



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

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TECHNICAL STAFF REPORT

Planning Board Quasi-Judicial Public Hearing of March 18, 2021

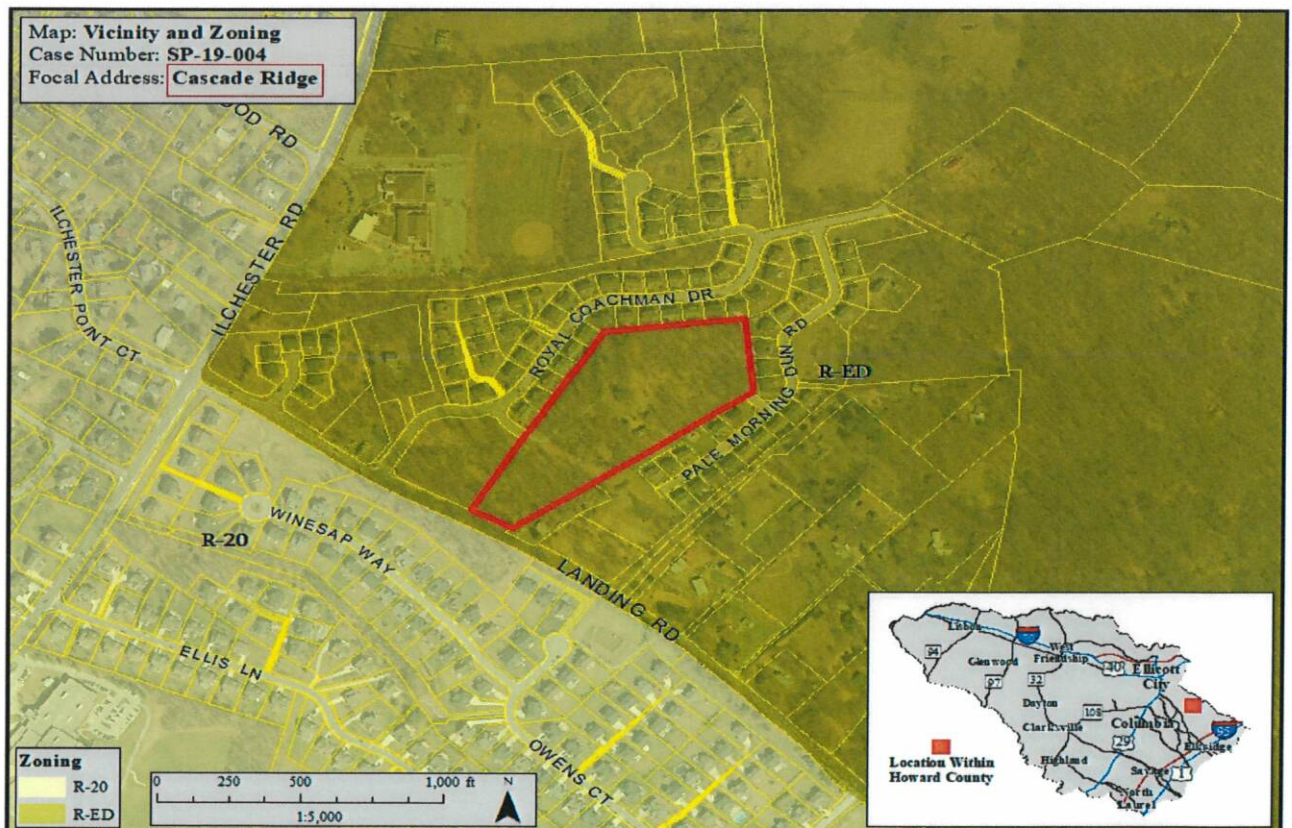
Case No./ Petitioner: PB Case 451/ John Neels

Project Name: Cascade Ridge, SP-19-004
Lots 1-16 and Open Space Lots 17-19

DPZ Planner: Derrick Jones, djones@howardcountymd.gov

Request: For Planning Board approval of a Preliminary Equivalent Sketch Plan, SP-19-004, for the subdivision of 16 single-family detached lots and 3 open space lots on 9.09 acres of land zoned R-ED (Residential: Environmental Development) in accordance with Section 107.0.F. of the Zoning Regulations and Section 1.105 of the Rules of Procedures of the Howard County Planning Board.

