



THOMAS COMMITTA ASSOCIATES, INC.
Town Planners & Landscape Architects

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Kennett Township Officials
Smith Property Applicant Team

FROM: Thomas J. Comitta, AICP, CNU-A, RLA
Daniel B. Mallach, RLA, AICP, ASLA

DATE: May 13, 2019

SUBJECT: **REVIEW COMMENTS FOR THE SMITH PROPERTY:**
PRELIMINARY LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN DATED APRIL 30, 2019

The enclosed Review Comments pertain to the following document that we received on May 2, 2019:

- Preliminary Land Development Plan for the Smith Property, consisting of 27 sheets dated April 30, 2019, prepared by D.L. Howell & Associates, Inc.

Please call or email if there are any questions.



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Please note the Review Comments below pertaining to the document listed in the Cover Memorandum.

1. Open Space Zoning Requirements

- 1.1. The subject property is governed by the Open Space requirements of Ordinance No. 2018-282, enacted and ordained on December 19, 2018, amending the Zoning Ordinance (ZO) R-4 Residential District §240-702 Area and Bulk regulations.
- 1.2. Per §240-702.F.8 (ZO) and §240-702.F.13.c.1 (ZO), Common Open Space shall comprise at least 35% of the tract.

The Zoning Data Tabulation the Title Plan indicates 8.222 acres, or 40.99% Common Open Space.

Therefore, the Plan appears to comply with §240-702.F.8 (ZO) and 240-702.F.13.c.1 (ZO).

However, the Applicant Team should confirm whether any decks or patios at the rear of the dwellings may be constructed outside of the 2,400 square-foot footprint rectangles indicated on the Plan, and, consequently, within areas currently identified as Open Space.

(If decks or patios are not constructed by Mitchell Homes within the designated Open Space, and the newly-built community meets the Open Space minimum area requirement as proposed, HOA Documents or the like should prohibit such construction by Homeowners.)

- 1.3. The combined area of Open Space per the Open Space Legend on the Open Space Area - Pedestrian Amenity Plan totals 8.811 acres, or 43.93% Common Open Space. This figure differs from the total on the Zoning Data Tabulation the Title Plan (8.222 acres, 40.99%). This discrepancy should be resolved on a future Plan submission.
- 1.4. Per §240-702.F.13.c.2 (ZO), the minimum width of an Open Space area shall be 25 feet.

The Plan complies with §240-702.F.13.c.2 (ZO).

(Note: Most of the “Twitten” Open Space areas are 20 feet in width (i.e., in their short dimension). However, these Twitten Areas are “Gathering Spaces”, which per §240-702.F.13.c.6 (ZO) are not subject to the minimum 25-foot width requirement.)

- 1.5. Per §240-702.F.13.c.3 (ZO), not more than 75% of the Open Space area shall contain natural features.

“Natural Features” is not an Ordinance-defined term. However, they are considered to be relatively undisturbed woodlands, hedgerows, floodplains, wetlands, riparian corridors, and naturally-occurring steep slopes, consistent with the Natural Resources Protection Standards of Article XVIII of the Zoning Ordinance. Based on this understanding, and per our analysis of the existing and proposed conditions, the Plan complies with §240-702.F.13.c.3 (ZO).



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- 1.6. Per §240-702.F.13.c.4 (ZO), Class 3 Woodlands along an existing street frontage (i.e., Rosedale Road) shall be included in the Open Space area for a depth of at least 75 feet, except for street connections, utilities, stormwater management areas, internal driveways, sidewalks and paths.

The Open Space adjacent to Rosedale Road has a proposed depth of approximately 375 feet. This Open Space includes all of the Class 3 Woodlands adjacent to Rosedale Road that are identified on the Kennett Township Woodland Classification and Forest Interior Map

Therefore, the Plan complies with §240-702.F.13.c.4 (ZO).

- 1.7. Per §240-702.F.13.c.5 (ZO), impervious areas may be located within Open Space but shall not be counted toward the minimum Open Space requirements, unless these impervious areas are with Gathering Spaces (which are the proposed Twitten Areas).

Minimal impervious area is proposed within the (non-Gathering) Open Space. It includes a short Brick Paver Trail at the Bus Stop, the Bus Stop pad itself, the Mailbox Pavilion pad, and small-footprint retaining walls and concrete basin structures. Although not yet detailed, impervious coverage may also include concrete pads for the benches proposed within the non-Gathering Open Space.

If these minimal impervious areas are excluded from the Open Space area calculations, the Plan would still comply with the minimum Open Space area requirements.

