

## SITE PLAN REVIEW ADVISORY BOARD

### NOTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING Wednesday, November 4, 2015 PRINCETON MUNICIPAL BUILDING Meeting Room A –7:30 P.M. Princeton, New Jersey

PRESENT: Alyce Bush, Robert Cerutti, Dana Molina, Lydia Robinson, William Wolfe

ABSENT: Robert Freudenberg, Harry Cooke, Holly Nelson, Pamela Rew

ALSO PRESENT: Jack West, Municipal Engineer; Derek Bridger, Zoning Officer; Kerry A. Philip, Secretary

Secretary Philip called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. reading the Opening Statement as required by the Open Public Meetings Act, acknowledging that notice of this meeting was issued on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2014.

#### APPLICATION

- a) Princeton Land Development  
Major Site Plan with variances  
392 and 396 Mt. Lucas Road  
Block 4201, Lots 4, 5, 16 & 17  
File #P1414-137P  
MLUL Deadline: 7/13/15, extension granted to 12/10/15

Representatives for the applicant: Mark Solomon, Esq., Pepper Hamilton, LLP; Mike Sanders, Applicant; Will Obera, Delaware-Raritan Engineering.

The request by Princeton Land Development is for the preliminary/final site plan approval to construct a 36 unit residential community for seniors (35 units are clustered and one unit is freestanding).

The applicant submitted revised plans dated 9/29/15 in an attempt to eliminate the requested variances.

Mark Solomon, Esq., legal counsel for the applicant, stated that there is a long history involving this application. The Township had made a policy decision prior to 2000 to encourage age restricted senior housing and three sites were identified and this property was the prime site. In 2001 the Township enacted an ordinance to provide for senior housing and then litigation followed which was settled in 2003. The Settlement Agreement has provisions to control the intensity and impacts of the project. The conceptual plan which was a part of the Settlement Agreement involved a 28 acre parcel. The formal site plan was filed and was approved in May 2007 with conditions and then the market crashed so the project was set aside. Now there is some recovery in the market so the owners wish to proceed. The parcel is no longer in the RSC zone and the property was reduced to 23.5 acres due to the removal of lot 3. A total of 36 units are now proposed whereas 49 units were originally proposed.

Mr. Solomon stated that several new variances have been identified, one variance for patios was identified but this was not called out as a variance in the plan that was approved in 2007. Derek Bridger, Zoning Officer, stated that the patio is considered a structure. He advised that he will speak with the board attorney. Will Obera, Engineer for the Applicant, stated that the patio size will be approximately 30' x 10'.

Chair Wolfe polled the board about patios, all members agreed that patios are needed. Chair Wolfe stated that the patio space would also provide an area for the air conditioning units. Mr. Obera advised that the A/C units can be stacked between the buildings. Mr. Bridger stated that he does not have a problem with the units being on the patio, one A/C unit per townhome is the better approach over stacking the units. The Board members were not in favor of stacking the A/C units between the buildings. Mr. Obera stated that they do not have the ability provide patios for the units to the north because everything is pressed up against the property line. Mr. West confirmed that prior to Planning Board review, the Zoning Officer will speak with the Board attorney and Council attorney for an interpretation of the ordinance pertaining to patios.

The Board members recommended approval of the variances required to permit patios and AC units within the 75 foot and 35 foot setbacks for the overall property. The applicant was asked to expand the individual property dimensions for each unit to allow for these patios and AC units without variance. Chair Wolfe recommended that the maximum depth for each patio should be 15 feet, the maximum width should be 20 feet.

R. Cerutti recommended that the patio screening be slightly higher than the a/c unit. Chair Wolfe recommended that the applicant include in the patio layout the proposed location of the a/c unit, the size of the unit and the distance needed for servicing and circulation.

A. Bush recommended privacy fencing between the patios. Chair Wolfe asked the applicant to return with a detail of the privacy fencing noting that all fences should be the same depth.

R. Cerutti stated that the landscaping along the road should start at the location across from Unit #2. The applicant was asked to provide details of this.

Mr. Solomon stated that he believes the encroachment into the stream corridor had been approved administratively. Mr. Obera stated that there is a small retaining wall in that location. Mr. West advised that a 50 foot buffer from the stream is required.

