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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

November 1, 2024

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

RE: MCPC #24-0216-001
Plan Name: South Collegeville Road
442 Apartments on 29.1 acres
Situate: 1731, 1739, 1747, 1755, 1761, and 1765 S. Collegeville Road/SR 0029 between Hopwood Road and Perkiomen Boulevard
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 October 4, 2024. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

The applicants, Acquisition Corp. Holding GP LLC and Audubon Land Development Corp. have formed a partnership and propose to demolish the six existing residential buildings and associated out-buildings on six residential properties and develop 442 apartments on 29.1 acres. This proposed apartment development is in the Yerkes Mixed Use District (YMU) District. This property is a consolidation of six separate parcels that all front on South Collegeville Road/SR 0029. This development will have public sewer and water. Almost half of this combined property is in a flood zone through which the Donny Brook runs.

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 Suburban Residential Area. As this request is for a 442 apartment 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 shows this land in it is Proposed Land Use map from the *2010 Comprehensive Plan* as Mixed Use with Multifamily Dwellings 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:

DESIGN

1. As presented on the sketch plan, there is no sense of arrival to this property. We recommend a fontal design that recognizes the frontage on Collegeville Road that is aesthetically pleasing and welcomes its resident's home.

2. We recognize that this sketch plan is at a scale that would be hard to show what trees and other vegetation would be proposed. However, as preliminary plans are prepared we hope that the applicant will ensure that street trees will be added to create a consistent and regular streetscape.

3. MCPC recommends that all plans show both roadway right of way and ultimate right of way.

4. MCPC strongly recommends that any parking islands be included in the final design. Street trees will be needed, regardless of whether they are above underground SWM basins or not.

5. Future plans should indicate the dimensions of the proposed recreation areas.

6. Landscaping buffers must be placed on this apartment property according to §270-68D.

7. The Sketch Plan indicates 472 dwelling units yet the application states 442 dwelling units. Please confirm which is the correct number, as it will affect density and parking requirements.

8. There is a Condo Unit 1, a Condo Unit 2 and a third building which is not addressed in the Proposed Unit Mix Breakdown. Please include this third building's detail information on future plans.

9. It does not appear that the sketch includes usable, centralized open spaces where residents and their families can publicly gather. There are no amenity areas centrally located for access by all homeowners, and two pool areas for 442 apartments seems inadequate.

TRANSPORTATION

1. We believe this plan would benefit from making sidewalk and trail connections within and outside of this community. The project, as designed, is segregated into three distinctly separate sub-communities. There does not appear to be a "street network" within this development that would create a "sense of place" and facilitate ease of access for residents, visitors and EMS.

2. We recommend aligning the main entrance to the apartment complex with Perkiomen Boulevard. It is not obvious from the sketch plan whether this is already the case.

3. If the developers are widening SR 0029/Collegeville Road to four lanes along the front of this development, then we recommend the addition of a bicycle lane.

ENVIRONMENTAL

1. Concerning the numerous underground stormwater (SWM) facilities located on this sketch plan, we have the following comments/questions:

    a. Where will underground SWM release to? The rate of discharge should be managed to protect the Donny Brook from bank erosion and flooding.

    b. We recommend that the developers provide a robust inspection and maintenance plan for these underground SWM with their application.

    c. MCPC recommends the design and placement of the underground basins should not preclude use of trees in the parking lot.

2. We notice that Condo Unit 2 is built right to the edge of the flood plain and given the increased frequency of higher intensity storms we are experiencing we believe the building should be set back farther from the flood plain.

3. There are parking areas in the southwest corner of the apartment community plan that encroach on the flood plain that will require a variance, as referenced in §300-109.Q.

4. There is no Open Space on this sketch plan. When considering Open Space for future plans, please adhere to the requirements listed in Article V Open Space and Recreational Facilities.

5. Regarding the Dog Park shown on the sketch plan, the MCPC recommends a landscape buffer between the park and the adjacent flood plain to prohibit possible contamination from animal waste and to maintain water quality.

6. We highly recommend that the developer provide a conservation easement for the area that is flood plain.

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

1. For reasons of mobility, people will want to walk between apartment communities and should be able to do so without having to drive. There should be an internal sidewalk and trail network to accommodate and promote connectivity and mobility. A pedestrian crosswalk at the main entrance should align with Perkiomen Boulevard, as it will facilitate connection to the Perkiomen Trail at the end of Perkiomen Boulevard.

2. We recommend a minimum 5' wide sidewalk or 10' wide trail along the front of the property along South Collegeville Road.