Location: The property is located at 7330 Green Drake Road in Elkridge. The property may be found on Tax Map 31, Grid 11, Parcel 474 in the First Election District.



Vicinal Properties: The subject property is surrounded by an existing residential subdivision named Cascade Overlook, except for where the property abuts Landing Road to the east.

Legal Notice: The property was properly posted and verified by DPZ in accordance with the legal requirements 30 days prior to the hearing. Certifications of legal notices advertising the case in two local newspapers at least 30 days prior to the hearing are on file.

Regulatory Compliance: This project must comply with the Amended Fifth Edition of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, the Zoning Regulations, the Howard County Design Manual, the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance, the Howard County Forest Conservation Manual and the Howard County Landscape Manual.

I. General Information:

Plan History:

- Pre-submission Community Meeting – A pre-submission community meeting was held on February 15, 2019 at the Phelps Luck Neighborhood Center.
- ECP-19-051 - An Environmental Concept Plan was submitted on March 26, 2019 and approved on November 7, 2019.
- HPC-19-035 - The Historic Preservation Commission met on July 11, 2019 as required under Subtitle 6 of the County Code. The Commission determined that the historic house and garage are not architectural structures and are not listed on the County's historic site inventory.
- SP-19-004 - A Preliminary Equivalent Sketch Plan was submitted on April 4, 2019. This plan was initially submitted to subdivide the subject site into 18 residential lots and 3 open space lots. The most recent plan was resubmitted on October 6, 2020 to subdivide the property into 16 residential lots and 3 open space lots.
- WP-20-036 - An Alternative Compliance Petition was submitted on October 18, 2019 to remove 8 specimen trees. Following the initial review by DPZ, the subdivision petition was redesigned with the reduction of 2 proposed residential lots. Due to the reduction of the two lots, 5 additional specimen trees were saved on site not impacted by the development. The petition was resubmitted on October 20, 2020 to remove only 3 specimen trees on site and was approved with conditions on November 19, 2020. There are no specimen trees located within the forested area of the property that abuts Landing Road.
- Scenic Road Approval by Planning Board - In accordance with Section 16.125(c) of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, the Planning Board must approve the initial plan submittal for subdivisions abutting a scenic road in the Planned Service Area as a public meeting. This meeting was occurred on March 4, 2021.

Bulk Regulations (In accordance with Section 107.E. of the Zoning Regulations):

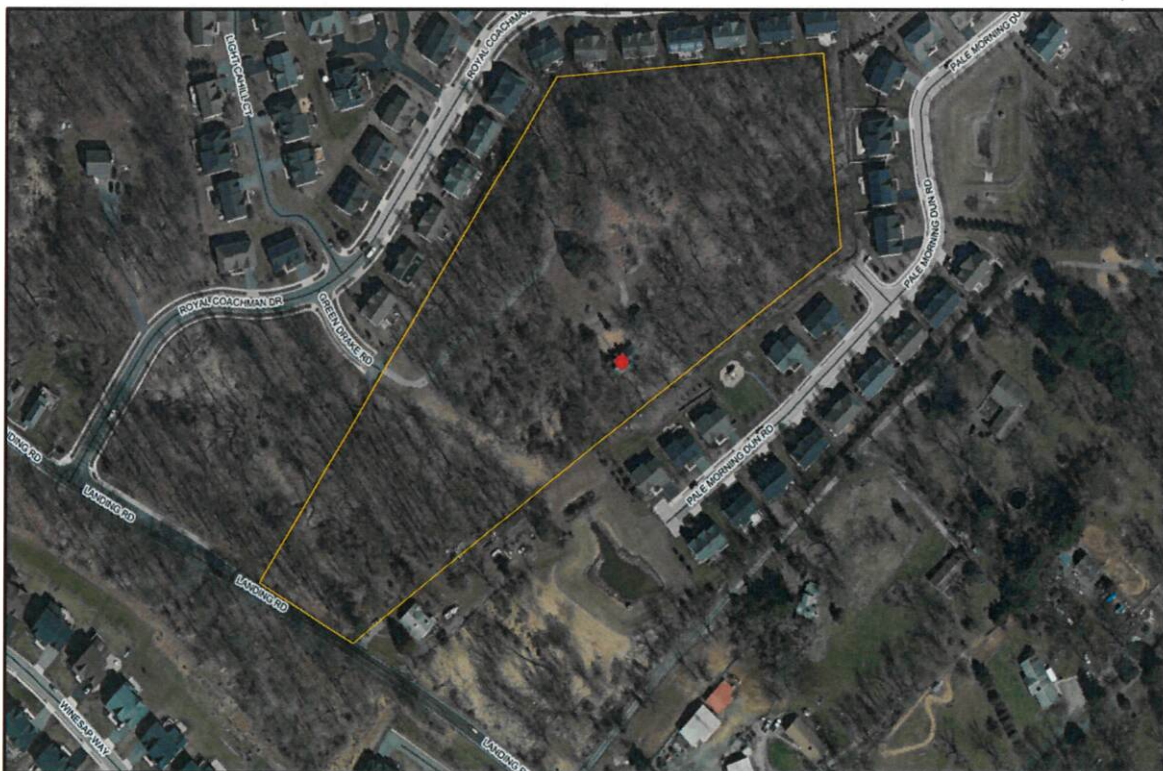
- Density – R-ED District permit 2 dwelling units per net acre. The site's net area is 8.722 acres and permits maximum of 17 dwelling units. A total of 16 dwelling units are proposed for this subdivision.
- Lot Size – The subdivision complies with the R-ED minimum lot size of 6,000 square feet. The smallest proposed lot is 6,045 square feet.

