

119 Oak Street, Apt. B
Bath, Maine 04530

September 7, 2021

Mr. Casey Anderson, Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: Creekside at Cabin Branch Site Plan #820200160

Dear Chair Anderson and Members of the Planning Board:

I write today as a Natural Resource Stewardship professional and a former Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission employee. I am also a Montgomery County native with strong ties to the county. Though I now live in Maine, I still care deeply about Montgomery County – the place where my parents, teachers, and dear friends reside – and I hope you will accept these comments from a concerned neighbor to the north.

As a past M-NCPPC employee with relevant experience to the matter at hand and as a current Board member and past President of the Friends of Ten Mile Creek & Little Seneca Reservoir, I feel compelled to write and implore you to reject the Site Plan for Creekside at Cabin Branch (Site Plan #820200160).

During my tenure as a M-NCPPC employee from 2016-2019, I served as a Senior Natural Resources Specialist in the Vegetation Ecology Unit of Montgomery Parks. My role was to manage the popular Weed Warrior Volunteer Program which was created by retired Forest Ecologist Carole Bergmann in 1999. This program, which engages citizens in assisting M-NCPPC staff in controlling non-native, invasive plants in county parks, has served as an inspiration and model for similar programs around the country, including here in Maine.

As part of my responsibilities at Montgomery Parks, I had the privilege of visiting many of Montgomery County's 400+ park units. Based on my profession experience, I can confidently say that the Ten Mile Creek watershed is one of the most exemplary natural areas in the county and indeed the greater Washington, D.C. area. As distinguished scientists and conservation organizations have testified on numerous occasions, Ten Mile Creek itself stands out as a biological gem, unique in the diversity of aquatic life it supports.

In addition to its aquatic diversity, I can attest that the Ten Mile Creek watershed is also one of the most botanically diverse and distinctive areas in the county. In particular, the watershed is home to a stand of shagbark hickory trees (*Carya ovata*), a very rare community type. In fact, personally I know of only one other place in the county where these tall and majestic trees occur – along the C&O Canal between Pennyfield and Violette's Locks and the adjacent

Blockhouse Point Conservation Park. To my knowledge, however, the forest at Ten Mile Creek is the *only* extensive example of this natural community type, with a unique assemblage of associated flora and fauna which is being studied by botanist John Parrish as well as Audubon Naturalist Society staff and volunteers.

In short, Ten Mile Creek not only plays a critical role in the Washington, D.C region's water supply system, but the watershed should also be protected as one Montgomery County's most precious and unique natural areas deserving of conservation in its own right. I, therefore, urge you to reject the proposed site plan for Creekside at Cabin Branch which will irreparably damage Ten Mile Creek's two most sensitive and biologically diverse tributaries, LSTM 110 and LSTM 111.

With respect,

Tenley Elizabeth Wurglitz