3. The path from the Dog Park should connect to all apartment buildings in order to facilitate its use.

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 #24-0216-001 on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,

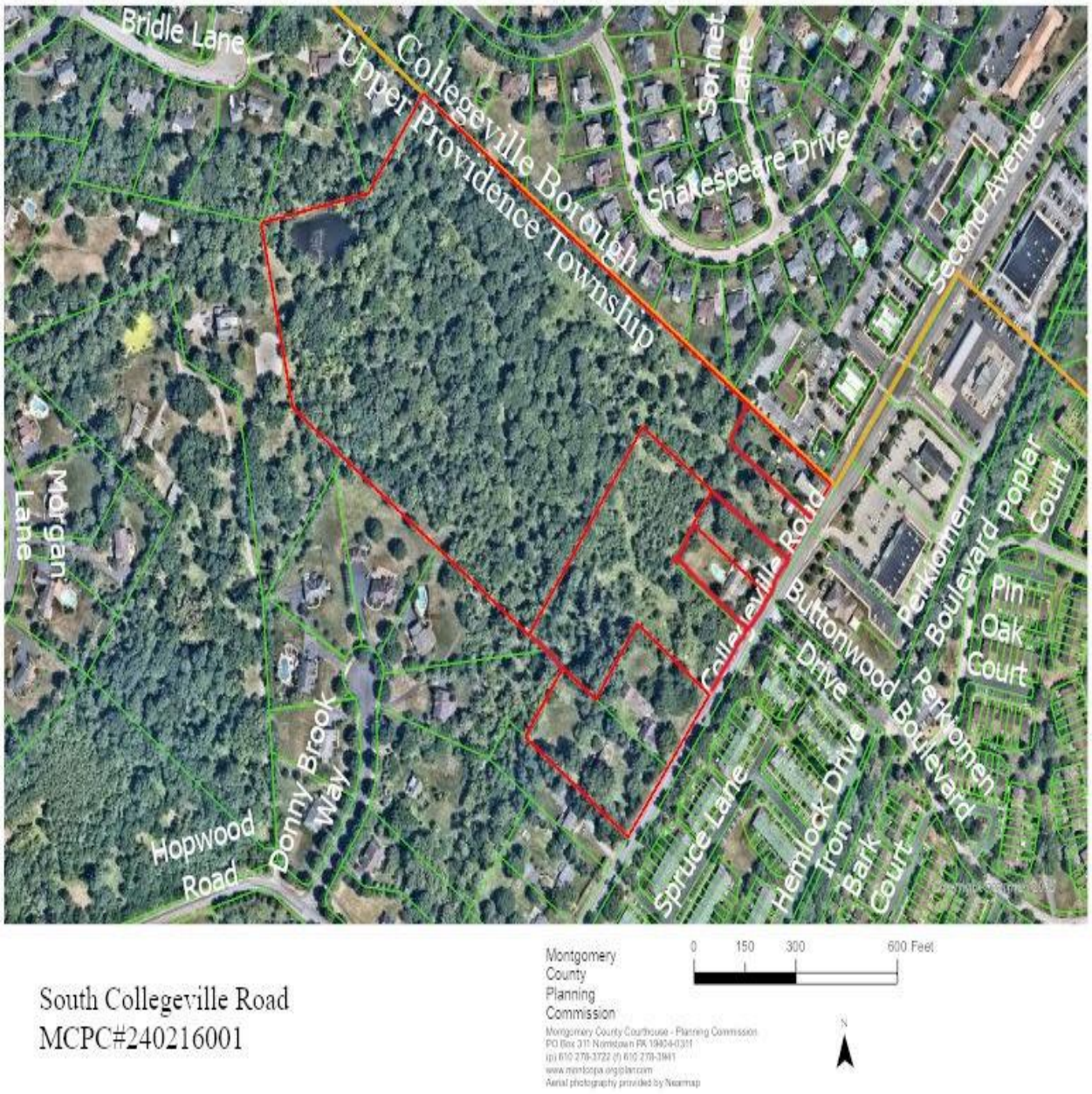


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Thomas Wright, Chair, Upper Providence Planning Commission
Scott Burton, PennDOT D-6 Regional Traffic Services, scburton@pa.gov

Attachments: 1) Aerial View; 2) Sketch Plan



Aerial View – 1731, 1739, 1747, 1755, 1761 and 1765 S. Collegeville Road, Upper Providence Township, Montgomery County, PA

Sketch Plan – 140 Whitaker Avenue, Upper Providence Township, Montgomery County, PA