- Minimum Lot Width – The subdivision complies with the R-ED minimum lot width of 50 feet at the front building restriction line (BRL).
- Setbacks – The subdivision complies with all setbacks for the R-ED zoning district.

II. Site Analysis:

Site Conditions and Environmental Assessment:

The property contains 9.085 acres and is improved with a historic house and an outbuilding (detached garage). The property is accessed from the western terminus of Green Drake Road by a dirt driveway. The topography naturally slopes to the south and east with a ridge in the center site. According to the environmental report prepared by Eco-Science Professionals, Inc., the property contains 7.6 acres of forest and includes a stream, wetland, floodplain and steep slope area that are in the southwestern area of the site adjacent to Landing Road. There are thirteen specimen trees on the property of which 3 have been approved for removal through an alternative compliance petition (WP-20-036). There are no rare or endangered species on the site. In April of 2019, DPZ inspected the site and confirmed that the environmental information reported by the Eco-Science Professionals was accurate.



Aerial of existing conditions of the Cascade Ridge Property

Character and Quality of the Scenic Road (Landing Road):

The subject property has 152 feet of public road frontage along Landing Road which is designated as a scenic road. Section 16.1402 (Subtitle 14) of the County Code defines scenic roads as public roads in the County which has one or more of the following characteristics: 1) an area of outstanding natural environmental features providing views of scenic elements such as forests, steep topography and streams or river valleys; 2) provide outstanding views of rural, agricultural landscapes; 3) follow historic road alignments and provide views of historic resources; and 4) the road provides frontage for properties that are in a historic district or subject to a perpetual

long-term agricultural, environmental or historic easements. In 1994, Landing Road was designated by the County Council as a scenic road. At that time, the County’s Scenic Road Inventory described Landing Road as a “rolling, winding road that passes through gently rolling terrain” and that the “scenic character of Landing Road is created primarily by natural features: forest and varied terrain.”

Historic Structures

The existing historic house is a Cape Cod style home that dates to 1904, according to the State Department of Assessments and Taxation. There is a historic outbuilding next to the house. The property is not within a historic district and the house is not listed on the Historic Sites Inventory. The development was presented to the Historic Preservation Commission for the HPC to identify all historic resources on the site and provide advice regarding the design of the development. The HPC determined the structure and does not have architectural significance and had no comments on the design. The house and outbuilding are proposed for demolition.

