

Ongoing Vigilance to Protect Headwaters of Ten Mile Creek

The 100-acre Miles-Coppola Property is currently undeveloped forest and farmland in the northeast headwaters of Ten Mile Creek. The 2014 Ten Mile Creek Master Plan Amendment recommended that if the property were to be developed, road access to Route 355 should avoid harm to forests, wetlands and tributaries by using a new less damaging road alignment. When a conceptual development plan was submitted to the County Planning Board in June 2021 it did not abide with the recommendations of the 2014 Plan. Instead, it sought a road connection to MD355 along an outdated, environmentally harmful alignment proposed in 1994. At this time Friends of Ten Mile Creek (FoTMC) submitted testimony to remind the Board of its obligations to adhere to the 2014 Amendment.

When the Planning Board did not heed our advice, FoTMC wrote to the County Executive expressing the same concerns. As a result, Executive Elrich directed the Department of Transportation to adhere to the 2014 road plan. We thank the Executive Elrich for acting in a timely manner.

In July 2022 FoTMC again submitted testimony to the Planning Board on the development plan and reiterated our concerns expressed in our June 2021 testimony. After the hearing, the Planning Board agreed to make the developer abide by the 2014 road connection recommendation but said that if the County and the developer did not acquire a small property necessary to complete the MD355 connection by August 2024, the developer was free to submit the destructive 1994 road alignment for consideration.

Fast forward to the present. As of September 2023, the County and the developer have finally agreed on plans to acquire the small property necessary to provide a road to access MD355. It has taken over two years of constant vigilance to assure that the developer abides by the protections stipulated in the 2014 Master Plan. The Friends of Ten Mile Creek led the way to remind decision makers of their obligations to uphold the protections set forth in the 2014 Amendment. Our efforts have assured the preservation of a large wetland, avoided a stream crossing and saved many acres of forest.