

February 28th, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in response to the comments regarding DEV17-001 submitted by Chris Jack and Petra Jennings.

I have lived on Mercer Island for the better part of 35 years and grew up on the south end of the Island, not far from our construction site. I also returned to this area because of the “island feel” and hope to maintain that for my family today and in the future. We do not feel our construction project in any way affects the overall neighborhood character. Driving along West Mercer Way, there are innumerable homes with tall fences (many similar in size) and some with gates, (please see attached pictures). One recently approved project with a similar fence and gate is currently under construction just three homes south of our property. Our intended fence and gate would be very similar to these already existing fences and gates, many of which are much closer to West Mercer Way than ours will be.

Heading north on West Mercer Way, we do not feel Mr. Allen’s property is unique in having a fence and a gate, as there are several nearby. We believe that the rationale behind fences all along West Mercer Way is likely related to safety, security, and privacy, as is the case for us. In summary, we believe our intended fence and gate are not out of character for the neighborhood, as many similar structures exist already. In fact, we would submit that Dr. Jack’s neighbor to the north has a tall fence bordering his property and there are already six foot tall fences located on Eden Lane itself, as well (see attached pictures).

The area referred to in the public comment by Dr. Jack “in which the taller fence and gate would be built” is made up of our driveway and some adjacent plantings. We do not believe that impacting the view of our driveway from his property should warrant denial of our deviation request. Looking east from our fence and gate location towards his property there is a large group of trees and bushes that are in direct line of sight (please see attached picture) at the western extent of his property. We believe these plantings largely shield the view of our driveway already and that our intended fence and gate would not affect that significantly, especially since they will be on the downslope away from West Mercer Way. The remainder of our home (permitted and within code) extends higher than our proposed gate and fence and, thus, these intended structures should not materially affect the view west from his property.

Safety and security are very important to us. We believe our intended higher gate and fence will help keep our children safe at home and from the busy traffic along West Mercer Way. In addition, we believe it will help deter the kinds of break-ins we’ve had during our construction process. In fact, just last week, we had another break-in (see attached pictures). Fortunately, the home wasn’t occupied, no one was hurt, and there was only minimal damage. MIPD was instrumental in securing the site expediently, once they were notified. We believe a higher fence and gate would protect against such incidents in the future.

Our home has been permitted through the standard application process required by Mercer Island and has passed all required code inspections thus far. We are within code for setbacks as well as height restrictions and all other regulations. We do not believe any part of our construction process (while lengthy) has been obtrusive.

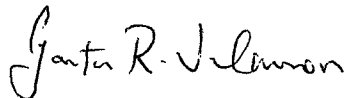
We believe that our intended fence and gate will not violate the building code referred to by Dr. Jack (MICC 19.15.020G5). We do not believe our fence and gate would be injurious to the property (ours) or improvements (West Mercer Way and the shared access drive to the south) in the vicinity. The intended fence and gate is entirely on our property and, therefore, cannot affect Mr. Jack's property which is located on the other side of West Mercer way. As mentioned above, there would be no view impact as our home is higher than the intended fence and gate, there is significant vegetation at the western extent of his property that already shields his view onto our driveway where the gate is to be located, and the intended fence and gate will be on the downslope away from West Mercer Way, lowering its effective visual impact. We also do not believe that the intended fence and gate would alter the character of the neighborhood, as such fences and gates already exist all along West Mercer Way and adjacent improved streets, as previously mentioned and shown in the attached pictures.

We believe that our intended fence and gate fall well within the regulations for approval as designated in the Mercer Island building code for fences. Our application for fence height deviation is virtually the same as the already approved deviation request for our neighbor three homes south on West Mercer Way.

Like Dr. Jack, I hope to raise my family on Mercer Island for years to come. As our community inevitably changes with newer construction and significant remodeling which I believe add value to Mercer Island in the long run, it has always been my goal to keep Mercer Island a wonderful residential community and a wonderful, safe place to raise a family. I do not believe that our intended fence and gate would affect that goal at all.

Thank you for your consideration. Please let us know if there are any further questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gautam R. Velamoor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G'.

Gautam R. Velamoor