- 1.8. Per §240-702.F.13.c.6 (ZO), at least two percent (2%) of the adjusted tract area shall be designated for use as Gathering Spaces that include sitting areas with shade trees and recreational uses.

The Plan includes “Twitten Areas” comprising 2.77% of the adjusted tract area that include sitting areas with shade trees, and recreational uses such as fitness and play structures.

Therefore, the Plan complies with §240-702.F.13.c.6 (ZO).

2. Open Space Area - Pedestrian Amenity Plan

- 2.1. The Open Space Area - Pedestrian Amenity Plan has been enhanced as recommended during discussions with the Applicant Team, including linking the Wood Chip Trail north of units 50-53 to the Brick Paver Trail in Twitten Area “1”, and providing a crosswalk across Internal Drive A to connect the Basin 2 Wood Chip Trail to the Brick Paver Trail in Twitten Area “2”.
- 2.2. We further recommend that the Open Space Area - Pedestrian Amenity Plan be enhanced with the addition of Piers at the entrances along Rosedale Road.

(These Piers could be item #10 on the Open Space Area - Pedestrian Amenity Plan.)



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- 2.3. On a Final Plan, the Brick Paver Trail and Natural Wood Chip Trail legend should reference Construction Details elsewhere within the Plan Set.
- 2.4. The Brick Paver Trail Detail(s) should specify:
 - 2.4.a. width dimension;
 - 2.4.b. cross-slope;
 - 2.4.c. surface/bed preparation;
 - 2.4.d. brick manufacturer;
 - 2.4.e. brick color name(s) per the manufacturer (helpful if replacement is ever necessary);
 - 2.4.f. laying "bond" pattern (e.g., herringbone, running, basketweave);
 - 2.4.g. edging;
 - 2.4.h. under-drain detailing, if necessary per adjacent grade;
 - 2.4.i. transition to concrete sidewalks; and
 - 2.4.j. installation and maintenance notes.
- 2.5. The Natural Wood Chip Trail Detail(s) should specify:
 - 2.5.a. width dimension;
 - 2.5.b. surface preparation;
 - 2.5.c. material (wood chips);
 - 2.5.d. weed barrier fabric;
 - 2.5.e. edging (to contain the wood chips and to stabilize the weed barrier fabric);
 - 2.5.f. under-drain detailing, if necessary per adjacent grade; and
 - 2.5.g. maintenance notes.
- 2.6. Sheet 24, Construction Details, includes an Asphalt Trail Detail. There are no Asphalt Trails labeled on the Plan. Therefore, perhaps this detail should be deleted and replaced with the details described in above comments 2.4 and 2.5.
- 2.7. We recommend that Benches be installed along the Wood Chip Trails around the basins.

3. Landscape Plan

- 3.1. Overall, the Landscape Plan is excellent, and compliant with most of the content requirements included in §206-519.G of the Kennett Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SLDO).
- 3.2. Per §206-519.G.1 (SLDO), the Landscape Plan shall include an analysis of the site in terms of the existing views to and from the areas that are proposed for development, existing topography and vegetation conditions, and other existing conditions that are relevant to the site.



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In order to comply with this requirement, we recommend that the Visual Resources and Site Analysis Plan be updated to include additional information pertaining to “existing views to and from the areas that are proposed for development”. The Visual Resources and Site Analysis Plan can then be cross-referenced on the Landscape Plan.

- 3.3. The Landscape Plan specifies an appropriate mix of mostly native plants that are hardy to our climate and reasonably low-maintenance, once established.
- 3.4. The Landscape Plan demonstrates compliance with the Street Tree requirements contained in §206.519.C (SLDO).
- 3.5. The Landscape Plan demonstrates compliance with the stormwater management facility landscaping requirements contained in §206-902.C.8 (SLDO).
- 3.6. The Landscape Plan appears to require further coordination with elements contained on the Open Space Area - Pedestrian Amenity Plan. Specifically:
 - 3.6.a. Wood Chip Trails are proposed around the basins. These Trails should be added to the Landscape Plan in order to ensure that the adjacent proposed trees are offset an appropriate distance so that they do not encroach into the Trail corridor as they grow.
 - 3.6.b. It appears that a tree is proposed very close to the Playground Structure, Amenity #5.
 - 3.6.c. It appears that there are trees proposed on or near the Bus Stop structure.
- 3.7. The Applicant Team should confirm whether any decks or patios may be installed at the rear of the dwellings, particularly if they would extend beyond the 2,400 square-foot rectangles on the Plan utilized to delineate these dwellings. As described in above comment 1.2, deck or patio construction may impact the calculation of the areas designated for Open Space. Such construction could also impact the planting layout for some of the dwellings, in particular dwellings 50 through 53 and 69 through 72; trees are indicated close to the rear of the rectangles outlining these dwelling footprints.
- 3.8. The Landscape Plan labels a retaining wall along the east property line as a “Proposed Trail”. This label should be deleted.

