both scheduled maintenance on the pond basin (dredging) and dam structure, and also to permit recreational access to the pond for the enjoyment of the owners.

The 1.10 acres of conservation easement is being relocated on-site; 0.84 acres will be adjacent to an existing Category I conservation easement and 0.11 acres will be adjacent to an existing 0.15 acre area of a stand of trees creating a new protected forest stand. Afforestation plantings will be installed within 0.95 acres of the 1.10 acres of new conservation easement. The amended FCP is enclosed (Attachment 3).

Staff believes that the proposed amendments to this preliminary plan are appropriate and adequate to compensate for the removal and relocation of 1.10 acres of conservation easement.

NOTIFICATION and OUTREACH

The subject property was properly signed with notification of the upcoming Preliminary Plan amendment prior to the October 22, 2012 submission. All adjoining and confronting property owners, civic associations, and other registered interested parties will be notified of the upcoming public hearing on the proposed amendment. As of the date of this report, Staff has received no inquiries. Any comments received hereafter will be forwarded to the Board.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Board approve this limited Preliminary Plan of subdivision to revise the Forest Conservation Plan and conservation easements with the conditions specified above.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1. Notice of Violation; Lot 109, 24310 Burnt Hill Road
- 2. Amended Preliminary Plan of Subdivision
- 3. Amended Final Forest Conservation Plan

ATTACHMENT 1



December 8, 2011

NOTICE OF VIOLATION

John R. and Christine Peeler 24310 Burnt Hill Road Clarksburg, MD 20871

Re: Category I Forest Conservation Easement Violations

Property Name: Tomahawk Estates Preliminary Plan Number: 120000940

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Peeler:

Subsequent to field inspections held on November 14 and November 21, 2011 for this subdivision it has been determined that a violation of the Category I Forest Conservation Easement located on your property currently exists. This violation consists of:

1. Agricultural activity and/or mowing of vegetation within the conservation easement.

The remediation for this violation consists of the following actions:

- 1. Cease all agricultural/mowing activities within the conservation easement immediately.
- 2. Install forest conservation easement signage along the boundary line of the easement on your property within 30 days of the date of this letter. Signage to consist of 6-foot high, heavy gage steel U-Posts with an 8"x5" aluminum forest conservation easement sign. Posts are to be driven into the ground at least 2-feet with 4-feet visible above ground. Posts are to be placed at every turn of the easement line and every 70-feet to 100-feet along a straight run of the easement line.

If you should have any questions please contact me at <u>douglas.johnsen@montgomeryplanning.org</u> or by phone at 301-495-4712.

Sincerely,

Doug Johnsen

Forest Conservation Inspector

Development Application and Regulatory Coordination Division

Enclosure(s):
Aerial photo
SDAT
Planning Board Opinion
Easement Agreement
Plat
Forest Conservation Plan
FAQs

Cc: FCP File (12000940)



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

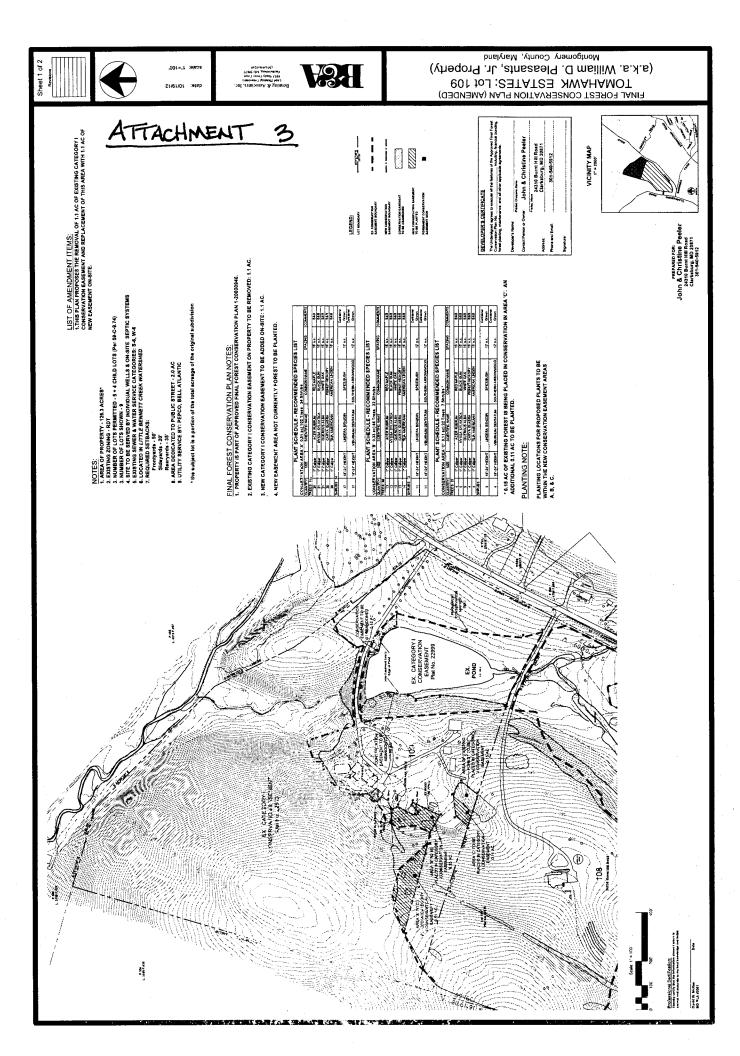
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION 8787 Georgia Avenue. Silver Spring, Maryland 20910 Environmental Planning Division 301.495.4540 Fax: 301.495.1303

