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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

May 29, 2024

Mr. Roman Pronczak, Manager
Whitpain Township
960 Wentz Road
Blue Bell, PA 19422

Re: MCPC #24-0097-001
Plan Name: Blue Bell Senior Residence – Active Adult Housing Development
(1 lot comprising 3.32 acres)
Situate: 953 Penllyn Blue Bell Pike (just south of Skippack Pike)
Whitpain Township

Dear Mr. Pronczak:

We have reviewed the above-referenced land development plan in accordance with Section 502 of Act 247, "The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code," as you requested on April 25, 2024. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

Blue Bell Senior Residence, LLC has requested a review for the land development of 953 Penllyn Blue Bell Pike. The land development plan consists of 3.32 acres and includes 56 income-restricted senior residences. The property is currently zoned Commercial; however, it abuts the R-3 Multifamily District, enabling the development of apartments on this parcel.

Multiple waivers were requested, including:

- A waiver from Sec. 129.20.F.(2) – Requiring that site grading or site disturbances shall not occur within a five feet of the parcel boundary line.
- A waiver from Sec. 129-20.F.(3) – Requiring the ground to slope away from all buildings at a minimum grade of ¼ vertical to 12 horizontal for a minimum distance of 10 feet.
- A waiver from Sec. 129.21.C. – Requiring a minimum storm pipe diameter of 18 inches.
- A waiver from Sec. 129.58.C.(1) – Requiring that the plan will set forth the location, names and widths of streets and alleys, including existing streets and those shown on the Whitpain Township Street Map; the location and names of railroads; the location of property lines and the names of owners; the names of all subdivisions and land developments immediately adjacent and the names of owners of adjacent acreage; and the location of watercourses, sanitary sewers, storm drains, and similar features within 400 feet of any part of the land to be subdivided or developed.

- A waiver from Ec. 129-57 – Requiring preliminary and final plans for all subdivision and land developments within the township.

The Whitpain Township Zoning Hearing Board granted the following variances on October 19, 2023:

- A variance from Sec. 160-41.B.6 to permit 19 dwelling units per developable acre, where a maximum permitted density of 8 dwelling units per developable acre is required; for a two-story fifty six (56) unit, age-qualified, income qualified, independent senior living, multi-family residential project.
- A variance form Sec. 160-192.A. to permit 38 off-street parking spaces where 140 off-street parking spaces are required.
- A variance from Sec. 160-124 to permit a reinforced-turf emergency access along the western property boundary in lieu of a permanent screen and buffer plantings.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

Montgomery County's 2015 Comprehensive Plan, *Montco 2040: A Shared Vision* is structured around the implementation of themes and goals. Developing age and income-restricted multifamily units on this site aligns with the "Sustainable Places" theme, particularly the goal of supporting housing choices and opportunities to meet the needs of all people. It also aligns with the county's initiative, *Homes for All: A Plan for Montgomery County.* The property is within a Designated Growth Area. The development aligns with Whitpain Township's Comprehensive Plan goal of promoting multi-family housing and mixed uses in and around the township's villages.

RECOMMENDATION

The Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) generally supports the applicant's proposal, however, in the course of our review we have identified the following issues that the applicant and Whitpain Township may wish to consider prior to final approval. Our comments are as follows:

REVIEW COMMENTS

SITE DESIGN

Transportation

As the applicant will be altering the driveway off of PA-73 (Skippack Pike), the applicant must obtain a Highway Occupancy Permit (HOP). The applicant should coordinate with PennDOT to obtain this and adhere to their policies and procedures.

Pedestrian Access

According to the site plan, there is a proposed access easement in the rear of the property that appears to connect to the Wissahickon Valley Public Library. While the easement is for emergency vehicles, it is recommended that the applicant include a pedestrian connection for residents to access the library and adjacent amenities on foot.

Community Context

It is recommended that the applicant incorporate a plaza or other type of outdoor gathering place on the site to provide space for residents to engage and interact with each other.

CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC generally supports the applicant's proposal but we believe that our suggested revisions will better achieve the Whitpain Township planning objectives for residential development. We also wish to commend the applicant for addressing affordable housing needs outlined in Montgomery County's Homes for All initiative.

Please note that the review comments and recommendations contained in this report are advisory to the municipality and final disposition for the approval of any proposal will be made by the municipality.

Should the governing body approve a final plat of this proposal, the applicant must present the plan to our office for seal and signature prior to recording with the Recorder of Deeds office. A paper copy bearing the municipal seal and signature of approval must be supplied for our files.

Please print the assigned MCPC #24-0097-001 on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,

David Greenberg, Senior County Planner
(610)278-3741 – david.greenberg@montgomerycountypa.gov

c: Blue Bell Senior Residences, LLC
Kenneth Corti, Township Planning Commission
James Blanche, Township Engineer
Michael P. Clarke, Esq., Township Solicitor

Attachment A: Aerial Image of Site
Attachment B: Reduced Copy of Applicant's Proposed Site Plan

ATTACHMENT A



ATTACHMENT B

