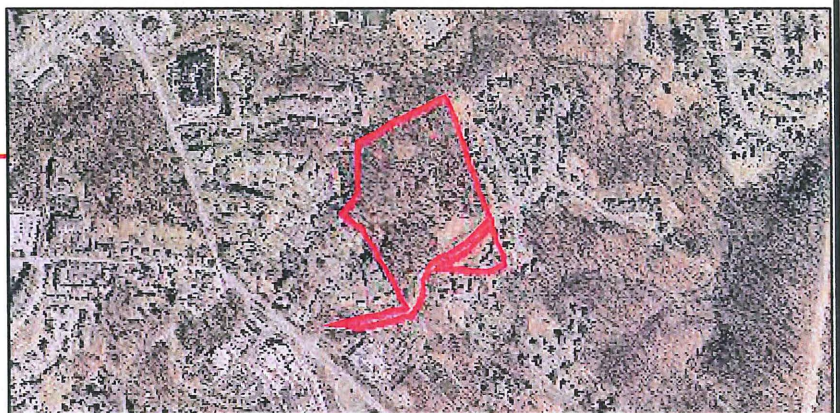


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Zoning Map General Plan Amendment: 25.007 Tax ID: 1402218488
 Current Zoning: POR Council District: 1
 Tax Map: 25 Grid: 1 Parcel: 264 Lot: N/A
 Address: 3420 Martha Bush Drive

Regner, Robin

From: Watson, Courtney
Sent: Monday, July 22, 2013 11:02 AM
To: Regner, Robin
Subject: FW: Comprehensive Zoning - Public Hearing Schedule

For your file. 25.007

From: Shearman, Craig [<mailto:shearmanc@NRF.com>]
Sent: Saturday, June 08, 2013 4:22 PM
To: CouncilMail
Cc: craigshearman@verizon.net; The Gaetanos; Chaconas, Terry; Watson, Courtney
Subject: Comprehensive Zoning - Public Hearing Schedule

Craig Shearman - District 1
3307 Governor Carroll Court
Ellicott City, MD 21043

June 8, 2013

Dear Council Member:

As you consider comprehensive zoning map changes and text amendments at the hearing scheduled for Monday, June 10, please be aware of the testimony below that I presented at a Planning and zoning Board hearing on March 27 on behalf of myself and other homeowners in the Courtyards at Governors Run development. My testimony concerned the proposal to rezone a 26-acre parcel of county-owned land at 3420 Martha Bush Drive from POR to R-ED.

Subsequent to the testimony below, I was informed in an email exchange with Planning and Zoning Director Marsha McGlaughlin that the county has no plans to sell the parcel in question and there are no proposals to develop the property. Ms. McGlaughlin informed me that the proposed change from POR to R-ED is strictly a matter of cleaning up the zoning map to reflect what would be appropriate use of the land should it ever be developed rather than something being done to facilitate any current or expected proposal by a developer.

Ms. McGlaughlin's reassurances were very welcome and brought considerable relief in my neighborhood. For the record, however, I would like to repeat that while my neighbors and I prefer R-ED over POR for the 3420 Martha Bush Drive, we remain adamantly opposed to any development of the parcel at all. For the reasons outlined below, it is our wish that this property permanently remain as undeveloped open space.

Thank you very much.

Craig Shearman

Craig Shearman
3307 Governor Carroll Court
Ellicott City, MD 21043

410-461-1347
craigshearman@verizon.net

March 27, 2013

Good evening. My name is Craig Shearman. I live at 3307 Governor Carroll Court in Ellicott City. I am here to testify on behalf of myself and other residents of the Courtyards at Governors Run in regard to Comprehensive Zoning Amendment 25.007 regarding the 26-acre parcel of county owned land at 3420 Martha Bush Drive. If I may, I'd like to have our group stand and be recognized.

This parcel is proposed to be rezoned from POR to R-ED. While my neighbors and I believe residential zoning would be more appropriate than commercial zoning, we are not comfortable in endorsing any action until certain questions are answered. We are very concerned that even an appropriate rezoning could lead to unwelcome development of the property.

The parcel in question makes up the wooded area behind the homes on Governor Carroll Court. When my wife and I chose to build here in 1995, I approached the Planning and Zoning Department to inquire about the parcel. I was told that it had been intended as an additional section of the Courtyards at Governors Run, but that the county had purchased it in order that it be preserved as open space. I was assured that the county had no plans to develop the property or to sell the property. Having our home back up to open space was a key decision for us and we would have bought elsewhere if not for this parcel of land.

In 2008 as you might recall, the county proposed selling this tract of land to help fund the renovation of county office buildings. I testified before the County Council in opposition to that plan on behalf of myself and my neighbors. With the help of Council Member Courtney Watson, the proposal was withdrawn.

My neighbors and I were opposed to development of this property in 2008 and we are opposed to development now. Since 2008, we have continually lost open space in the surrounding neighborhood and seen far too much development already. More than 700 apartment units have been built, are being built, or are planned in the area, including the Alta Regency Crest, Ellicott Crossing, Burgess Mills and Normandy Center projects.

This new influx of development is already worsening traffic at two of the county's most congested and dangerous intersections – Route 40 at Rogers Avenue and Route 40 at Ridge Road. It is also increasing the burden on Veterans Elementary School, which was overcrowded from the day it opened.

Our County Executive, Ken Ullman, has emphasized the importance of preserving the natural beauty of Howard County and protecting its environment, and we agree with him. This parcel supports an entire ecosystem involving deer, fox, owls, songbirds and a stream that ultimately feeds into the Patapsco River and Chesapeake Bay. It also includes a retention pond along Martha Bush Drive that is important to the proper environmental control of runoff and is required by county regulations.

This forest is directly across the street from our neighborhood playground, and plays a role in keeping the playground a safe and peaceful place for our children and families. The playground is a focal point of our community for neighborhood gatherings and daily visits. The woods are an area of exploration for children and its edges are a place of solitude for neighborhood dog walkers.

As I mentioned, I chose Howard County, this neighborhood and my particular street because of this wooded parcel. I paid more for my home than I might have elsewhere because of it. Even in today's reduced real estate market, the 60 homes in our neighborhood are collectively worth a minimum of \$30 million. Even a 10 percent reduction in perceived value because of the loss of this open space would mean a \$3 million loss in county property values and a resulting loss of tax revenue.

Given that background, there are some key questions my neighbors and I would like answered:

- Who is asking for rezoning of this parcel?
- Why are they asking for it to be rezoned?
- Does the county have any plans today or in the future to sell this property?
- If so, to whom?
- And finally, does the prospective purchaser have any plans for development?

My neighbors and I look forward to hearing the answers to these questions. Thank you very much for this opportunity to appear here tonight.