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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

May 23, 2024

Mr. Geoffrey Grace, Director of Planning and Zoning
Upper Providence Township
P.O. Box 406
Oaks, Pennsylvania 19456

RE: MCPC #24-0099-001
Plan Name: Parkhouse Residential Cluster Community Zoning Ordinance Amendment
Upper Providence Township

Dear Mr. Grace:

We have reviewed the above-referenced zoning ordinance text revisions in accordance with Section 609 of Act 247, "The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code," as you requested on April 29, 2024. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, (Equitable) NVR Inc., proposes to amend the code of the Township of Upper Providence at Part II [General Legislation], Chapter 300 [Zoning], by amending and restating Article XVII [OSRS-2 Open Space Residential Community-2] to revise regulations for the development of an Open Space Residential Community.

The applicant, (Equitable) NVR Inc., proposes to build 19 single-family homes, 76 stacked townhomes, 366 townhomes, 153 active adult carriage homes, or a total of 614 residences, with public water and sewer on a 185.69-acre property located in the Open Space Conservation District with an Institutional (IN) overlay between Old State and Black Rock Roads. This lot is bounded by Black Rock Road, Dreibelbis Road, 2nd Avenue, Old State Road, Yeager Road and South Trappe Road.

The Parkhouse Nursing and Rehabilitation Center and adjoining property, which includes the current Schuylkill Valley Park, was a Montgomery County-owned facility for the care of the poor and indigent from 1808 until March 2014. On March 6, 2014, Mid-Atlantic Healthcare purchased 306.962 acres, which included the land the Schuylkill Valley Park sits on (which was condemned for buyback immediately after the sale), and the 185.69 acres proposed for this development.

RECOMMENDATION/COMMENTS

While this property has previously served as open space, its current zoning allows for institutional development. As such, the Montgomery County Planning Commission generally supports the applicant's proposal, but we believe that our suggested revisions will better achieve the planning objectives Upper Providence Township has for residential development. We make the following recommendations that we strongly suggest the applicant and township consider prior to approval of this zoning text amendment.

1. In the zoning text section §300-312.C below we recommend the addition of "Twins" in the AREA & BULK STANDARDS chart since it is missing from this chart and is addressed under GENERAL PROVISIONS:

§ 300-312 Development regulations; Area and Bulk Standards.

A. Density. The maximum density for development pursuant to this Article shall be 5.0 units per gross acre. In computing density, the number of units shall be rounded down to the nearest whole number. The applicant's ability to develop the maximum number may be reduced as a result of the choice of dwelling types, lot sizes, physical constraints, or other factors.

B. Active adult. At least 25% of the number of dwelling units proposed shall be active adult units occupied by persons 55 years of age or older, and married couples with at least one person over the age of 55.

C. Development Regulations

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Min. Gross Tract Area: 50 Acres

Permitted Residential Uses:

Single Family Detached

Twins

Townhouses

Stacked Townhouses

Min. Primary Open Space: 25% of Tract Area

Min. Contiguous Primary Open Space:

30% of minimum Primary Open Space

Min. Perimeter Building Setbacks:

Existing Perimeter Roads: 60 feet Other Property Lines: 50 feet

Min. Parking Ratio:

2.0 Spaces per DU On-Lot
+ 0.25 Spaces Common Guest On-Street Parking
Max. Tract Wide Impervious Coverage: 60%
Max Tract Wide Building Coverage: 40%

AREA & BULK STANDARDS

	Single-Family Dwelling Front Access	**Single-Family Dwelling Rear Access**	**Townhouse Front Access**	**Townhouse Rear Access**	**Stacked Townhouse**
Min. Lot Size	5,000 SF	4,500 SF	1,600 SF	1,200 SF	1,800 SF
Min. Lot Width	50 ft	50 ft	20 ft	20 ft	22 ft
Min. Front Yard	20 ft	15 ft	20 ft	10 ft	10 ft
Min. Front Yard facing Side of Building	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	10 ft	10 ft
Min. Side Yard	5 ft	5 ft	5 ft	5 ft	5 ft
Min. Aggregate Side Yard	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft
Min. Rear Yard	20 ft	10 ft	20 ft	10 ft	10 ft
Min. Building Separations	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft	15 ft
Max. Building Height	2.5 stories 35 ft	2.5 stories 35 ft	3.5 stories 48 ft	3.5 stories 48 ft	4.0 stories 50 ft
Max. Building Length	1 DU	1 DU	6 DU	6 DU	6 Modules*
Max. Building Coverage	50%	50%	60%	60%	

*Each module equals 2 DU

2. In section §300-312.D(6) we recommend a comment that the 34-foot width may include on-street (parallel to the curb line) parking but would be exclusive of the pull-in on-street Guest Parking Bump Out Widths addressed on the Conceptual Site Plan that was submitted with the Zoning Text Amendment.

3. We recommend the addition of a requirement for separate active areas of recreation within each proposed development.

4. Since your zoning code has been recodified, we recommend that all internal references in this amendment be checked for accuracy.

5. In section § 300-309 Use regulations we recommend changing the text by adding the word “useable” as indicated: “An open space residential community shall be construed to mean a planned development consisting of single-family and mixed-density single-family attached residential use(s) combined with the preservation of extensive areas of *useable*

open space and/or parkland, along with any appropriate recreational uses and uses incidental to such a development, as hereinafter provided." This changes the term "Open Space" to mean not just *required* but required and *useable,* to prohibit developers from designating only their undevelopable space as open space.

6. Upper Providence Township's median housing sale price has gone up considerably over the last several years, not unlike what MCPC has observed across the rest of Montgomery County. The township has an opportunity here, with a development of this size, to incentivize the construction of affordable units by allowing for a density bonus as part of this proposal (and other large scale residential developments). While we understand that this amended proposal provides fewer units than were initially slated for this development, this is a potential opportunity to proactively provide homes for those who otherwise struggle to afford to live in Upper Providence Township. MCPC staff would be happy to meet with township staff to discuss these ideas in more detail.

CONCLUSION

Please note that the review recommendation contained in this report is advisory to the municipality and final disposition for the approval of any zoning changes will be made by the municipality.

Should the governing body adopt this proposed zoning ordinance amendment, Section 609 of the Municipalities Planning Code requires that we be sent an official copy within 30 days.

Please print the assigned MCPC number #24-0099-001 on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,



Laureen G. Sendel-Grant
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cc: (Equitable) NVR Inc., rsettann@nvrinc.com

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