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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

July 16, 2024

Ms. Cecile Daniel, Manager
Perkiomen Township
1 Trappe Road
Collegeville, PA 19426-1829

Re: MCPC #24-0126-001
Plan Name: Landis Tract
(30 lots/27 dwelling units comprising 50.70 acres)
Situate: Bucher Road and Smith Road
Perkiomen Township

Dear Ms. Daniel:

We have reviewed the above-referenced subdivision and land development with Section 502 of Act 247, "The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code" as you requested on May 22, 2024. We forward this letter as a report of our review and recommendations.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, Artisan Land Company, proposes to subdivide a 50.70 acre tract into 30 lots, consisting of 27 single-family detached dwellings, and 3 open space lots. The property is comprised of open space, consisting of farmland, woodlands, steep slopes and several stream valleys. The proposal is part of a larger land development, involving 13 single-family detached dwellings on 8 acres in Schwenksville Borough, and 1 single-family detached dwelling on 4 acres in Lower Frederick Township. The plans for those sections are being reviewed as part of those municipal submissions. The applicant proposes two access points off of Bucher Road (Centennial Street). The plan indicates the need for several waivers involving cartway width, cul-de-sac radius, cul-de-sac right-of-way radius, and cul-de-sac street length.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

MONTCO 2040: A Shared Vision – We find the proposed development to be generally consistent with the county comprehensive plan. The county's future land use plan identifies the proposed development site as primarily suburban residential area. These areas are residential areas which depend on automobiles for transportation and often have extensive landscaping on individual properties. These areas will have a variety of housing types, with single-family detached homes being the most prominent type.

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 comments that the applicant and township may wish to consider prior to final plan approval. Our comment is as follows:

REVIEW COMMENTS

OPEN SPACE RESIDENTIAL OVERLAY

Article XXII OSR Open Space Residential Overlay District of the township's zoning code permits properties 20 aces or larger in the R-1 District, to reduce lots sizes to 20,000 square feet and preserve 45% of the property as open space. Given the amount of existing farmland, stream valleys, steep slopes, and woodlands on the property, the applicant should consider utilizing this option. This option will permit the same number of lots demonstrated in a yield plan, will serve to protect the site's natural resources, reduce impervious surface and stormwater generation, eliminate the need for single-access streets, and provide more space to create a traditional neighborhood setting. Given the site is served by public sewer and water, this option is particularly viable.

CARTWAY WIDTH

The applicant is requesting a waiver from the required minimum cartway width of 32 feet. While it's always good to consider opportunities for reducing impervious surface, this development will be best served by some provision for on-street parking. We don't support a cartway width below 28 feet, and recommend that it be maintained at 30 feet to match what is being proposed in the Schwenksville Borough portion of the development.

CUL-DE-SAC STREENT LENGTH AND EMERGENCY ACCESS

A waiver has been requested to increase the maximum cul-de-sac length from 500 feet to 873 feet. As previously noted, use of the OSR Open Space Residential Overlay District would likely eliminate the need for any cul-de-sacs at all, and we encourage the applicant to utilize these standards to create a more conservation-minded, and neighborhood-like development. If any cul-de-sac exceeds the maximum length required by the code, it should be served by an emergency access to ensure the proper provision of fire and ambulance services.

TRAIL EASEMENT

We commend the applicant for proposing a 20 foot wide trail easement throughout the development. However, it is unclear how the easement relates to the existing steep slopes and the riparian corridor conservation district (trails are only permitted in Zone 2 of the corridor). We also recommend, as an amenity to the development and future residents, that the applicant install the trail as part of the proposed improvements. In addition, the trail should be installed prior to any home construction and sales, so that future homeowners fully understand the proximity of their home to the existing trail network. It is often more difficult to install a trail after the homes are sold and occupied, even with the existence of a trail easement.

