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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

May 15, 2025

Ms. Jamie Worman, Assistant Township Manager
Lower Gwynedd Township
1130 North Bethlehem Pike
Post Office Box 625
Spring House, Pennsylvania 19477

Re: MCPC # 25-0087-001
Plan Name: 900 N. Bethlehem Pike
(1 lot comprising 2 acres)
Situate: Bethlehem Pike (cross street: Penllyn Pike)
Lower Gwynedd Township

Dear Ms. Worman:

We have reviewed the above-referenced land development in accordance with Section 502 of Act 247, "The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code," as you requested on April 25, 2025. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, Kefelonia Partners, is proposing an addition to an existing building to be used for a daycare facility. The existing one-story building has an approximately 8,544-square-foot footprint; the proposed building addition would be 3,600 square feet. The parking lot would be expanded in the rear of the property, impacting the existing tree line. The parking lot in the front portion of the property along Bethlehem Pike would remain mostly unchanged, with the exception of three existing parking spaces which would be removed and replaced with a green space and street trees. The proposal also includes a raised outdoor play area. A concrete walkway, which currently exists along the front façade of the building, would be continued along the side and rear of the building and the outdoor play area. The proposed development would result in a net decrease in impervious coverage of 916 square feet. The property is located in the underlying D Business District (Chapter 1280) and the Lower Pike Overlay District (Chapter 1271).

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

The proposal is generally consistent with the county's comprehensive plan*, Montco 2040: A Shared Vision,* which shows the proposed area as located in the "Community Mixed Use" future land use areas, indicating that it would be an appropriate location for a mixed-use, transitional development. Community Mixed Use

areas are designed to serve as local destinations for retail and services. The proposed development is located within the Bethlehem Pike Focus Area study area of the Lower Gwynedd Comprehensive Plan, which is currently in draft form.

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

LANDSCAPING

A. Waivers. The applicant is requesting several waivers from the township's landscaping requirements in the subdivision and land development ordinance (SALDO), claiming in some cases existing non-conformities. We recommend that the township consider the waivers that are being requested and the aesthetic impact that they would have on the Bethlehem Pike corridor.

1. *Shade Trees*. We encourage the township and the applicant to consider the proposed land development as an opportunity to reinvigorate the properties along Bethlehem Pike and we recommend that landscaping be conformed to with the greatest extent possible. The applicant is proposing to plant three street trees and four shade trees but is requesting a waiver to provide fewer shade trees than is required for the site interior (§ 1230.42(f)(2)) and parking lot landscaping requirements (§ 1230.41(g) and § 1230.42(f)(3)).

    a. We recommend the applicant plant trees in the existing parking lot islands in the front of the property. The existing parking lot appears to have planting islands with grass and small shrubs that appear to have enough space to plant trees.

    b. We recommend the applicant plant shade trees around the outdoor play area to protect people using the space from the sun and heat.

2. *Replacement Trees.* The applicant is proposing to remove existing trees at the rear of the property and is requesting a waiver from the SALDO Section 1230.41(i) to not plant the required replacement trees. The Site Landscaping Design and Lighting Plan provided does not appear to indicate specific specimens to be removed. Based on notes provided on the landscaping plan, most of the trees and shrubs proposed to be removed are in poor condition and one 12-inch-caliper tree would be required to be replaced. We recommend the applicant consider locations on the site for replacement trees.

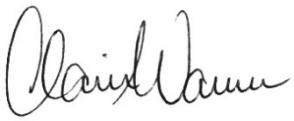
CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC generally supports the applicant's proposal but we believe that our suggested revisions will better achieve Lower Gwynedd's planning objectives for commercial development on Bethlehem Pike.

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 (25-0087-001) on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,



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

c: Woodrow & Associates, Applicant's Representative
Mimi Gleason, Township Manager
Craig Melograno, Chairman, Planning Commission

