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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

October 21, 2024

Sara Jarrett-Eaton, Manager
Souderton Borough
31 West Summit Street
Souderton, PA 18964-1693

Re: MCPC #20-0082-004
Plan Name: Goddard School at Towne Gate Commons
1 lot comprising 11.85 acres
Situate: East Broad Street at North School Lane
Souderton Borough

Dear Ms. Jarrett-Eaton:

We have reviewed the above-referenced land development plan in accordance with Section 502 of Act 247, "The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code," as you requested on September 20, 2024. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, School Lane Development, LLC, is in the process of redeveloping the site of the former Souderton Area High School into Towne Gate Commons. Some portions of the site are built and occupied, while other portions of the site are under construction or yet to be built. The portion of the site containing this land development application is approximately 12 acres and when completed will include townhomes, mixed-use buildings, commercial space, a neighborhood park, public plaza, new internal roads, landscaping, stormwater management, and lighting. The site is located in Souderton's MUR – Mixed-use Redevelopment Zoning District.

The applicant's plan was previously approved by the borough, however, the applicant proposes to change the number of commercial buildings on site: two non-residential building on the plan (previously referred to as B1 and B2) are now proposed to be one larger building (now labeled "B1 & B2 Combined" on plan set) that will be 11,071 square feet. The number and configuration of the parking spaces near that proposed building is also proposed to change from the previously approved plan set.

The newly reconfigured building is proposed to be a Goddard School, a private preschool with multiple locations throughout the United States. The use is considered a child day-care center by the borough's zoning ordinance, which requires conditional use in this district. The applicant received that conditional use approval from Borough Council on June 3, 2024.

The parking along Souder's Way and in the lot by buildings B1 and B2 was previously approved at 38 spaces. This revised plan increases the proposed parking by 24 spaces to a total of 62 in that area. Bicycle parking is also shown near the proposed Goddard School building.

We reviewed proposals for earlier phases of this project on May 14, 2013; November 20, 2013; April 11, 2014; October 15, 2014; and August 30, 2017. We previously reviewed a sketch plan for this phase on June 25, 2018. We previously reviewed this phase on May 11, 2020 and September 25, 2020. We reviewed a previous revision to the approved plan on May 1, 2023.

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 Souderton Borough may wish to consider prior to final plan approval. Our comments are as follows:

REVIEW COMMENTS

PARKING

A. Configuration of Parking. The applicant proposes an increase in the number of parking spaces from the previously approved plan. The parking lot as now proposed has many spaces that do not meet the minimum required dimensions by the borough's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) and that are located on a slope (§403.3.C.1.). There are also 14 spaces in a row proposed along the back of the lot, which exceeds the maximum permitted number of spaces without a planting island (§420.3.G.2.). We recommend that the applicant provide the required planting island and increase the width of the parking spaces that are located on slopes.
B. Parking Lot Screening. The Borough's SALDO requires that parking lots should be screened from view of any streets (§420.1.F.4.). We recommend the applicant ensure this screening is adequately provided for the proposed parking lot.

LANDSCAPING

A. Required Buffers. The applicant is required to provide a 15-foot landscape buffer along the property boundaries adjacent to this area of the site per §420.3.F.5., with requirements to be designed for 80% canopy coverage within 10 years and 85% ground coverage within five years. It does not appear that there are enough canopy trees proposed to meet this requirement. Additionally, a 10-foot landscaped buffer is required around 50% of the perimeter of the parking lot per §420.3.F.6. It is not clear from the plan submitted that a buffer area meeting this requirement has been provided.
B. Landscaping Reductions. The applicant is space constrained in this corner of the site and may need waivers from some of the requirements. If these are discussed, we ask the applicant to consider the inclusion of as many large canopy trees as possible within the landscaping provided, especially adjacent to the parking lot to combat the urban heat island effect.

STREETSCAPE STANDARDS

A. Furniture. Streetscape furniture such as benches, trash receptacles, and planters, are required by the SALDO (§420.2.A.). The approved street furniture plan will need to be revised based on the adjusted configuration of the buildings and parking.

ARCHITECTURAL REQUIREMENTS

B. Window Area. It is not clear from the architectural designs submitted whether the facades facing the street and parking lot meet the requirement of 30% window area for the first floor. (§420.4.E.1.) We recommend the applicant supply dimensional calculations demonstrating that they are meeting this requirement.
C. Architectural Theme. The entire site should have a common, coherent architectural and signage theme throughout. (§420.4.F.1., §420.4.J.1., and §420.5.) We suggest the applicant explain how the architecture, materials, colors, and signage create a coherent design throughout Towne Gate Commons.

PLAY AREA

A. Landscaping. The applicant shows two fenced play areas to the rear of the building. No landscaping is proposed within these areas. We suggest the applicant consider some hardy trees and shrubs within the area children will have outdoor access to. In addition to the potential to provide shade for the play area, children benefit from access to nature.

CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC generally supports the applicant's proposal. 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 (*#20-0082-004*) on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,

Chloe M. Mohr, AICP, Principal Planner
Chloe.Mohr@MontgomeryCountyPA.gov, 610-278-3739

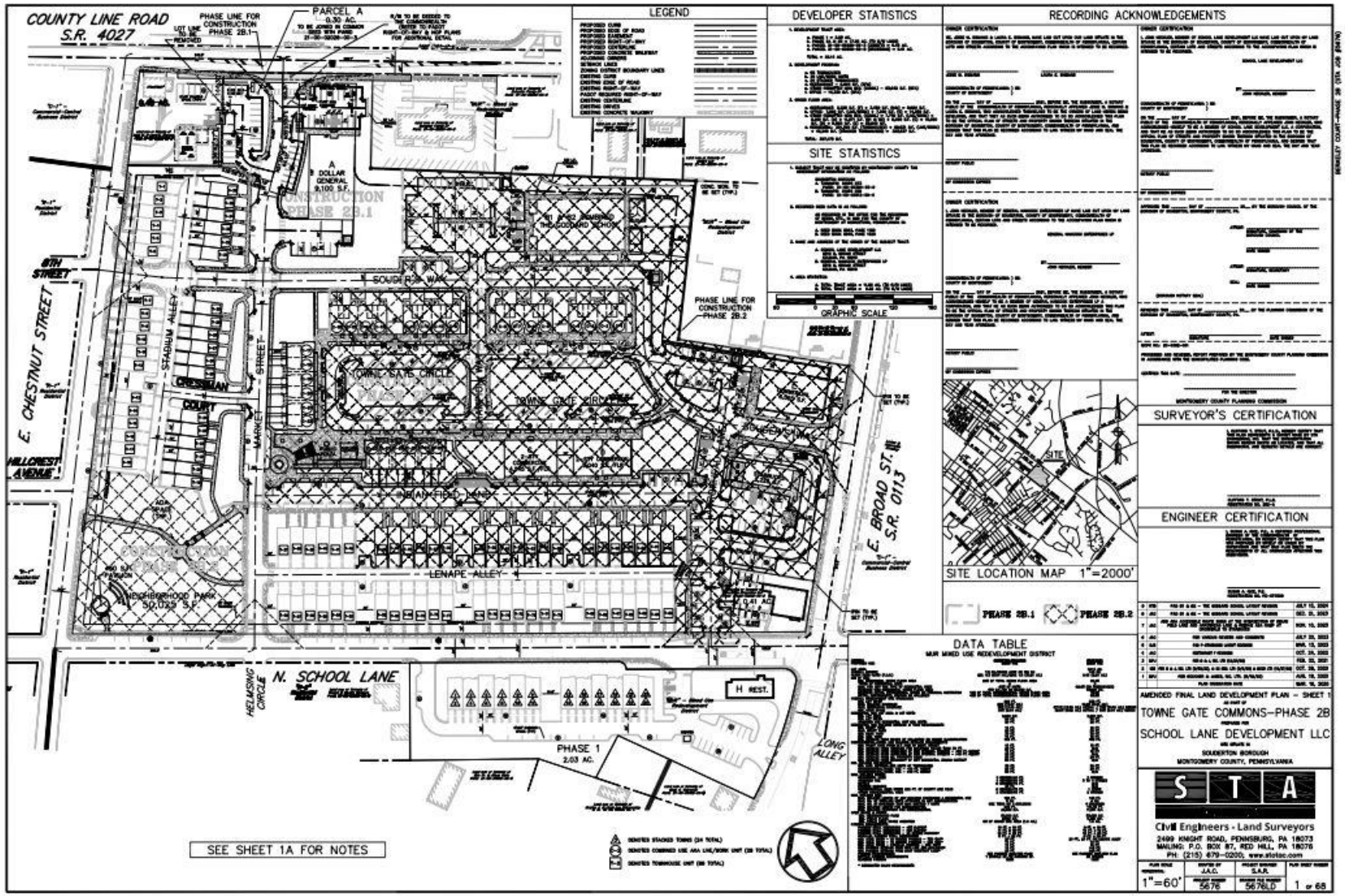
c: Brian Grant, Applicant's Representative
Susan A. Rice, P.E., Applicant's Engineer
Melissa Hutchison, P.E., Borough Engineer
Ed Huber, PLS, Chair, Borough Planning Commission
Scott Burton, PennDOT

Paul Lutz, PennDOT
Fran Hanney, P.E., PennDOT
Michael McGahee, SEPTA
Harley Cooper, SEPTA
Jessica Buck, District Manager, Montgomery County Conservation District
Matt Lubitz, Senior Community Planner, Montgomery County Planning Commission

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

ATTACHMENTS A & B




COUNTY LINE ROAD
S.R. 4027
PHASE LINE FOR CONSTRUCTION PHASE 2B.1
PARCEL A
0.30 AC.
E. CHESTNUT STREET
8TH STREET
HILLCREST AVENUE
STADIUM ALLEY
CRESSMAN COURT
MARKET STREET
TOWNE GATE CIRCLE
TOWNE GATE CIRCLE
SOUTH RUN WAY
PHASE LINE FOR CONSTRUCTION PHASE 2B.2
E. BROAD ST. (RT. 113) S.R. 0113
LENAPE ALLEY
NEIGHBORHOOD PARK 50,025 S.F.
N. SCHOOL LANE
HELMSING CIRCLE
PHASE 1 2.03 AC.
LONG ALLEY
SEE SHEET 1A FOR NOTES
LEGEND
DEVELOPER STATISTICS
SITE STATISTICS
GRAPHIC SCALE
RECORDING ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
SURVEYOR'S CERTIFICATION
ENGINEER CERTIFICATION
SITE LOCATION MAP 1"=2000'
PHASE 2B.1
PHASE 2B.2
DATA TABLE
MJR MIXED USE REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICT
AMENDED FINAL LAND DEVELOPMENT PLAN – SHEET 1
TOWNE GATE COMMONS–PHASE 2B
SCHOOL LANE DEVELOPMENT LLC
SOUDERTON BOROUGH
MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA
Civil Engineers • Land Surveyors
2499 KNIGHT ROAD, PENNSBURG, PA 18073
MAILING: P.O. BOX 87, RED HILL, PA 18076
PH: (215) 679-0200, www.stalsc.com
1"=60'
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