Site and Density Information Chart:

Total Gross Area.....	9.085 acres
Minus 100-Year Floodplain Area.....	0.31 acres
Minus 25% of Greater Steep Slope Area.....	0.053 acres
Net Site Area.....	8.722 acres
Density Permitted (2 units per net acre).....	17 units
Number of Dwellings Units Proposed.....	16 units
Proposed Acreage of the 16 buildable lots.....	2.56 acres
Area of Proposed SFD Lots.....	2.56 acres
Area of Proposed Public Road Right-of Way.....	1.04 acres
Area of Public Right-of-Way Dedication.....	0.11 acres
Open Space Required (50% of gross area).....	4.54 acres
Open Space Provided.....	5.38 acres

Access and Frontage:

The subdivision will have access and public road frontage from Green Drake Road. Green Drake Road currently contains two dead-end stubs and shall provide a connection through this proposed subdivision between two existing public roads: Royal Coachman Drive and Pale Morning Dun Road.

Water and Sewer Service

The site is in the Planned Service Area for public water and sewer service. Water and sewer service shall be provided by the County under Contract Number 14-4080-D.

Proposed Development Plan

- **Subdivision Plan** - The subdivision shall consist of 16 single-family detached (SFD) lots and 3 open space lots. The 16 SFD lots will have an average size of 6,969 SF and a lot width of no less than 50 feet at the front BRL. The subdivision shall be compatible to the adjacent R-ED zoned residential developments, in terms of similar lot sizes and house types. The subdivision has a 30-foot project

boundary setback from adjoining properties, per the R-ED bulk regulations. All the SFD lots and open space lots will have access and frontage at the future extension of Green Drake Road, which will be a 24-foot wide public road within a 50-foot wide public right-of-way. Sidewalk and street lighting will be provided on each side of the street and the road will connect between Royal Coachman Drive and Pale Morning Dun Road. The subdivision shall provide 5.38 acres of open space, which includes recreational open space that will feature playground equipment. All environmentally sensitive areas (floodplain, stream, wetlands, steep slopes) will be protected in open space that will be owned and maintained by either a homeowner's association or the County's Department of Recreation and Parks.

- **Scenic Road Compliance** -The site has 152 feet of frontage on a scenic road (Landing Road). Section 16.125(c) of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations requires that the Planning Board approve any minor or major subdivision that abuts or adjoins a scenic road. * *The scenic road plan was scheduled for the February 4, 2021 Planning Board meeting, and has been continued to the March 4, 2021 meeting.*

At the time of this report, the Planning Board has not reviewed the scenic road case. As stated in the technical staff report for that case, new major subdivisions inside the planned service area require that a minimum 100-foot continuous vegetated buffer shall be maintained between the scenic road and the subdivision to preserve or enhance the visual character of the road. This subdivision proposes a 225-foot continuous vegetated buffer from the Landing Road public right-of-way, which exceeds the 100-foot scenic road buffer requirement. The closest house will be located over 400' from the Landing Road right-of-way. There are no proposed direct driveway or road connections to Landing Road, which further protects the natural elements and view shed. Although the houses should not be visible from the scenic road, there are no rear facades oriented toward Landing Road.

- **Forest Conservation** – This subdivision complies with Subtitle 12 of the County Code for Forest Conservation. The site with contains 7.6 acres of (0.3 acres contains floodplain area) forest with 4.1 acres to be cleared for the installation of the road, utilities and the lots. A total of 3.2 acres of forest shall be retained and protected by three separate public forest conservation easements. These three easements are to be in Open Space Lots 17, 18 and 19. Since 3.2 acres of forest is to be retained, this subdivision has a modest planting requirement of 0.7 acres (or 30,492 SF). This subdivision intends to satisfy its 0.7-acre planting requirement by purchasing forest bank credits within a forest mitigation bank within the same watershed.
- **Landscaping** – This subdivision complies with perimeter and street tree landscaping requirements in accordance with Section 16.124 of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations and the Landscape Manual. Perimeter landscaping will be provided with new landscape plantings (21 shade trees and 15 evergreen trees) provided along the perimeter to supplement the existing wooded areas to remain. In addition, six native trees are to be provided to mitigate the three specimen trees that were approved for removal. Lastly, a total of 46 street trees are to be provided along the Green Drake Road right-of-way.
- **Stormwater Management** – Stormwater management (SWM) is provided by the use of micro-scale practices in accordance with the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) environmental site design criteria. Micro-scale practices include M-2 submerged gravel wetlands, M-6 micro-bioretenion facilities, M-8 bioswales and M-5 dry wells.
- **Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO):**

Roads Test – This subdivision satisfies the Adequate Road Facility Test Evaluation requirements since there are no intersections of major collector or high classification roads within 1.5 mile travel distance from the site.

