

Nicole Gaudette

From: dandean@dandeanpro.com
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2019 4:03 PM
To: Nicole Gaudette; Julie Underwood; Debbie Bertlin; Evan Maxim; Kari Sand; Council; tana.senn@leg.wa.gov; Brian Thomas
Subject: CAO17-010 & SEP19003 4825 East Mercer Way

Dan P. Dean
Gail T. Shimooka
5017 East Mercer Way
Mercer Island, WA 98040

March 21st, 2019

Ms. Nicole Guadette, Senior Planner, Community Planning and Development
City of Mercer Island
9611 S.E. 36th Street
Mercer Island, WA 98040
nicole.gaudette@mercergov.org

Re: File CAO17-010 and SEP19-003

Applicant: Sang Hou
Property Address: 4825 East Mercer Way

Dear Ms. Gaudette:

We are writing in response to the proposed development of the property at 4825 East Mercer Way, located on a private road in the East Mercer Highlands. We are sure you have been made aware of the steep slope, drainage, tree cutting, erosion and other concerns associated with the development of this property.

We personally understand the potential dangers associated with soil destabilization, landslides, water runoff matters leading to serious erosion, removal of trees causing liquefaction of steep slopes and many other matters, as we previously lived on Lindley Road. There, tree cutting altered the wind patterns on our road resulting in considerable damage to our house when a mature cedar tree destroyed the upper level of our house. When trees are removed, there are fewer of them to diffuse the wind, meaning more of force is taken by less trees, making them more susceptible to blow-over and huge property damage and potential personal injury/loss of life. People on the island continually remove, prune or top trees (in many cases) that do not belong to them.

It is our understanding that 18 or so healthy trees were removed uphill from the 4825 EMW property. Removing trees to improve views causes many issues. The root systems of the tree will normally strengthen and solidify the steep slope bank surface and protect against slides and soil liquefaction. The removal of such a high number of trees on this property has already caused damage, notwithstanding water saturation of the steep slope, slide of the steep slope and trees toppled over into adjacent properties due to the shift in wind patterns. The area affected is the same the geology of Lindley Road, as it is located close by on the same hill.

Some years ago, while living on Lindley Road, the steep slope just to the west of our house was liquefied and caused a major landslide, burying the private road under 5 or so feet of mud and dirt. Thank heaven no one was killed or injured. Why did this massive slide occur? Neighbors living on top of the hill removed trees and rerouted water runoff that found

its way down the steep slope, eroding it and resulting in its saturation and eventual slide. To repair the damage, multiple hundreds of thousands of dollars were needed to design, replant, drive pipes into the soil and spray shotcrete onto the damaged hillside, to restore its stability. It took a long time to repair the road and allow displaced neighbors access to their homes. Neighbors living around the 4825 property have already seen increased water runoff as a result of tree cutting and noticed uprooting of trees caused by wind damage due to lack of wind diffusion from tree removal.

The road that accesses our homes in the East Mercer Highlands is private, as was Lindley Road. There were 4 homes on Lindley Road cut off by the slide. In the East Mercer Highlands neighborhood, there are probably 20 homes that would be seriously impacted by the loss of the road to a slide, flood or other hazard. There are a number of homes in the potential slide path at 4825 EMW. We know the dangers associated with steep slopes, runoff issues, trees falling and so on as we saw it happen next door on Lindley Road. If there were to be problems at this site, it would almost certainly erode and collapse our private road. The homes adjacent to the area would be damaged as well as homes in the path of the debris field below.

Finally, we moved to Mercer Island because it is an “oasis” in an ever-burgeoning metropolitan area. We enjoy the wildlife, and there is quite an abundance of it – deer, owls, woodpeckers and eagles. Eagles nest in the trees located on this property. The other day I saw 5 eagles hovering over this lot where they have nested for decades.

We are strongly opposed to this SEPA variance to the wetland and any building on the “difficult” site. We respectfully request that any and all development of this area be prohibited.

Regards,



Dan P. Dean & Gail Shimooka

cc:

Julie Underwood, City Manager: julie.underwood@mercergov.org
Debbie Bertlin (Mercer Island Mayor): debbie.bertlin@mercergov.org
Evan Maxim (Community Planning & Development Director): evan.maxim@mercergov.org
Kari Sand (City Attorney): kari.sand@mercergov.org
Mercer Island City Council: council@mercergov.org
Representative Tana Senn, 41st District: tana.senn@leg.wa.gov
Brian Thomas, President East Mercer Highlands Road Maintenance Association: brianth59@hotmail.com



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