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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

September 12, 2024

Alison Giles, Zoning Officer & Planning Coordinator
Upper Dublin Township
801 Loch Alsh Avenue
Fort Washington, PA 19034

Re: MCPC # 20-0180-004
Plan Name: 1250 Virginia Ave
(124 dwelling units on 3.62 acres)
Situate: Virginia Drive (S) and W Office Center Drive (E)
Upper Dublin Township

Dear Ms. Giles:

We have reviewed the above-referenced subdivision and land development plan in accordance with Section 502 of Act 247, "The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code," as you requested on August 23, 2024. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, Metropolitan 4, LLC, is proposing to develop a 124-unit residential apartment building in the Fort Washington Office Park. The proposed building would be 4 stories, and the front portion of the building would be elevated out of the floodplain. There would be surface parking in the rear half of the property. The applicant was granted zoning variance to allow an apartment development without the required 10% guest parking spaces (§ 255-295.C(1)(i)[i] and § 255-135.B(14), but with the additional condition that the applicant obtain an easement from the owner of 1300 Virginia Drive to allow the use of 19 parking spaces. The property has frontage along the existing Cross County Trail, which runs parallel to Virginia Drive, and would provide gathering space that would be accessible to trail users.

The property is located within the GFW-Greater Fort Washington Zoning District and in the Floodplain Conservation Overlay District. The property is served by public water and sewer. We reviewed previous versions of this plan in letters dated October 14, 2020, February 9, 2021, and December 9, 2021.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

A. *MONTCO 2040* – The proposal is generally consistent with *MONTCO 2040: A Shared Vision*, which designates the area as "regional mixed use" future land use category. Regional Mixed Use Centers are intensely developed suburban cores with significant retail, office, and residential land uses.

B. Upper Dublin Comprehensive Plan – The proposal is generally consistent with the Upper Dublin Comprehensive Plan and the goal to promote infill development, create a diversity of housing options, and diversify the township's economy through redevelopment within the Fort Washington Office Park.

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 the applicant and township may wish to consider prior to final plan approval.

REVIEW COMMENTS

SITE DESIGN

We generally support the proposed development; however, we wish to reiterate the following comments from our previous review letter that we feel are important to the success of the development overall.

A. Building Entrance. The size of the proposed building has been reduced from previously submitted plans for the site. However, we feel that the plan overall remains dominated by vehicular circulation and the design does not support the intent of the GFW District, as illustrated by the lack of entrance on the Virginia Drive side of the building. The location and orientation of building entrances should encourage interactions between the buildings, sidewalk, and street. We recommend the applicant consider adding another entrance on the front or side of the building, or at the minimum provide better pedestrian connections from the proposed entrance to the gathering space and the Cross County Trail on Virginia Drive (see comments below).

B. Public Gathering Space. The applicant is proposing a public outdoor gathering space, as required in the GFW District (§212.35.2.H.2.). We commend the applicant for providing gathering space that is accessible to users of the Cross County Trail; however, there are no direct pedestrian connections from the building entrance to the gathering space. As stated in the Cross County Trail comment above, we recommend building a walkway connecting the building entrance to the XCT and gathering space on Virginia Drive.

C. Cross County Trail. Based on the information provided, the applicant has proposed a gathering space to be located alongside the Cross County Trail (XCT) at the intersection of Virginia Drive and W Office Center Drive, which we commend. The driveway access from Virginia Drive could disrupt the existing Cross County Trail. We recommend that the applicant ensure that the trail connection is made

correctly. Specifically, we recommend designing the sidewalk and driveway apron in such a way that is accessible and highly visible. We suggest using the same material for the sidewalk across the driveway apron and the entire length of the frontage, and to ensure that it is level for people walking or rolling. These design strategies will signal a continuation of the pedestrian area.

LANDSCAPING

A. Surface Parking Lot Landscaping. The current plan is proposing a smaller building footprint than the previously submitted proposal, but the impervious area is approximately the same as previous proposals, at nearly 74% coverage. Much of the impervious coverage is due to the surface parking lot. We commend the applicant for proposing bioretention islands as part of the parking lot stormwater management. However, due to the large amount of impervious coverage, we strongly encourage the applicant to plant additional trees in the parking lot islands in order to mitigate the heat island effect and capture stormwater (§212-35.2.C). We recommend that each of the landscaping islands contain two trees (§ 212-32.F.(4)). We recommend that the bioretention islands also have two trees, provided they are the appropriate species.

B. Replacement Trees. The township's SALDO requires that every tree eight inches or more in diameter that is removed during site improvements be replaced (§212.32.H). We recommend the applicant coordinate with the township to ensure that these replacement trees are planted as required.

CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC generally supports the applicant's proposal but we believe that our suggested revisions will better achieve Upper Dublin's planning objectives for residential development within the Fort Washington Office Park.