Schools Test - This subdivision is in the Established Communities Allocation Area, the North East School Region, the Rockburn Elementary School District, the Bonnie Branch Middle School District and the

Howard High School District. Following a signed Decision and Order, the housing unit allocations and open/closed schools tests will be performed.

III. Planning Board Criteria

In accordance with Section 107.0.F.6. of the Zoning Regulations, the following criteria must be considered by the Planning Board when evaluating this Preliminary Equivalent Sketch Plan.

1. **The proposed lay-out of the lots and open space effectively protects environmental and historic resources.**

The proposed subdivision is designed so that the proposed lots, road, utilities, stormwater management and drainage systems are positioned on the site's most suitable area for development. The site has a perennial stream, wetlands, a floodplain, and a small area of 25% or greater steep slopes. These environmental features are of high priority for protection and the subdivision is designed to avoid disturbance to these features by placing them in open space lots. There are 13 specimen trees on the site. This subdivision shall require the removal of three specimen trees due to their location near the existing house, which will be razed, and the Drake Road connection. The removal of these three specimen trees were approved under an alternative compliance petition (WP-20-036).

This subdivision proposes no disturbance to the environmental features and these features will be located within open space (Open Space Lots 18 and 19). The subdivision's stormwater management practices (a single shallow grave wetland and two micro-bioretenion facilities) are consolidated to reduce land disturbance and grading. These facilities will be in Open Space Lot 18, just above the 25-foot wetland buffer, avoiding all protected environmental features.

The development was presented to the Historic Preservation Commission to identify all historic resources on the site and provide advice regarding the design of the development. The HPC determined the historic house does not have architectural significance and had no comments on the design.

2. **Buildings, parking areas, roads, stormwater management facilities and other site features are located to take advantage of existing topography and to limit the extent of clearing and grading.**

The proposed subdivision layout takes advantage of the uniqueness of the site's topography and forests by minimizing the limits of clearing and grading necessary to construct houses, the Green Drake Road connection, SWM facilities and public utilities. The proposed residential lots and road shall be constructed in the north-central area of the site, on top of a ridge where an existing house and outbuilding is located. The proposed road connection is dictated by the two existing road stubs of Green Drake Road.

The subdivision is planned to utilize a shallow, submerged gravel wetland, micro-bioretenion facilities, bioswales and dry wells for managing stormwater. The use of a shallow gravel wetland facilitates the reduction of the land disturbance and grading. There will not be any clearing and grading within the required 100-foot scenic road buffer. Access to and from this subdivision will be from a non-scenic road and no disturbances are proposed at the frontage where the western edge of the site abuts Landing Road.

The site's environmentally sensitive areas will be protected within open space lots. 3.2 acres of forest will be retained on site within public forest conservation easements on site which represents 35% of the site's gross area.

3. **Setbacks, landscaped buffers, or other methods are proposed to buffer the development from existing neighborhoods or roads, especially from designated scenic roads or historic districts.**

The site is designed to provide substantial buffering to the adjacent developments through the retention of existing wooded resources, proposed landscaping plantings and reduced grading. The residential development north and west of the site will be buffered from the subdivision by existing forest and the residential development to the east and south will be buffered by a combination of existing vegetation and proposed perimeter landscaping. The site has 152 feet of public road frontage at its western edge along Landing Road, a designated scenic road. Access to and from this subdivision will be from a non-scenic road and no disturbances are proposed at the frontage that abuts Landing Road. A 225-foot continuous vegetated buffer from the Landing Road public right-of-way has been established, which exceeds the 100-foot scenic road buffer requirement, per Section 16.125(c)(2) of the Subdivision Regulations. Within this buffer, existing vegetation that includes forested areas and understory plant communities shall be preserved and permanently protected in a forest conservation easement within a County-owned open space lot. The scenic elements of forests shall be preserved with very minimal visual impact of the subdivision from the scenic road. The applicant's scenic road exhibit demonstrates that the line of sight from Landing Road will not distort the natural forested views from the new development of single-family homes proposed 460 feet away.



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3-3-21
Date