4. Perimeter Buffering

- 4.1. The Plan indicates the preservation of some of the existing deciduous vegetation along the property lines.

In addition, based on the Screening Table contained in §240-2011 (ZO), no vegetative screening or buffers are explicitly required along the property lines of new single-family detached residential uses.



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- 4.2. Notwithstanding the Screening Table in §240-2011 (ZO), the Township may, at its discretion, require suitable screening between uses that are deemed to require additional buffering and screening due to potential disruption or negative impact on the adjoining use or district.
- 4.3. Based on the existing adjacent conditions, we do not believe that additional screening is appropriate for most of the perimeter of this project. However, we recommend that additional visual buffering be considered for dwellings 27 through 30 at the southwest corner of the property, for the benefit of the R-2 District residential neighbor to the south. Specifically:
 - 4.3.a. To the rear of dwelling 27, low-maintenance evergreen tree planting at the base of the lower retaining wall, and shrub planting at the top of the upper wall, would soften views of dwelling 27 and the walls themselves.
 - 4.3.b. To the rear of dwellings 28 through 30, evergreen tree planting at the top of the slope would soften views of these dwelling.
- 4.4 The neighbor to the south may wish to comment further, in which case the above recommendations may be considered “food for thought”.

5. Long-Term Maintenance Plan

- 5.1. Per §206-519.G.8.a (SLDO), the Applicant shall submit a long-term maintenance plan for the ongoing management and maintenance of the street trees, foundation plantings, lawns and other required landscaping such as the stormwater basin landscaping.
- 5.2. The long-term maintenance plan shall establish standards of care and maintenance on an annual basis, including the following:
 - 5.2.a. Lawns: mowing, watering, fertilizing, herbicide and pesticide applications;
 - 5.2.b. Meadows: mowing and invasives plant removal; and
 - 5.3.c Trees and Shrubs: pruning, watering and fertilizing.
- 5.3 Although chemical inputs are often necessary in order to maintain our installed landscapes, we recommend that the long-term maintenance plan seek to minimize such inputs, due to the potential for unintended negative consequences. (For example, over-fertilization of lawns and flower beds with nitrogen and phosphorus can lead to the contamination of waterways, which in turn cause the algal blooms that result in high fish mortality.)

6. Permitted Tree Removal

- 6.1. §206-517.A.4 (SLDO) describes the permitted amount of woodland disturbance. The Plan does not exceed this amount. In addition, no Heritage Trees are proposed for disturbance.

Therefore, no Replacement Trees are required, and we consider the Plan to be satisfactory.



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7. Tree Protection

- 7.1. The Plan includes a good Tree Protection Detail with the Erosion Control Details on Sheet 12, and the Erosion Control Notes Sequence of Construction lists the installation of the "Tree Protection Fencing (TPF/OCF) as depicted on the Plans". Accordingly, the location of the Tree Protection Fencing should be added to the Erosion Control Plan graphic.

8. Playground Structure with Slide

- 8.1. Amenity #5 on the Open Space - Pedestrian Amenity Plan is proposed to be a Playground Structure with Slide.

The following items should be illustrated or specified on a forthcoming Plan submission:

- 8.1.a. The manufacturer and model of the Play Equipment (to ensure that it meets the applicable safety testing standards).
- 8.1.b. The Use Zone (Safety Zone) should be delineated on the Plans based on the manufacturer's specifications. For anything other than swings, the Use Zone recommended by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) is a clear area extending at least six feet (6') out from the play equipment.
- 8.1.c. The surfacing type should be specified, and its installed and maintained depth if applicable, based on the maximum fall height of the play equipment. For example, play equipment with a seven-foot (7') maximum fall height from the highest platform would require 12 inches of mulch be installed, with a long-term maintained compressed depth of nine (9) inches.
- 8.1.d. Surface edging, if necessary, to contain loose surfacing materials such as mulch.
- 8.1.e. Safety/Supervision signage with an age-appropriateness designation. This signage should be available from the manufacturer.

9. Swings

- 9.1. Amenity #7 on the Open Space - Pedestrian Amenity Plan is proposed to be Swings.

