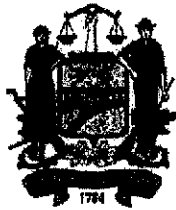


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BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

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**MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION**

MONTGOMERY COUNTY COURTHOUSE • PO Box 311
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JODY L. HOLTON, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

April 1, 2019

Mr. Geoffrey Grace, AICP, Director of Planning & Zoning
Upper Providence Township
1286 Black Rock Road, Post Office Box 406
Oaks, Pennsylvania 19456

Re: MCPC # 15-0106-002
Plan Name: 1701 Main Street
100 units on 23.09 acres
Situates: Main Street
Upper Providence Township

Dear Mr. Grace:

We have reviewed the above-referenced zoning map amendment in accordance with Section 609 of Act 247, "The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code," as you requested on March 8, 2019. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

The MCPC has received for review a proposal, which pertains to planned improvements on a 23.09-acre, NC Neighborhood-Convenience Commercial District tract of land (County Parcel ID 61 00 03454 00 4) located on Main Street, west of Greenwood Avenue. Pulte Homes, the applicant, seeks permission to rezone the subject property from NC Neighborhood-Convenience Commercial to R-3 Residential.

Accompanying this submission is a conceptual sketch plan prepared by representatives of the applicant, depicting the planned construction of 100 single family attached units on the site. In addition, the plan delineates a 10.55-acre lot, which would be reserved as municipal open space.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

This proposed zoning map amendment is generally consistent with goals and objectives established in the County Comprehensive Plan, *Montco 2040: A Shared Vision*.

The map amendment is also consistent with the Land Use Vision Element of the Montco 2040 Plan. Per our Future Land Use Plan, the subject tract is situated in an area categorized as *Suburban Residential*. The primary uses in such a Suburban Residential Area may include single-family detached homes, single family attached homes and less dense multifamily as well as institutional uses. It is written in our Comprehensive Plan that "denser and more compact development should occur in Suburban Residential Areas that are adjacent to centers with significant non-residential development"; moreover, "residential development should match the character and type of housing found in the immediate neighborhood".



Accordingly, townhouse development can be appropriate on tracts adjacent to the NC Neighborhood-Convenience Commercial District insofar as such development can provide a transition to lower density residential uses as well as complement existing commercial development along the Ridge Pike/Main Street corridor.

TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The proposed zoning map amendment is partially consistent with goals and objectives established in the Upper Providence Township Comprehensive Plan Update.

According to the Land Use Plan component of the Comprehensive Plan, the applicant's property lies within an area of the municipality which is demarcated as *mixed use*. It is stated in the Plan that "the mixed use area along Ridge Pike should complement the existing uses there while not infringing on the existing residential uses behind them". Furthermore, "the uses in this area should therefore continue to be a mix primarily of commercial uses along with some transitional residential uses".

The properties which lie north of the subject tract are zoned OSC Open Space Conservation and R-1 Residential-Agricultural. Abutting lands to the east are zoned R-2 Residential. NC District zoning exists to the south and a combination of OSC and NC District zoning are to the west. The Upper Providence Zoning Ordinance permits single family detached homes in the R-1 District with a minimum lot size of 1 acre. Meanwhile, the R-2 District allows "any uses permitted in the R-1 Residential-Agricultural District" with a minimum lot area of 15,000 square feet (with public sewer and water) to 30,000 square feet (with public sewer or water) to 1 acre (with no public sewer and water). We question whether the application or introduction of R-3 District zoning- permitting townhomes with a minimum lot size of 2,000 square feet and a maximum density of up to 6 dwelling units per developable acre- to this site constitutes an appropriate "transitional residential use" to these adjacent properties.

RECOMMENDATION

The Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC) can support the applicant's proposal. We recognize that the plan offers open space benefits and the addition of proposed trail facilities, which link to the municipal trail network. However, R-3 Residential District standards may require modifications to ensure that the plan, as proposed, meets the Township's goals and objectives with regards to residential development.

In the course of our review we have identified the following issues that the applicant and municipality may wish to consider.

REVIEW COMMENTS

ZONING MAP AMENDMENT

A. Zoning Options

There are 4 residential zoning districts (R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4) in Upper Providence Township. Additionally, residential uses are permitted in the IO-2 Interchange Office 2 District (RUG-2/Residential Use Group-2 Option) and the IO-3 Interchange Office 3 (RUG/Residential Use Group Option, RUG-3/Residential Use Group 3 Option). The Township also has 5 overlay districts (Mixed Residential Community, GCR, OSR, OSR 2, ARR) that include an option for residential development. Although some form of single family attached use is permitted in 7 of these 11 choices, various prerequisites, locational requirements and minimum tract size standards eliminate 6 of these 7, thus making the R-3 District the only viable option for townhouse development on this tract.

While the application of R-3 District zoning on this site appears logical, we believe that the regulations and standards governing this district as currently constructed in the Upper Providence Zoning Ordinance and

Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance may not be adequate. Issues related to density, building setbacks, building placement, massing (units permitted in one row), building orientation (entrance facing street or open space), architectural elements (e.g. porches, stoops, and/or balconies) should be included in the standards for this district to ensure quality residential development.

We believe that this map amendment should be accompanied by an appropriate zoning text amendment that addresses these matters as they relate to the applicant's plan.

B. Main Street Corridor/NC Neighborhood-Convenience Commercial District Zoning

In addition to a reassessment of R-3 Residential District requirements, the Township may also wish to examine the NC District zoning along the entire Main Street corridor from Linfield-Trappe Road to Township Line Road in light of recent development as well as this proposal.