Chair Wolfe suggested that the building foundation for Unit #22 be brought down to grade instead of constructing a retaining wall, so that it would appear as a basement. He also recommended steps from the basement in the rear so this unit would have a walk out basement. Mr. Sanders stated that this is a good suggestion and further study will be done.

Mr. Obera stated that they are considering moving the sanitary pump station at the end of the gravity line. The pump station will be maintained by the homeowners association. The applicant was instructed to meet with the Director of Sewer Operations (R. Hough) and the Land Use Engineer (J. West) to discuss this.

R. Cerutti recommended that the Planning Board discourage left turns in to the site from Route 206. Mr. West stated that the access road has to be wide enough for large vehicles and the design would be reviewed by the NJDOT because it is a State road.

Chair Wolfe asked if the applicant will be filing an application with the NJDEP for the road that is proposed to encroach into the water main line easement area. The applicant advised that they will be applying for a General Permit #10 which will allow them to cross over the line. Mr. West advised that this is not an easy permit to get from the NJDEP. He also stated that he has no concerns about placing the road over the water line.

Chair Wolfe suggested a change to the design of the roadway, he recommended that the road be curved instead of a series of flats for unity. It will not be a single radius but it will be close.

Chair Wolfe stated that the proposed units exceed 3000 sf and includes double height living rooms and second floor family rooms. Mr. Sanders stated that the neighbors asked them to make the units as large as possible to keep the market up. Chair Wolfe recommended that the applicant scale down the unit sizes. Mr. Sanders stated that 3 units are permitted per acre, there are 23 acres therefore 69 units are permitted. Chair Wolfe stated that he is questioning the market and the size home that seniors over 62 years of age are seeking. A. Bush noted that stairs are proposed and seniors do not typically want steps. Mr. Sanders stated that elevators are an option.

D. Molina stated that the area is sensitive and she would consider it a terrible situation if the land was disturbed for the development but nothing is constructed. Mr. Sanders stated that the units will be constructed as they are sold.

D. Molina stated that the PEC report recommends not using toxic materials during construction and the report notes that the elevations did not identify the materials proposed. Mr. Sanders handed out a rendering of the project.

Chair Wolfe stated that these are very large units and the scale will be important, it appears that 11 foot ceilings are proposed and the roof line are rather steep and imposing. He asked that the applicant consider reducing the size of the units. In addition, at the previous meeting the applicant was asked to vary the planes and this was attempted. He advised that the split garage design does not work with the roof shapes and they do not work in terms of the interior space. In addition, a 16 foot wide garage door is preferable over two eight-foot doors. Mr. Sanders stated that this will be addressed. Chair Wolfe stated that there are arched shaped windows on rectangular garage doors which appear awkward. There are also railings proposed in areas where no one can stand. He requested more harmony in the proposed materials and recommended review of the gutters and leaders. The roof drainage system will be significant because of the jiggling planes and he asked the applicant to make them beautiful.

R. Cerutti suggested making the guest parking area pervious. Mr. West stated that he is not in favor of porous pavement. D. Molina stated that the soils in this area are not pervious.

Mr. Sanders advised that boulder crushing will occur on site and that material will be reused if possible. Mr. Solomon stated that the applicant will work with the Engineering Department.

D. Molina stated that a tree survey should be provided. Mr. Obera stated that the applicant will ensure adequate tree protection is in place and a tree survey will be done.

Chair Wolfe stated the symbols being used for the existing tree species vary and should be consistent on the plans. He encouraged the applicant to provide a detailed view around a single

cluster to the Planning Board including the patio with landscaping and privacy fence. Detail should also be provided for the walkways proposed to each end unit. White trim is proposed for the windows and this is not recommended. A darker color to blend is preferred.