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 number (20-0180-004) on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,



Claire Warner, Senior Community Planner
Claire.Warner@montgomerycountypa.gov – 610-278-3755

c: The Dublin Metro LP, c/o Metropolitan Development Group, Applicant
Robert W. Gundlach, Jr., Applicant's Representative
Kurt Ferguson, Manager, Upper Dublin Township
Michael J. Cover, Chair, Upper Dublin Planning Commission
Tom Fountain, P.E., Upper Dublin Township Engineer

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

ATTACHMENTS A & B



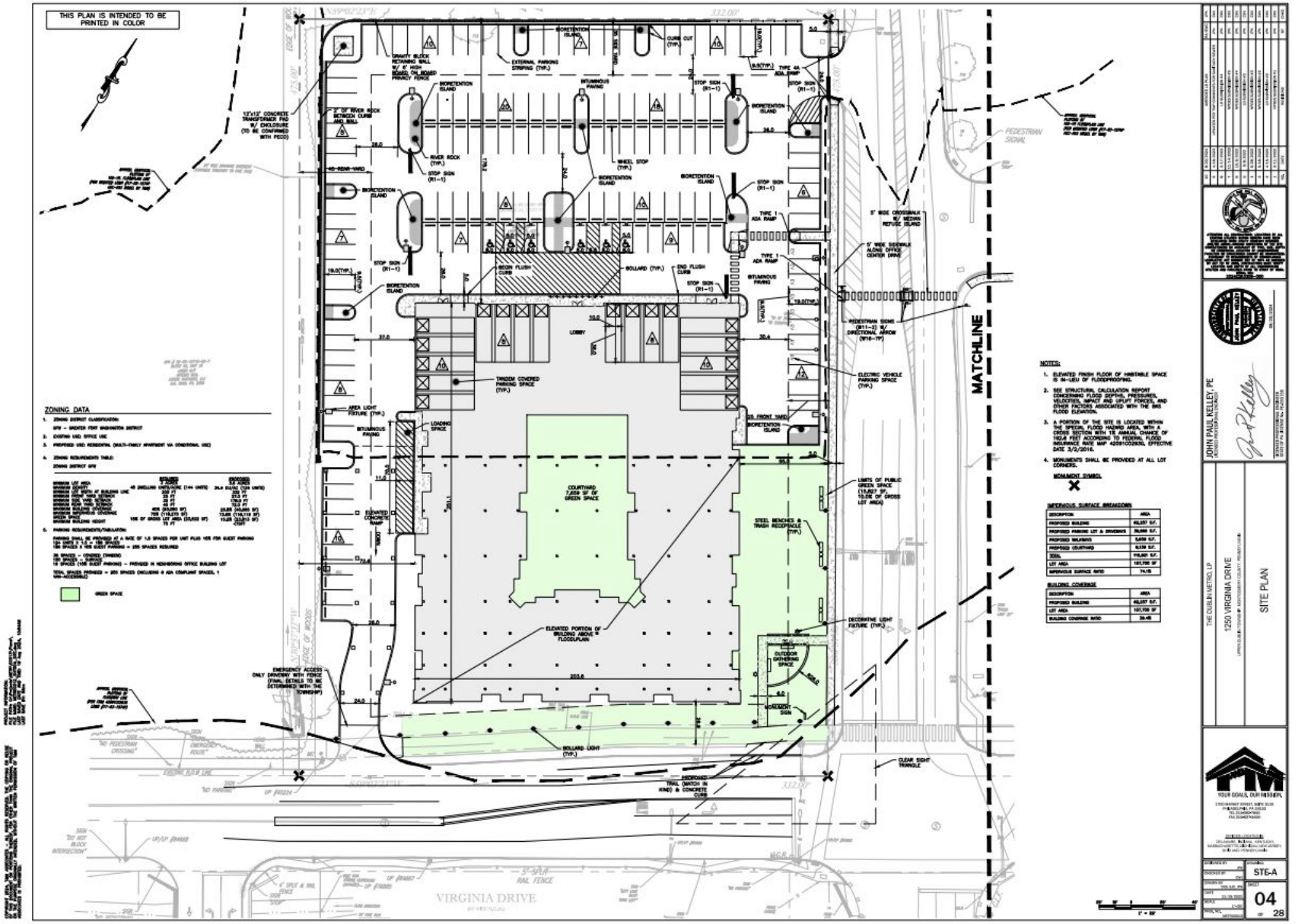
1250 Virginia Drive
MCPC#200180004

Montgomery County Planning Commission

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Montgomery County Courthouse - Planning Commission
PO Box 311 Norristown PA 19404-0311
(p) 610 278-3722 (f) 610 278-3941
www.montcopa.org/plancom
Aerial photography provided by Nearmap


THIS PLAN IS INTENDED TO BE PRINTED IN COLOR
MATCHLINE
VIRGINIA DRIVE
ZONING DATA
NOTES:
1. ELEVATED FINISH FLOOR OF HABITABLE SPACE IS IN-LIEU OF FLOODPROOFING.
2. SEE STRUCTURAL CALCULATION REPORT CONCERNING FLOOD DEPTHS, PRESSURES, VELOCITIES, IMPACT AND UPLIFT FORCES, AND OTHER FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE BIS FLOOD ELEVATION.
3. A PORTION OF THE SITE IS LOCATED WITHIN THE SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREA, WITH A CROSS SECTION WITH 1% ANNUAL CHANCE OF 192.8 FEET ACCORDING TO FEDERAL FLOOD INSURANCE RATE MAP 42091C0226G, EFFECTIVE DATE 3/2/2016.
4. MONUMENTS SHALL BE PROVIDED AT ALL LOT CORNERS.
MONUMENT SYMBOL
IMPERVIOUS SURFACE BREAKDOWN
BUILDING COVERAGE
JOHN PAUL KELLEY, PE
THE DUBLIN METRO, LP
1250 VIRGINIA DRIVE
SITE PLAN
STE-A
04
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