

FIRST AMENDED
STATEMENT OF JUSTIFICATION
PECAN RIDGE
PRELIMINARY PLAN OF SUBDIVISION 4-19003

The applicant for this Preliminary Subdivision Plan is Caruso Homes ("Caruso" or "Applicant"). Caruso is a residential developer with substantial experience in the development of residential properties and the construction and marketing of homes on developed residential lots.

The property forming the subject matter of this Preliminary Subdivision Plan consists of approximately 41.7± acres. The property is irregular in shape and is located generally southwest of Laurel Bowie Road (MD 197) and Old Laurel Bowie Road near their intersection with the WB&A Trail.

This Preliminary Subdivision Plan has been filed utilizing the Public Benefit Conservation Subdivision Technique as authorized in Section 24-152 of the Prince George's County Subdivision Ordinance. Prior to filing a Preliminary Plan of Subdivision utilizing the Public Benefit Conservation Technique, an applicant is required to file and process a Sketch Plan. The Sketch Plan is reviewed by various agencies and ultimately it is certified as having been completed by the Planning Director of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Among other things, the Sketch Plan is required to establish that the provisions of Section 24-152 are met and satisfied. In this instance, Caruso filed its Sketch Plan. In addition to filing the Sketch Plan, the applicant filed a Statement of Justification demonstrating conformance with the referenced provisions of the

Subdivision Ordinance. The Sketch Plan was reviewed and analyzed by various agencies within Prince George's County and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission ("M-NCPPC"). Ultimately, conformance with those provisions was found and the Sketch Plan was certified by the Planning Director on March 13, 2019. A copy of the staff report dated March 12, 2019 and the M-NCPPC certification, dated March 13, 2019 have been filed with this application.

The Sketch Plan, as certified, proposed that most of the development of single-family detached homes would occur in the southwest portion of the property. Lots would primarily be oriented around three internal streets ending in cul-de-sacs and running generally in a north-south direction. Homes are proposed to be located on both sides of the streets. The property is characterized by pecan tree groves. The pecan tree groves are for the most part to be preserved. The preservation areas are designated as parcels on the Preliminary Subdivision Plan.

The Preliminary Subdivision Plan conforms to the design and layout which was approved by the Sketch Plan. Eighty (80) individual building lots are proposed. Most of the lots as shown on the Preliminary Plan of Subdivision will be oriented toward the Southwest portion of the property and will be situated on both sides of the three streets ending in cul-de-sacs. A further analysis of Section 24-152(g) thru (l) follows:

Section 24-152(g)

Pursuant to Section 24-152(g), Conservation Areas are required to be designated and identified on the Preliminary

Subdivision Plan. Those Conservation Areas are in fact are identified and are assigned Parcel designations "H", "I", "J", "K" and "L" These Conservation Areas included the pecan groves. Section 24-152(g) also requires that a Conservation Easement be established. A draft Conservation Easement has been filed with this application.

The design criteria for the Conservation Areas as set forth in Section 24-152(g)(2) requires that Conservation Areas shall connect with other existing and potentially new Conservation Areas on abutting sites. It also provides that fragmentation of Conservation Areas into small parcels should be avoided, to the extent possible. The pecan groves are in general preserved in large Parcels designated on site. A substantial parcel has been identified as Parcel "H" in the southeast section of the property. Two additional large parcels, Parcel "L" and Parcel "K", generally extend along the northern boundary of the property. These Conservation Areas include not just pecan trees but also sensitive environmental features. The potential exists for a connection between Parcel "H" and the WB&A Trail.

Section 24-152(h)

Section 24-152(h) contains regulations relating to the residential development area. The Preliminary Subdivision Plan has been designed so as to satisfy these residential development criteria. The subdivision has been designed to conform to the street layout and lotting pattern which was certified as part of the Sketch Plan. An entrance road connects Old Laurel Bowie Road in the northeast corner of the site. Some of the residential

lots are situated on both sides of the entrance road. However, most of the lots will be situated on either side of the three internal streets which end in cul-de-sacs. This design and layout allows for preservation of sensitive environmental features and also supports preservation of the pecan trees. A stormwater management concept plan has been submitted and is under review by the Department of Permits, Inspections and Enforcement. The internal street layout and design supports minimal changes to existing grades. In addition, clustering the residential units in the southwest portion of the site in large measure preserves views into the property from the WB&A Trail. Access to all of the individual building lots occurs from interior streets. Only two lots, Lots 54 and 55, are accessed via an easement designated as Alley A. As noted above, the most sensitive natural features traverse the site along its northern boundary. Care has been taken not to intrude into these areas with either lots or streets. Further, no dwelling is proposed to be located within 40 feet from any environmentally regulated area. The Ordinance also encourages buildings and driveways to be sited so as to maintain existing grades to the greatest extent possible. The applicant has done that through the design of this plan. While there is not a great variety in the size of individual lots (other than those on the cul-de-sacs), a variety of house facades and streetscape elements will be provided during the Detailed Site Plan process.

