

# THREE NOTCH DENTAL

IMPLANTS - COSMETICS - FAMILY

February 7, 2025

St. Mary's County Board of Appeals  
41770 Baldrige Street  
Leonardtown, MD 20650

## **Subject: Consideration of Variance Requests for Proposed Riverside Townhome Development**

Dear Members of the Board of Appeals,

I appreciate the opportunity to provide input regarding the requested variances for the proposed development adjacent to my property. While I support responsible development and respect the rights of landowners to utilize their property within legal guidelines, I have serious concerns about the potential impacts of these variances on safety, traffic, and the overall well-being of the community. My goal is not to prevent development but to advocate for a plan that balances growth with the needs of current and future residents. I believe that a more appropriately scaled project—one that does not require these variances—would still allow for a successful and profitable development while addressing key concerns.

### **1. The Variances Are Primarily Intended to Maximize Density, Not Address Hardship**

**(Standard: "The purpose of the variance is not based exclusively upon reasons of convenience, profit, or caprice.")**

The standards for granting a variance clearly state that variances should not be granted solely for reasons of convenience, profit, or caprice. However, the primary intent behind these variances appears to be the developer's desire to maximize the number of units on the site. While economic feasibility is an important consideration, it should not come at the expense of public safety, responsible planning and negative impacts to my property and the other neighboring properties. A slightly reduced density—achievable without variances—would at least reduce the negative impacts.

### **2. Safety Concerns Related to Traffic and School Transportation**

**(Standard: "The proposed variance will not substantially increase the congestion of the public street.")**

One of my most significant concerns is the effect that increased density will have on traffic safety, particularly along Three Notch Road (MD Route 235) and the intersection with Route 4. These roads are already heavily traveled, and increasing the number of townhomes beyond what the site can reasonably support will contribute to further congestion and safety risks.

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Additionally, the increased traffic flow, from the proposed access point, could present hazards for children boarding and exiting school buses. The current infrastructure does not provide sufficient merging lanes for safe and efficient school transportation access. A redesign of the project—without the variance—would mean fewer townhomes could be built, leading to reduced traffic volume, improved parking conditions, and slightly safer access for school buses and emergency vehicles.

### **3. The Challenges of This Site Are Self-Created by the Townhouse Maximum Capacity Design**

**(Standard: “The alleged difficulty has not been created by the property owner.”)**

A variance should only be granted when the alleged difficulty is not self-created by the property owner. In this case, it appears to be the result of the developer’s desire to maximize density beyond what the site can accommodate under the current zoning regulations.

### **4. Potential Negative Impact on Adjacent Properties**

**(Standard: “The variance will not be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to other property or improvements in the neighborhood.”)**

The requested variance would negatively impact neighboring properties, both now and in the future. The adjacent property on Lot 500-22 is currently vacant, but given the rapid development along Three Notch Road, it is unlikely to remain undeveloped indefinitely. If the variance is granted, the reduced buffer yard will diminish the value and potential use of surrounding properties.

Additionally, commercial developments such as the proposed car wash may be negatively affected by the loss of required buffer space. The unintended consequences of granting this variance could hinder future growth and limit the intended use of neighboring properties. Denying the variance would ensure that future development in the area remains viable and equitable.

### **5. Inconsistency with the St. Mary’s County Comprehensive Plan**

**(Reference: St. Mary’s County Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 11.3.2.A.ii.a – The recommended action for this roadway policy is to manage demands for direct access to major roads and designate Route 4 and Three Notch Road as restricted access traffic arteries.)**

The St. Mary’s County Comprehensive Plan prioritizes safe and efficient transportation infrastructure while minimizing environmental impacts. Specifically, Chapter 11.3.2.A.ii.a outlines a policy to limit direct access to major roads and designate Route 4 and Three Notch Road as restricted access traffic arteries. The proposed buffer yard variances and setback regulations

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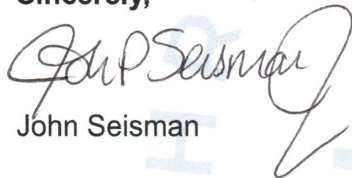
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are in place to help protect high traffic roads like Three Notch Road and Route 4, as well as, minimize impacts to adjoining properties.

I recognize the importance of development and growth, and I am not opposed to townhomes being built on this site. However, I strongly believe that a project that adheres to existing zoning requirements—without the requested variances—would better serve both the developer and the surrounding community. I believe the Board of Appeals can help ensure that this project moves forward in a way that prioritizes safety, preserves property values, and aligns with the county's planning objectives.

I appreciate your time and consideration of these concerns and trust that the Board will carefully weigh the broader impact of these variances on the community. Thank you for your commitment to responsible development in St. Mary's County.

**Sincerely,**



John Seisman

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