LANDSCAPING AND TREE REPLACEMENT

As seen on the aerial in Attachment A, the site contains significant woodlands along the stream corridors and on steep slopes, as well as in the rear portion of the site, closest to North Limerick Road. Once again, use of the OSR Open Space Residential Overlay District will reduce the need for tree removal and disturbance. If the current design and resulting tree removal takes place, the applicant should ensure compliance with all street tree standards and provide as much tree replacement as possible. Tree replacement can take place on the proposed residential lots and within the proposed stormwater basins as well.

STORMWATER BASINS AND GRADING

There are a significant number of stormwater basins proposed within the development, and they will be in close proximity to existing and proposed homes. These basins offer additional buffering opportunities, and it is important that they serve as a visual amenity on the site as well. Properly landscaping the basins with trees, shrubs, and a meadow mix will help create additional habitat on the site, and complement the remaining natural areas within the development.

RIPARIAN BUFFER REQUIREMENTS

The applicant should clearly demonstrate compliance with the township's Riparian Corridor Conservation Overlay District guidelines. The intent of the district is to protect the existing stream valleys by creating a two-zone system that establishes a 75 foot stream buffer along both sides of the waterway. It is difficult to determine from the plans provided whether the proposal complies with all the standards, including: 1) expansion of zone 1 to incorporate slopes exceeding 25%; 2) the location of trails (easements) outside of zone 1; 3) the location of all stormwater basins outside of zone 1; 4) the proper design of all stream crossings to be perpendicular to the stream. We also recommend that all culverts have open bottoms to maintain stream habitat, and; 5) that all mitigation measures be properly applied, expanding the width of the corridor to balance out the proposed corridor disturbance.

BUCHER AND SMITH ROAD INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

The existing Bucher/Centennial Road and Smith Road intersection is at an oblique angle and has limited site lines, creating a difficult situation for drivers attempting to turn left onto Smith Road. Given the minimum lot size of only 2 acres in the Lower Frederick portion of the site, that single-family lot can be reduced in size to facilitate an adjustment to Bucher Road that will allow it to intersect with Smith Road at a more perpendicular angle. This should be incorporated into the development design.

CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC generally supports the applicant's proposed subdivision and land development, however, we believe the proposal is better suited for an open space residential development in order to preserve farmlands and woodlands, and conserve steep slopes and stream valleys. Should the applicant continue with the development as proposed, our remaining review comments should also be considered.

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 #24-0126-001 on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,