As noted above, a Conceptual Stormwater Management Plan has been filed with DPIE and is currently under review. The Plan

includes the use of low impact development techniques in order to reduce impervious surfaces.

Section 24-152(i)

Section 24-152(i) deals with scenic and historic roads. The applicant does not believe there is any historic road which impacts this property. However, the property is bounded on the east by the WB&A Trail. The subdivision has been designed to sensitively recognize the WB&A Trail. For the most part, the property frontage along the WB&A Trail is not being developed with residential homes. Instead, most of the land area abutting the trail is devoted to Conservation Area. As noted above, it is possible that a trail connection will be made from Parcel "H" to the WB&A Trail.

Section 24-152(j)

Pursuant to Section 24-152(j), streets may be either public or private. In general, the applicant in this subdivision is proposing that internal streets be public. However, Lots 54 and 55 are proposed to be accessed from a private street/right-of-way which is 24 feet wide. Access in this manner is expressly authorized by this Section and by Section 24-128(b)(1).

Section 24-152(k)

Section 24-152(k) sets forth the criteria for approval. That section provides that the Planning Board shall find that the plan:

(1) Fulfills the purpose and conforms to the regulations and standards for a conservation subdivision.

As has been noted above, the Sketch Plan was previously certified. As part of that process, findings were made that the development of this property would conform to the purposes for a Public Benefit Conservation Subdivision. The Preliminary Plan filed with this application demonstrates that the actual design and layout of the subdivision will conform to the regulations for a Conservation Subdivision as set forth in Section 27-152.

(2) Achieves the best possible relationship between the development and the conservation of site characteristics as prioritized in the sketch plan and preliminary plan.

The impetus for using the Conservation Subdivision Technique results from a desire to preserve and maintain the significant pecan trees located on site. Preservation of most of the pecan trees as well as the significant environmental features on site is being accomplished by creating Conservation Areas. This preservation effort results in the clustering of most residential lots in the southwest corner of the site. The applicant submits the proposed layout as initially certified on the Sketch Plan and as further implemented in the Preliminary Subdivision Plan allows for establishing the best possible relationship between the proposed single-family home lots and conservation of significant site characteristics.

(3) Because the use of the Conservation Subdivision technique in the Developed or Developing Tier is optional, the Planning Board shall also find that the proposed plan is clearly superior to that which could be achieved through the use of conventional development standards and clearly meets the purposes of the Conservation Subdivision technique. Lot yield shall be a secondary consideration to achieving the purposes of the Public Benefit Conservation Subdivision in assessing whether a proposed plan is clearly superior.

The applicant submits that the use of the Conservation Subdivision Technique is clearly superior to the result which would be achieved using a conventional subdivision. Conventional subdivision techniques would result in requests being made to substantially impair and/or remove the pecan groves on site. By clustering the lots in the southwest quadrant of the property and pursuing an approval using the Conservation Subdivision Technique, a plan results which is clearly superior to the mass grading of the site which would occur through use of a conventional subdivision technique.

Section 24-152(1)

This section provides that in addition to the information required for a major subdivision, a conservation subdivision shall:

Preliminary plan. In addition to the information required for a major subdivision provided in Section 24-119, the preliminary plan for a conversation subdivision shall:

- (1) **Include all information required in the sketch plan process, including the proposed purpose (scenic, historic, agricultural, or environmental) of the conservation areas(s);**

Conformance with these provisions was established at the time of the approval of the Conservation Sketch Plan. In particular, it was proffered and accepted that the purpose of the Conservation Sketch Plan was to preserve viewsheds into the Property and to also preserve substantial natural features including the pecan groves. A copy of the Statement of Justification submitted in support of the Sketch Plan has been attached to this application.

- (2) **Include as a separate exhibit for any application in the Developed or Developing Tier, a reasonable and achievable lotting pattern reflecting the minimum conventional standards of the existing zoning of the property; and**

An example of a achievable subdivision of the Property using conventional standards is attached.

- (3) **Include a draft conservation easement document.**

A copy of a Deed of Conservation Easement is attached. The applicant believes This Deed conforms with all requirements of the Subdivision Ordinance. As noted above, the grantee entity which will take title to the conservation areas has not yet been determined. That determination will be made prior to the approval of this Subdivision.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, the applicant submits that all of the criteria set forth in Section 24-152 of the Subdivision Ordinance are met and satisfied in this instance. For that reason, the applicant requests that the Preliminary Subdivision Plan for Pecan Ridge be approved.

Respectfully submitted,



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