The following items should be addressed on a forthcoming Plan submission:

- 9.1.a. The manufacturer and model of the Swings (to ensure that it meets the applicable safety testing standards).
- 9.1.b. The Use Zone should be delineated on the Plans based on the manufacturer's specifications. For swings, the NRPA-recommended Use Zone is a clear area extending forward and backward for a distance of twice the height of the crossbar, and



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six feet (6') from the sides of the support "legs". For example, if the crossbar is eight feet (8') high, the Use Zone shall extend for 16 feet in front of the swings and 16 feet behind the swings. Where the swings are currently indicated on the Plan, there is not sufficient area to install the NRPA-recommended Use Zone.

9.1.c. The surfacing type should be specified, and its installed and maintained depth if applicable; the manufacturer may make recommendations. (If mulch is used for surfacing, we recommend an installed minimum depth of six inches (6"), with a four-inch (4") minimum maintained compressed depth.)

9.1.d. Surfacing edging, if necessary, to contain loose surfacing materials such.

10. Other Equipment Amenities: Climbing Rock, Monkey Bars, Pull-Up Bars, Balance Beam

10.1. Manufacturer specifications, Use Zones as may be recommended by the manufacturer, surfacing type and installed depth, and surfacing edging as necessary to contain loose materials should be specified for the Climbing Rock, Monkey Bars, Pull-Up Bars and Balance Beam.

11. Crosswalks

11.1. The Plan appears to indicate a continuation of the sidewalk surface material where it crosses Internal Drives 1, 2 and 3 (the "crossing" drives). This would be excellent.

11.2. The crosswalk should be labeled that crosses Internal Drive A, between the Twitten Area adjacent to dwelling 50 and the Basin 2 Trail, with a reference to the corresponding Detail.

There is a "Typical Crosswalk Striping Detail" on Sheet 23 that may correspond to this crosswalk across Internal Drive A. However, we recommend that the Applicant consider utilizing a brick paver crosswalk in this location in order to continue the surfacing of the Brick Paver Trail in the adjacent Twitten.

11.3. It could be appropriate to install a crosswalk at the entrance to Internal Drive A, to connect the sidewalk on the east side of this entrance to the Brick Paver Trail at the Bus Stop Gathering Area. We recommend that a crosswalk in this location also be of brick pavers.

12. Building Architecture

12.1. Mitchell Homes and Township Officials should discuss the dwelling design during the evaluation of this Preliminary Plan. Mitchell Homes should re-submit at least what was presented at the Public Hearing on December 19, 2018.

12.2. Per §240-702.F.13.b (ZO), garage doors that face an internal drive shall contain windows and/or panels, and be an earth-tone, non-white color.



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13. Retaining Wall Color/Texture Specification

- 13.1. We understand that shop drawings for the retaining walls will be generated as the Plan is refined, at later stages of design development. However, because of their visual prominence in the landscape, we recommend that the Applicant Team present Township Officials with their preferred options for the color and texture of the block.

The color and texture of the retaining wall block should be coordinated with other site features, such as the dwellings, the Bus Stop Gathering Area and Mail Pavilion.

14. Additional Plan Details

- 14.1. In addition to details discussed elsewhere in these Review Comments, a forthcoming Plan submission should also include product/construction and installation details for the following:
- 14.1.a. Mailbox Pavilion (structure construction, surfacing, mail boxes);
 - 14.1.b. Bus Stop Gathering Area (structure construction, surfacing, seating);
 - 14.1.c. Climbing Rock Feature;
 - 14.1.d. Monkey Bars;
 - 14.1.e. Pull-Up Bars;
 - 14.1.f. Gazebo; and
 - 14.1.g. Benches.

15. Off-Site Sidewalk Connections

- 15.1. A sidewalk connection along Rosedale Road could connect westward toward Legacy Fields, where there is already a sidewalk along Rosedale Road, and Kennett Square Borough.

Such a connection would be a great benefit to future residents of this tract. Therefore, we recommend that the Applicant work with the Township to provide whatever easements may be necessary along Rosedale Road to facilitate the effort to establish a continuous network of sidewalks in this area.

16. Impact Studies

- 16.1. Township Officials may require various Impact Studies, as described in §206-405 (SLDO), including for Local Traffic, Water, Sewage, and Stormwater Systems, Public Services and Facilities, Police and Fire and Rescue, Recreation, and Cost Revenue.

The Township Planning Commission will determine which, if any, of the Impact Studies are required. When required, the Applicant shall submit the Impact Studies to the Township for



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review before the Planning Commission can recommend Preliminary Approval to the Board of Supervisors.

17. Conclusion

- 17.1. Forthcoming Plan submissions should address the comments herein, and the requirements and recommendations of Township Officials and the Township Engineer.

Please call or email if there are any questions.