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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

August 28, 2024

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

RE: MCPC #24-0165-001
Plan Name: 1201 S. Collegeville Road Redevelopment
122 Townhomes and 148,430 SF of Retail on 29.54 acres
Situate: 1201 S. Collegeville Road at the intersection of South Collegeville Road (SR 0029) and Black Rock Road (SR4033)
Upper Providence Township

Dear Mr. Grace:

We have reviewed the above-referenced tentative subdivision/land development plan in accordance with Section 502 of Act 247, "The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code," as you requested on July 29, 2024. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, HT 1201 Collegeville, LLC proposes to demolish the current office building (Quest) and parking lots on the property and develop 122 stacked townhouses and 148,430 SF of retail space on 29.54 acres. This proposed townhome/retail development is in the recently rezoned Community and Regional Shopping Center (CRSC) District which includes a new Residential Use Group-4 (RUG-4). This is a single parcel property that will be serviced by public sewer and water.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

Montgomery County's Comprehensive Plan, *Montco 2040: A Shared Vision*, identifies this area on its Development Potential map as a Designated Growth Area – Developed Land, and on its Future Land Use map as Regional Mixed Use Center. As this request is for a 122 townhome and 148K SF retail development, the Montgomery County Planning Commission finds this project to be consistent with the goals and objectives established in the County's comprehensive plan.

Upper Providence Township's *2010 Comprehensive Plan's* Land Use Plan identifies the property to be subdivided as Office, and on their proposed land use plan as Office with townhouse as a permitted use. The Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) believes that this project is consistent with the township's current zoning.

RECOMMENDATION/COMMENTS

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

OVERALL DESIGN

1. It appears that the stacked townhomes are designed with just enough parking for residents and no additional parking for visitors, we question if this was the applicant's intent.

2. The Residential Use Group-4 criteria includes common areas and recreation facilities this not included in the design; we recommend designing these amenities into the stacked townhome plan.

3. Within the retail area there are a significant amount of parking terminal islands in the largest parking area over the underground storm water (SWM) basin. We always recommend street trees and native plantings in these endcaps but want to make sure that they are designed in such a manner that the plantings do not prohibit the proper operation of the underground SWM facility (please see our comment below in the ENVIRONMENTAL section).

4. Upon reviewing the retail parking area, we believe that, in general, the planting islands and end caps should be more evenly spaced throughout the parking area.; I As well, the parking area around the F, G, and H retail areas does not have terminal or planting islands and would benefit from their placement.

5. As there are numerous steel slope areas within this property, we recommend that the applicant landscape these areas with erosion control native plantings.

6. In our review of the utility plan we noticed that the parking islands are above many of the utilities and could preclude placement of trees in these islands. We recommend either a re-design of the sewer lines or placement of the parking islands in order to accommodate planting of trees.

TRANSPORTATION/CIRCULATION

1. Re-use of the existing entrance to this development from South Collegeville Road (SR0029) is prudent but we urge the applicant to check if the Highway Occupancy Permit (HOP) from PennDOT District 6 is still valid. The two new entrances on Black Rock Road (SR 4033) will require coordination and approval with Scott Burton, PennDOT D-6 Regional Traffic Services.

2. The Black Rock Trail is an important trail connection that runs along the Black Rock Road border of this property and eventually connects to the Schuylkill River Train to the west. We recommend that this trail be preserved and serve as a terminus or connection for internal pedestrian walkways which aren't shown on this sketch plan but should be included on the next submission of this plan.

3. There is no internal pedestrian circulation plan shown on this sketch; we recommend future versions include sidewalks and pedestrian crossings within the retail shopping and parking areas of the plan. We also recommend that more pedestrian connections be included from the townhome development to the retail areas.

4. Currently, there is no sidewalk/trail along the S. Collegeville Road border of this development. Construction of a trail along this road would go a long way to closing a gap in the existing trial network as identified in Upper Providence Township's Active Transportation Plan, "*The trail link along PA Route 29 was identified to close a gap in the existing trail network in Upper Providence and provide a multimodal connection to major destinations in the area such as the GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), Providence Town Center, and the Arcola Corporate Campus."*

5. The inclusion of a pedestrian crossing at the main entrance on South Collegeville Road would allow the workforce from the Glaxo Smith Kline office campus to access the planned food and retail establishments.

ENVIRONMENTAL

1. This plan contains a rather large underground detention basin that can deter tree placement in the planting islands and parking end caps above it. We recommend the applicant consider implementing green parking lot designs and approaches as shown in the MCPC brochure *Green Sustainable Parking Guide*.

2. The applicant has selected a large underground detention basin to mitigate stormwater runoff. All BMPs, etc., require specialized maintenance to function as designed. Please stipulate the perpetual maintenance of this underground detention basin.

3. This plan shows a proposed stormwater outfall at the rear of the retail shopping center. As the volume of the outfall will increase significantly due to the large area of impervious material being used, please ensure that the outfall does not detrimentally affect the township park bordering the property.

CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC supports the applicant's subdivision proposal. Please note that the recommendation contained in this report is advisory to the municipality and the municipality will make final disposition of the approval of any proposal.

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. Please supply a paper copy bearing the municipal seal and signature of approval for our files.

Please print the assigned MCPC number #24-0165-001 on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,



Laureen G. Sendel-Grant
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cc: AMRB Properties LLC, david@hightopdevelopment.com
Allison M. Zarro, alyson@rrhc.com
Thomas Wright, Chair, Upper Providence Planning Commission
Scott Burton, PennDOT D-6 Regional Traffic Services, scburton@pa.gov

Attachments: 1) Aerial View; 2) Sketch Plan

Aerial View – 1201 South Collegeville Road, Upper Providence Township, Montgomery County, PA



1201 South Collegeville Road
Redevelopment
MCPC#240165001

Montgomery County Planning Commission

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Aerial photography provided by Nearmap

Sketch Plan – 1201 South Collegeville Road, Upper Providence Township, Montgomery County, PA

