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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

January 27, 2024

Mr. Jamie Gwynn, Township Manager
New Hanover Township
2943 North Charlotte Street
Gilbertsville, Pennsylvania 19525

Re: MCPC #17-0177-006
Plan Name: Laurel Field
Subdivision and Land Development Plan
(32.99 Acres)
New Hanover Township

Dear Mr. Gwynn:

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

BACKGROUND

Artisan Land Company, the applicant, has submitted a preliminary subdivision and land development plan for development of 32.99 acres to be subdivided into 44 lots, each containing a single family detached home. The existing property, according to the county assessor, contains an open field. When the applicant initially applied, the parcel was in R-25 District. Water and sewage serve the site. The applicant has submitted a preliminary plan dated December 9th, 2024.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

The plan is consistent with *MONTCO 2040: A Shared Vision,* the comprehensive plan for Montgomery County. The site is located within the "Suburban Residential Area" on the future land use map. This area features single family detached homes with density declining as one approaches rural resource area and environmentally-sensitive land. This application is consistent with this plan.

This plan is consistent with the *Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Comprehensive Plan 2015*. The development site is located within the "Secondary Growth Area." The area calls for residential

development that is built in context within the surrounding communities and adjacent land uses. This conditional use is consistent with this plan.

The plan is consistent with *New Hanover Township Comprehensive Plan 2040*. The site falls within the "Suburban Residential" future land use area. The Suburban Residential future land use encourages residential development on parcels of one acre or smaller featuring mostly single family detached homes. This application is consistent with this plan.

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 township may wish to consider prior to final plan approval. Our comments are as follows:

REVIEW COMMENTS

OPEN SPACE

A. Encroachment

1. The county encourages the applicant to provide landscaping along property boundaries to the homes to identify the open space and the homeowner's property.

B. Front Yards

1. The county encourages New Hanover to assess its front yard setbacks for future development. Within the R-25 zoning district, the front yard setback is 40'. This existing regulation may limit the amount of both private and community open space that can be developed. Reducing the front yard allows developers to create larger back yards and private open spaces for residents. It also allows developers to be flexible in providing communal open spaces and pedestrian pathways through developments. This can also reduce the impervious surface, as it may reduce the length of the driveways.

LANDSCAPING

A. Street Trees

1. Eastern Redbud and Flowering Dogwood are not normally selected as street trees as they cannot be limbed up to 7'. This may cause a few issues in terms of vehicles accessing on-street parking and sightlines. The county encourages the applicant to

verify that these plantings do not interfere with the visibility of anyone using the public right-of-way.

TRANSPORTATION

A. Sightlines

1. Several homes along the curve may have issues seeing oncoming traffic while pulling out of their driveways due to parked cars and landscaping. The county encourages the applicant to verify parking and landscaping along the curve to leave enough time for drivers to react.

B. Pedestrians

1. There are no ADA ramps at any of the intersections within the development, making all or some sidewalks inaccessible to those who cannot step up onto a curb. § 22-828.2.K of the code of ordinances states:

   … all sidewalks and/or shared-use paths shall provide for adequate and reasonable access for the safe and convenient movement of physically handicapped persons…

   The county encourages the applicant to install curb ramps at the development's intersection to facilitate the pedestrian transportation of all potential residents.

C. Trails

1. It should be noted on Attachment A in this letter that there are noticeable paths that have been created by community members walking the perimeters of this parcel. While a sidewalk will provide some level of connectivity to between two neighborhoods, we encourage the applicant to explore creating stub shared-use paths for future connections with neighboring subdivisions. Should the township or adjacent property owner(s) ever deem it in their interest to connect to Laurel Field, a stub would make that process easier.

CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC generally supports the applicant's proposal, but we believe that our recommendations will better adhere to the long-term planning of the region. It features several good aspects of effective subdivision planning including robust curb extensions and side-loading garages.

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 (#17-0177-006) on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,



Timothy P. Staub, Senior Community Planner
Timothy.Staub@montgomerycountypa.gov – 610-278-3751

c: Dan Gray, Township Engineer
Patrick McKenna, Township Solicitor
Sandy Koza, Township Traffic Engineer
Jessica Buck, District Manager, MCCD
Russell Oister, Planning Commission Chair
Susan Smith, Planning Commission Vice Chair
Michael Crotty, Planning & Zoning Solicitor
Artisan Land Company, Applicant
Joan London, Esq, Applicant's Representative

Attachment A: Aerial Image of Site
Attachment B: Reduced Copy of Plan

ATTACHMENT A



Laurel Field
MCPC#170177006

Montgomery County Planning Commission

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Aerial photography provided by Nearmap

ATTACHMENT B