Based upon the foregoing, a motion was made by R. Cerutti, seconded by L. Robinson and carried by a vote of five ayes to classify this application as a major site plan, endorse the joint Engineering and Zoning Report dated October 21, 2015, the joint Engineering and Zoning Report dated 4/23/15, rev 6/19/15; Princeton Environmental Commission Report dated 4/28/15; Traffic and Transportation Report dated 5/1/15 and to recommend approval of the application with the following recommendations:

1. The main roadway should be permitted to connect to the northbound lane of Route 206. Entrance and exit would be by right turn only. Approval is required by the NJDOT. The island at the driveway entrance on Route 206 should be enlarged to effectively prohibit left turning movements. A mountable curb may be required for emergency vehicles.
2. Because patios are considered a good feature, SPRAB recommends approval of the variances required to permit patios and AC units within the 75 foot and 35 foot setbacks for the overall property. The applicant was asked to expand the individual property dimensions for each unit to allow for these patios and AC units without variance. The maximum depth for each patio should be 15 feet, the maximum width should be 20 feet.
3. The property dimensions and/or the front to side orientation of the single house (Unit #1) should be adjusted to avoid variances. SPRAB felt that the front could be considered to face Mt. Lucas, but the house should have an increased setback from the development's roadway rather than just a minimum side yard.
4. The townhouse units shown in detail appear to be over 3,000 s.f. This seems unusual for townhouses in general and inconsistent with age restricted housing (over 62). Both the municipality and the applicant should be concerned about the marketability of these townhouses. SPRAB asks the applicant to consider scaling down the unit sizes.
5. Privacy fencing should be provided for each unit. The fence should be no less than 8 feet and no more than 20 feet. Details of the privacy fencing were requested for review by the Planning Board and Land Use Engineer. The fences are also intended to screen noise from neighboring AC units and generators.
6. Dimensions and details of the air conditioning units must be provided including the distances required from the building and fence for air circulation and service.
7. A location for emergency generators for each unit should also be identified and shown in plans for future installation.
8. The applicant was asked to provide a large scale plan of at least one of the clusters for review by the Planning Board to include the patio, privacy fencing, HVAC, emergency generator, walkways, and plantings.
9. In lieu of the multiple alternating curves and straight sections of the main roadway between the unit clusters, the applicant was asked to attempt to layout this length of the road with larger and continuous curvature. This would provide a more unified character to the neighborhood and organize the setbacks of the individual units.
10. A fence is proposed along the roadway. The fence is recommended to begin 250 feet from Mt. Lucas Road and extending 480 feet. Cedar fencing, with treated wood posts are recommended at a height of 6 feet.
11. The applicant was instructed to meet with the Director of Sewer Operations (R. Hough) and the Land Use Engineer (J. West) to discuss the applicant's desire to locate a sanitary pump station at the end of the gravity line.

12. Instead of constructing a retaining wall between the end unit #22 and the wetlands transition buffer line, it was recommended that the applicant lower the grade and provide a walk out basement for Unit #22.
13. The architect should redesign the buildings to introduce some harmony of materials and proportions while retaining reasonable variety and identity of the units.
14. The elevations should identify the actual proposed façade materials. Darker earth tone colors were recommended for the façades so that they recede and blend into the woodland environment. White windows and trim should be avoided.
15. Reduce the overall height both by reducing floor to floor height and roof pitches.
16. Some variation in roof shapes should be retained, but attention should be paid to roof drainage. The current proposal doesn't adequately address gutters and leaders which may well become very prominent. It is recommended that the Land Use Engineer review the final design to make sure that it is attractive as well as maintainable.
17. Railings that serve no functional purpose should be eliminated from the facades for a less frivolous and cluttered appearance.
18. The design of the garage roofs and other low roofs do not work with the proposed elevations.
19. The arch shaped windows proposed on garage doors with rectangular openings appear awkward and uncoordinated. The applicant was asked to provide a design with better proportion.
20. The distance between the two eight foot wide garage doors will result in insufficient space between cars and walls. The space should be reduced or 16 foot wide garage doors should be considered.
21. Proposed landscaping should be in accordance to the recommendations by the Town's landscape architectural consultant Daniel Dobromilsky, CLA in his report dated 2/27/15. Landscape subcommittee review and approval is recommended.

### COMMENT

The applicant questioned the zoning officer's interpretation that a variance is needed for the patios since patios were a part of the 2001 approved plan and did not require variances for the patios. Mr. Bridger advised that he will speak with their attorney prior to Planning Board review.

W. Wolfe advised that the variety of symbols used for proposed trees on the landscape plans are inconsistent with those symbols used for the variety of existing trees.

A. Bush suggested that the applicant provide affordable housing units instead of paying a fee to the Town.

D. Molina asked that natural habitat be considered when looking at the landscaping.

With no further business before the Board, motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kerry A. Philip  
Secretary