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

ATTACHMENTS A & B



900 North Bethlehem Pike
MCPC#250087001

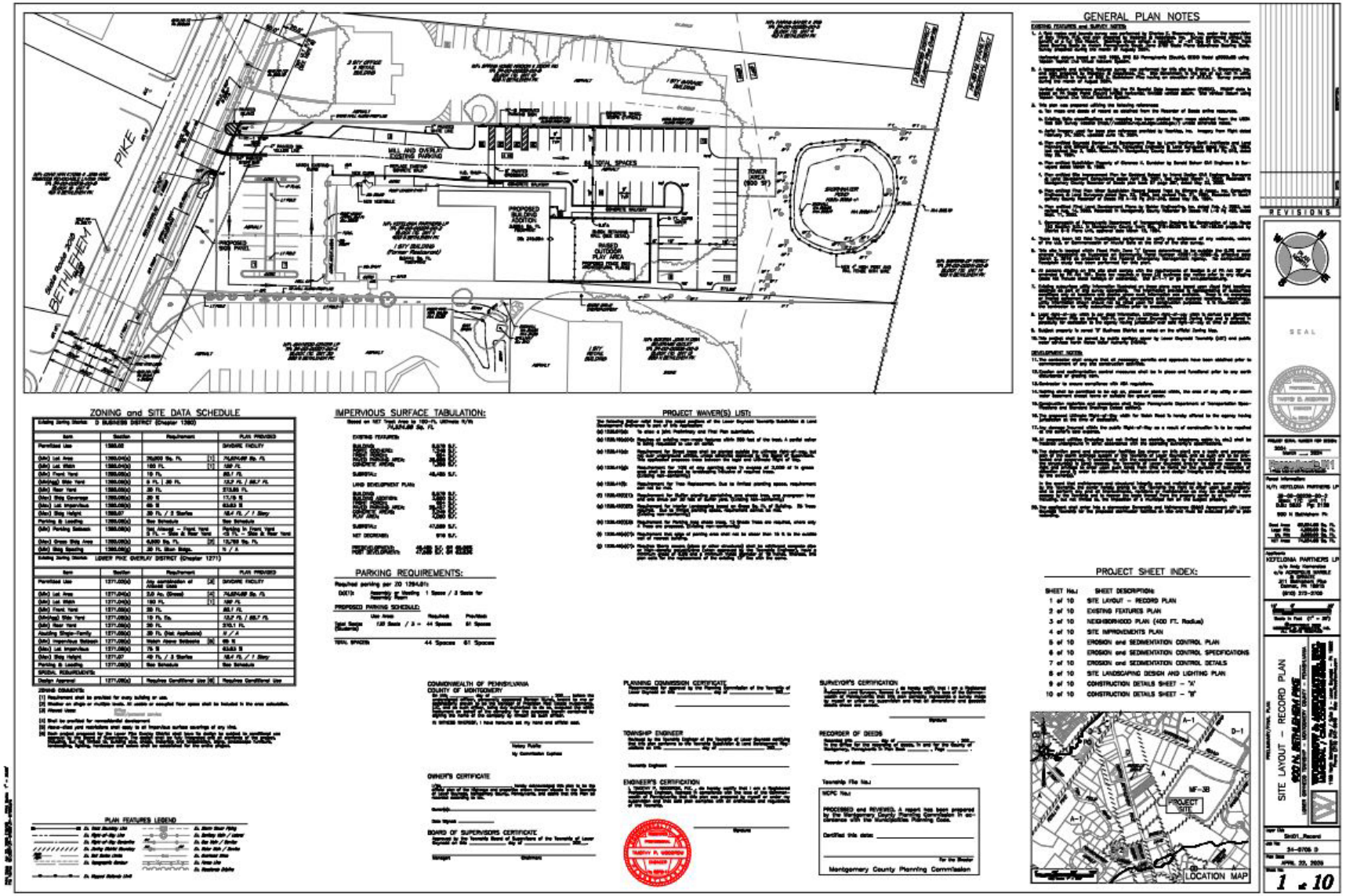
Montgomery County Planning Commission

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Aerial photography provided by Nearmap


PIKE
BETHLEHEM
MILL AND OVERLAY EXISTING PARKING
PROPOSED BUILDING ADDITION
RAISED OUTDOOR PLAY AREA
TOWER AREA (600' ±)
GENERAL PLAN NOTES
ZONING and SITE DATA SCHEDULE
IMPERVIOUS SURFACE TABULATION:
PARKING REQUIREMENTS:
PROJECT WAIVER(S) LIST:
PROJECT SHEET INDEX:
PLAN FEATURES LEGEND
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
COUNTY OF MONTGOMERY
OWNER'S CERTIFICATE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS CERTIFICATE
PLANNING COMMISSION CERTIFICATE
TOWNSHIP ENGINEER
ENGINEER'S CERTIFICATION
SURVEYOR'S CERTIFICATION
RECORDER OF DEEDS
PROJECT SITE
LOCATION MAP
REVISIONS
SEAL
SITE LAYOUT – RECORD PLAN
922 N. BETHLEHEM PIKE
1 of 10