R. Eric Jarrell, Community Planning Manager
eric.jarrell@montgomerycountypa.gov – 610-278-3745

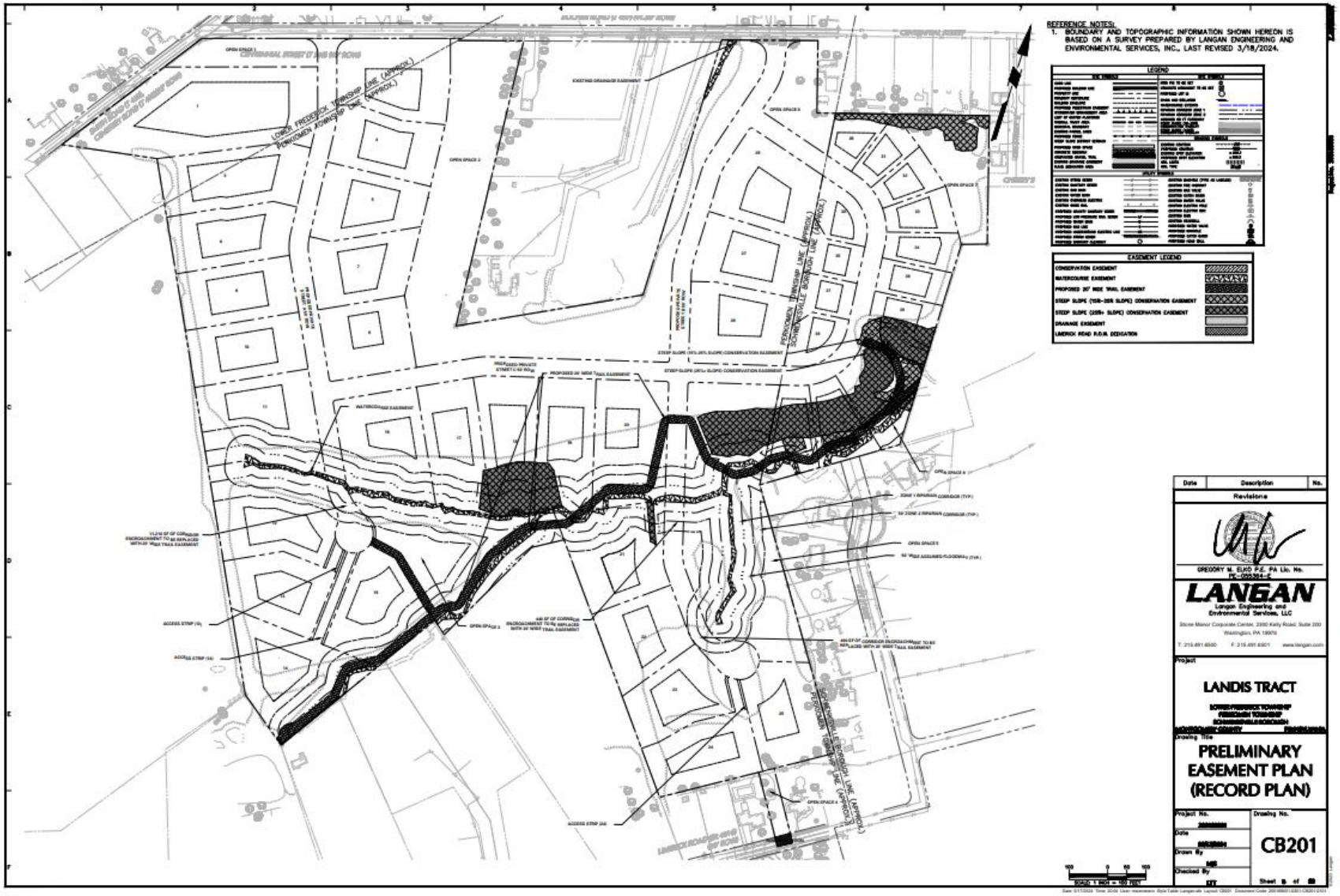
c: Artisan Land Company, Applicant
Langan Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc. Applicant's Representative
Brett Coleman, Chair, Perkiomen Township Planning Commission

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

ATTACHMENT A



Landis Tract
MCPC#240126001


REFERENCE NOTES:
1. BOUNDARY AND TOPOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SHOWN HEREON IS BASED ON A SURVEY PREPARED BY LANGAN ENGINEERING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES, INC., LAST REVISED 3/18/2024.
LEGEND
EASEMENT LEGEND
CONSERVATION EASEMENT
WATERCOURSE EASEMENT
PROPOSED 20' WIDE TRAIL EASEMENT
STEEP SLOPE (15%-25% SLOPE) CONSERVATION EASEMENT
STEEP SLOPE (25%+ SLOPE) CONSERVATION EASEMENT
DRAINAGE EASEMENT
LIMERICK ROAD R.O.W. DEDICATION
LOWER FREDERICK TOWNSHIP LINE (APPROX.)
PERKIOMEN TOWNSHIP LINE (APPROX.)
SCHWENKSVILLE BOROUGH LINE (APPROX.)
LIMERICK ROAD
Date
Description
No.
Revisions
GREGORY M. ELKO P.E. PA Lic. No. PE-090941-E
LANGAN
Langan Engineering and Environmental Services, LLC
Project
LANDIS TRACT
Drawing Title
PRELIMINARY EASEMENT PLAN (RECORD PLAN)
Project No.
Drawing No.
CB201
Date
Drawn By
MR
Checked By
KTT
Sheet 5 of 8