

August 28, 2024

Brent Ramsey
Gannett Fleming
Rutherford Plaza Bldg., Suite 300
Baltimore, MD 21244

Re: Gwynn Oak Park-Pavilion and Parking Expansion
Forest Buffer Variance
Tracking #02-24-4080

Dear Brent Ramsey:

A request for a variance from the Baltimore County Code, Article 33, Title 3, a Law for the Protection of Water Quality, Streams, Wetlands and Floodplains (i.e. Forest Buffer Law), was received by the Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability (EPS) on July 29, 2024. The applicant is seeking to construct additional parking, remodel the volleyball court, renovate a picnic pavilion and construct a new picnic pavilion with underground power cables. The utility impacts have been addressed through an Alternatives Analysis.

The Gwynns Falls, a Use-IV stream that feeds directly into the Patapsco River, passes through the 62.9-acre park property. The full buffer required by the Forest Buffer Law encompasses the majority of the property due to an expansive 100-year floodplain and the orientation of Gwynns Falls to the park. The total impact for the proposed development is 17,607-sf (0.40 acres), which is currently manicured grass lawn. A Forest Conservation Variance (tracking #02-24-4079) has been granted for the removal of one specimen tree in the LOD, in poor condition (White oak, 33-DBH). The location of the pavilions and volleyball court are designed to focus visitor amenities in one central location, allowing the remainder of the park to be undeveloped. No forest or wetlands are located within the LOD and all impacts will be mitigated at 1:1, with 17,607-sf of planting on site which will be placed to connect two wooded stands.

This Department has reviewed your request and has determined that a practical difficulty exists in fully complying with Section 33-3-111 given the extent of the forest buffer onsite and the location of the existing amenities. Furthermore, impacts to water quality can be adequately minimized, given that no direct impacts to streams or wetlands are proposed, and the development will be located well over 200 feet from the Gwynn Falls.

Therefore, we will grant this request in accordance with Section 33-3-106 (a)(1) of the Baltimore County Code, with the following conditions:

1. The following notes shall appear on all subsequent plans submitted for this project:

- “A variance to the Law for the Protection of Water Quality, Streams, Wetlands and Floodplains (tracking # 02-24-4080) was granted by Baltimore County Environmental Protection and Sustainability to impact 17,607 sf of Forest Buffer to construct additional parking, remodel the sand volleyball court, renovate a picnic pavilion and construct a new picnic pavilion.”
- “There shall be no clearing, grading, construction or disturbance of vegetation in the Forest Buffer except as permitted by the Baltimore County Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability.”

Please have the property owner sign the statement on the following page and return a signed copy of this letter to this Department. Failure to return a signed copy may render this approval null and void, or may result in delays in the processing of the addition permit for this property.

This variance is approved by the Director of the Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability on _____. Any changes to site layout may require submittal of revised plans and a new variance request.

If you have any questions regarding this correspondence, please contact Ms. Jann Anderson at (410) 887-3980.

Sincerely yours,

Horacio Tablada
Director

HT/ja

c. Bill Sherd, Baltimore County Property Management

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I/we agree to the above conditions to bring my/our property into compliance with Law for the Protection of Water Quality, Streams, Wetlands and Floodplains.

Property Owner's Signature Date

Printed Name

Property Owner's Signature Date

Printed Name