www.MontgomeryPlanning.Org

NOTICE OF VIOLATION

EDPNOV 0001

FOR	MONTGOMERY C	OUNTY, MARYLA	ND, the undersigned issuer, bei	ng duly authorized, states that:			
0	10/0/2011	the reginies	nt of this NOTICE John	P==1=2			
On,_	Date	the recipies	in of this NOTICE,	Recipient's Name			
On, 12/8/2011 the recipient of this NOTICE, JOHN PEELER Recipient's Name who represents the property owner, JOHN R. AND/OR CHRISTINE PEELER Recipient's Name							
is not	ified that a violation	of the Montgomery	Property Owner's Nar County Forest Conservation La HILL PD, CLARKSBUR	nw (Chapter 22-A) exists at the			
Plan N	10. 2000940	Explanation:					
			VIOLATION:				
	Failure to hold a requir	red pre-construction me	eeting.				
	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.						
	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 affores	station requirements of a Forest Cons	ervation Plan.			
Y	easement. Other: AGRICULTS	RAL ACTIVITY	AND/OR MOWING WITH	passes through or around a concervation A CATEGORY I			
Failus	FOREST (CONSERVATION	EASEMEN	a citation, ii) issuance of a Stop Work			
				ng Board for appropriate Administrative			
				tive action is complete. The following			
correc			ected and within any time frame				
	Stake out limits of dist	urbance (LOD) and cor	ntact Forest Conservation Inspector for	or a pre-construction meeting:			
	Install tree protection r	neasures and/or tree car	re as directed by Forest Conservation	Inspector.			
	Submit required application for compliance with Chapter 22A of the County Code. Contact Environmental Planning at 301-45-4540.						
	Cease all cutting, clearing, or grading and/or land distributing activity. Approval from Forest Conservation Inspector is required to resume work.						
	Schedule a pre-planting	g meeting with the Fore	est Conservation Inspector prior to the	e 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 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.						
X	Other: REFERENCE	NOTICE OF Y	Islation LETTER DA	ATED 12/8/2011			
MNCP Inspect	or Joug	Johnsen d Name	Tignaphre 1	12/8/2011 Date			
RECEI BY:	ved John	2 Paeler	WW We	h 12/8/2011			
	Printed	d Name	Signature	Date			





Montgomery County, Maryland FINAL FOREST CONSERVATION PLAN (AMENDED)
TOMAHAWK ESTATES: Lot 109
(a.K.a. William D. Pleasants, Jr. Property)
Mothogogy Ceipty, Mardand

Z1/61/01 :018p

Sequence of Events for Property Owners Required to Comply With Forest Conservation and/ or Tree-Save Plans

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Long-term protection devices will be installed part the Forest Conservation Plas Plan, and attached destalls. Installation will occur at the appropriate term carrivation including the long-term protection measure contribution project. Relative the plan drawing for long-term protection measure installation.

Forest retention area signs shall be installed as required by the fores inspector, or as shown approved plan.

Container Grown

THEE PLANTING AND LABORATIONAGE CALDIGUE