CONCEPTUAL SKETCH PLAN

A. General Statement

Our office has examined the submitted conceptual sketch plan that has been included with this application and we commend the applicant's representatives for an attempt to create a plan featuring various elements such as open space and trails to foster a greater sense of community. However, we mention that it is unclear whether the plan can be fully realized under current requirements established in the Township Zoning Ordinance as well as Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. Thus, modifications to existing requirements may be necessary in order to meet municipal goals and objectives with regards to townhouse development in Upper Providence.

B. Building Orientation

The plan depicts a proposed mixture of both rear loaded townhomes and front loaded townhomes on the subject tract. Access to the garages of rear loaded homes shall be gained by way of an alley with a planned 20-foot wide cartway. With respect to these units, we note that the Township, in its Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance under §154-18.D.(3) stipulates that *alleys are prohibited in residential developments*. This issue should be addressed.

C. Setback Requirements

In a related issue, the plan depicts rear loaded townhome units set back from the planned alley at a distance ranging from 19 to 21 feet, approximately. While sufficient, the MCPC notes that R-3 District development regulations, which are found in §182-53 of the Zoning Ordinance do not appear to address the issue of a minimum setback of a townhouse unit from an alley. In addition, additional standards may be needed in the SALDO related to landscape standards to ensure that trees and other vegetation be provided in the areas between the units and the alley as well as between each driveway to allow privacy, greenery and shade within the alley. These matters should also be addressed.

Also, with respect to the planned Central Commons, municipal officials may wish to consider whether a minimum setback requirement is needed from this common/village green area to the townhome unit.

D. Open Space Connectivity

The plan features a proposed Central Commons, which will serve as a community focal point within this development. The MCPC believes that there should be pedestrian access to this space. It is recommended that the plan be revised to include changes to the alignment of the trail with additional pedestrian connections from proposed trail to this central green area. As proposed, it is unclear how residents may access this area.

E. Bicycle Connectivity

We mention that Main Street is a designated Priority Bike Route on our Planned Bicycle Network Map- a component of the Bike Montco Bicycle Plan for Montgomery County. Accordingly, thought should be given to how the plan could be modified to facilitate cycling within the site and link to various attractions and amenities in the surrounding vicinity.

F. Visitor Parking

The applicant's representatives have proposed a total 48 visitor spaces for a planned residential development consisting of 100 units. We advise you that a parking ratio .5 spaces per unit are considered sufficient for visitor parking in a townhouse development. However, parking stalls- placed perpendicular to the street as shown on the plan- are not permitted per the SALDO. We cite §154-19.B, which stipulates that *at no time shall angle or perpendicular parking along the curbs of local, public or private access roads or streets be permitted. Moreover, all parking lots and bays allowing any parking other than parallel shall be physically separated from the cartway by a minimum of seven feet and confined by barrier curbing.*

G. Building Massing

Townhome units on the plan are grouped in rows of 4, 5, 6 and 8 units. We acknowledge that R-3 District regulations established in §182-53.B, state that *there shall be no more than eight dwelling units in a continuous attached row;* but, the MCPC mentions that longer rows of townhome units require a greater diversity in building articulation to reduce the monotonous look of too many units attached in a row. Accordingly, we recommend that development standards in this section be revised and amended to limit the number of attached units to 6, maximum, and include further standards related to façade treatments and materials.

CONCLUSION

To summarize, our conclusions are as follows- the applicant's proposal to build a townhouse development on the subject tract is generally consistent with the Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan. The conceptual sketch plan, however, is only partially consistent with municipal objectives articulated the Township Comprehensive Plan.

Issues surrounding the appropriate density for this site, building setbacks, building placement, massing, building orientation, architectural elements and open space should be addressed in an amendment to the district regulations and development requirements of the R-3 Residential District. In addition, further amendments to the Township's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance may be needed to resolve issues surrounding rear loaded garages, alleys and visitor parking.

We can support a proposed rezoning to R-3 Residential if an ordinance is drafted to address these matters and the plan is revised accordingly.

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 adopt this proposed map amendment, Section 609 of the Municipalities Planning Code requires that we be sent an official copy within 30 days.

Sincerely,



Kevin Chavous, ASLA, SITES AP, LEED AP BD+C, LEED AP ID+C, LEED AP ND, LEED AP Homes, CNU-A, AICP CUD

Mr. Geoffrey Grace

- 5 -

April 1, 2019

Design Planner

610.278.3731 e mail kehavous@montcopa.org

c: Timothy Tieperman, Township Manager

John Kennedy, AICP, Kennedy & Associates, Applicant's Representative

Joseph Kuhls, Kuhls Law, P.L.L.C., Applicant's Representative

Attachments: Copy of conceptual sketch plan

NOTES:

NET SITE AREA: 22.09 AC ±
 EXISTING ZONING: NC DISTRICT
 PROPOSED ZONING: R-3
 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:
 TOWNHOUSES: 60
 TOWNHOUSES: 40
 TOWNHOUSES: 20-407
 TOTAL UNITS: 100 DU

Item	Quantity	Notes
1. Total Units	100	
2. Single Units	60	
3. Two Units	40	
4. Total Units	100	
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SKETCH PLAN

1701 Main Street
 WYOMING COUNTY TOWNSHIP
 WYOMING COUNTY, PA.

PULTE GROUP
 1701 Main Street
 WYOMING COUNTY, PA.

Kennedy & Associates
 1701 Main Street
 WYOMING COUNTY, PA.

