

City of Gig Harbor Community Development Department  
3510 Grandview Street  
Gig Harbor, WA 98335

Date: July 7, 2023

RE: Public Hearing on July 18, 2023 - Application Permit Number(s): PL-PPLAT 22-0001, PL-DR-22-0005, PL-ALP-22-0001, PL-SEPA-22-0004 - The Reserve Preliminary Plat

Hearing Examiner:

As owner of an adjoining Pierce County property (#0222327017) to this proposal, I would like to share my comments and concerns regarding this application as follows:

Firstly, I am not in favor of the city permitting this development. I am familiar with the property on which this proposal is made and I have been monitoring the drainage at the southeast corner for the past 27 years. This is not a seasonal drainage as some might think. This is a small, year-round type-4 stream that runs eventually into Crescent Creek. It runs across the NE corner of my property and creates habitat for several native species, namely, Washington's only native species of crayfish, the Signal crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*), the Red-legged frog (*Rana aurora*), the Pacific Treefrog (*Hyla regilla*), the Roughskin newt (*Taricha granulosa*), the Long-toed salamander (*Ambystoma macrodactylum*), the Northwestern salamander (*Ambystoma gracile*), and the Little Brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*), among a host of other animals and plants that consider this pristine ravine and this stream their home.

In addition, this entire project will be precariously hanging over a pristine ravine that is part of the Crescent Valley Watershed, at the base of which lies Crescent Creek which is a salmon-bearing habitat. Crescent Valley Alliance (of which I am a founding member) was organized in January, 2007 by Pierce County to acknowledge that this watershed is one of the most pristine in Pierce County and worthy of good stewardship practices by community members. It would be commendable for the city to practice that same good stewardship on a municipal level and deny this application as proposed, if only on the grounds that the project adversely impacts the environment.

Please consider reviewing Federal statutes concerning salmon-bearing streams and the ramifications of one or more failures in the design that would seriously compromise this critical salmon habitat and put the city's planning department at risk.

I have watched for several years how the applicant has been trying to recover his investment and create building lots on a steep slope where homes do not belong *and* pushing the limits of the codes and regulations by obtaining variances. **Sure, what is being proposed may meet current codes and requirements but please consider extreme weather conditions that, no doubt, will affect our area just like they are occurring elsewhere in the US and worldwide. Many municipalities are having to re-write their codes to account for these new climate**

**conditions.** All it would take is one big rainstorm to overwhelm an already maxed-out retention system forever contaminating this pristine ravine ecosystem.

Some critical questions that should be asked are as follows:

Is there proof that the retention system being proposed is capable of safely handling 500 gallons of pesticides that are accidentally spilled from a pest control vehicle at lots 7, 8, or 9?

Or what about a failed sewer pump that sends gallons and gallons into the sensitive ravine habitat?

Where do such toxins end up?

Who is tasked with monitoring the quality of water coming out of the vault and into the ravine at the gabion outfall?

Will the surface water drainage system be maintained regularly and if so, by whom?

Will the entire surface water drainage system be inspected and recertified by the City of Gig Harbor annually?

Should this project move forward, and given the sensitivity of this habitat, I would strongly urge the city to perform due diligence in requiring annual water samples of this stream in order to ensure contaminants such as copper, zinc, lead, arsenic, nitrates, phosphates, pesticides, herbicides, and other toxins are not entering this sensitive habitat. A preliminary sampling and testing prior to the development would determine a base-line for subsequent sampling and tests.

As humans with the power to alter natural habitat (quite often negatively), we have the responsibility of being good stewards of this earth.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration to these comments, concerns, and questions.

Sincerely,

John McMillan  
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See attached Exhibits A - F

Exhibit A:



Pond (sanctioned by Pierce County Planning Department) on parcel #0222327017. (Photo courtesy John McMillan, owner)



Exhibit B:



Year-round stream at NE corner of Parcel #0222327017 and SE corner of subject property.  
(Photo courtesy John McMillan)



Exhibit C:



Catchment basin at stream with low impact diversion of a small portion of water to the pond of Exhibit A as installed by previous property owner circa. 1970s. (Photo courtesy John McMillan)

Exhibit D:



Signal crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*). (Photo courtesy John McMillan 2005)



Exhibit E:



Signal crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*), female with eggs. (Photo courtesy John McMillan)



Exhibit F:



Roughskin newt (*Taricha granulosa*). (Photo courtesy John McMillan)