

Nicole Gaudette

From: Carl Berkenwald <berkenwald@comcast.net>
Sent: Sunday, April 12, 2020 11:14 AM
To: Nicole Gaudette
Subject: Comments Regarding Request for Steep Slope Alteration, File No. CAO19-015

Nicole Gaudette/Senior Planner

Community Planning and Development
City of Mercer Island

Dear Ms. Guadette,

We are submitting comments in opposition to the request for a steep slope alteration to construct a single-family residence as outlined in Public Notice of Application File # CA019-015. We live at 3876 West Mercer Way, over 34 years, close to and down the hill from the proposed residence.

Preliminarily, we have questions about the timing of the comment period. Everyone is focused on the Covid 19 epidemic and trying to stay safe. Many residents in the area did not receive notices in the mail about the request. Others are unaware of the Public Notice of Application that was posted at the top of an undeveloped property that is neither at nor next to the site in question.

Why did the comment period begin on March 16, 2020, when the Covid 19 pandemic was rapidly spreading in King County?

Why does the comment period end on April 16, 2020? It may be City of Mercer Island standard practice to provide a one month period for comment, but this is not a standard time. Residents remain subject to a state and county stay at home mandate. They are not in a position to visit the site to observe it and its proximity to the eagle nest. Or to observe the mature "significant and exceptional" trees that would be removed and replaced by smaller immature trees. Or, to observe the location of a 30 foot wide paved road that would be built to provide access to the building site, which includes a trail entrance to the Mercerdale Hill greenbelt, and apparently runs across a city owned easement.

Turning to the proposal itself. Neighbors have submitted comments expressing concerns about the environmental impact were the project to go forward. For example, questioning how it was determined that the proposal is exempt from the SEPA, given the proximity of the building site and access road to the eagle nest and a wetland area. We share those concerns.

It appears a residence would be built in two stages, each requiring city permits. The first stage would be the steep slope alteration and the second would be the residence construction. It's a given that these activities could not be completed in a few weeks or months. How could a steep slope alteration and a residence construction not involve significant noise, pounding and vibration of land and trees? How could such work not significantly and negatively impact the eagles in and near their nest, particularly during annual nesting season after an eaglet, and in some years two eaglets, are hatched? How is it not probable that the eagles will be permanently driven away? How can the site owner and contractor guarantee that will not happen? They cannot.

How would the loss of some of the forest canopy, and especially the loss of the eagles, not adversely affect the quality of life that we Mercer Islanders have? Over the more than a quarter century that the eagles have been our neighbors, children and adults alike have marveled at their beauty and grace as they soar in the sky above and fly in and out of

their nest. We take joy each year when an eaglet(s) is born, as its parents deliver food and teach it to fly. We teach our children about the cycle of life, and of the importance of these marvelous birds to the ecosystem.

We understand that the city would collect permit fees and additional annual income from property taxes if a residence were built on the proposed site. But is it worth paving a road by the trail, removing mature trees, and losing the eagles so that a house can be built on a steep slope in the middle of a greenbelt?

We urge the city to deny the request. Thank you for considering our comments.

Carl and Leanne Berkenwald