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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

September 30, 2024

Mr. William Walker, Township Manager
Horsham Township
1025 Horsham Road
Horsham, PA 19044

Re: MCPC #24-0192-001
Plan Name: Flex Use Facility Development
(237,512 sq. ft. commercial on approximately 17.6 acres)
Situate: Gibraltar Road (N); east of Dresher Road
Horsham Township

Dear Mr. Walker:

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 3, 2024. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, Big Rock Realty Associates, LLC, proposes to redevelop the site at 250 Gibraltar Road with two "flex use" buildings totaling 237,512 square feet. All existing structures on the site, including a three-story office building will be demolished. Vehicular access will be provided via three proposed driveways along the Gibraltar Road frontage. The driveway closest to Dresher Road is shown to be limited to right-in and right-out turns. Additional improvements shown at this time include a total of 538 surface parking spaces, stormwater management facilities including two rain gardens, landscaping, and a 5-foot wide sidewalk along the New Road and Gibraltar Road frontages of the site. The property is located in the township's Business Park District (BPD) zoning district.

According to the zoning hearing board decision for application HTZHB 23-33 dated January 13, 2024, the applicant has received the following variances from the township's zoning ordinance:

- From §230-35.A. to permit loading spaces to be 13 feet wide by 55 feet long, where a loading space size of 14 feet wide by 65 feet long is required

- From §230-259.A. to permit an impervious coverage of 68.5%, where a maximum of 65% permitted
- From §230-261.B.(2) to permit a flat roof on a one-story building, where flat roofs are only permitted on buildings of three-stories or more
- From §230-217 to change the existing nonconforming parking condition along New Road and Gibraltar Road

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

This area of Horsham Township is shown as Business Area in the Future Land Use Plan of the Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan, *Montco 2040: A Shared Vision*. Business Areas are concentrations of employment-oriented land uses, such as offices, research facilities, and industrial parks. Development within Business Areas should be designed to accommodate significant automobile and truck trips, make it easy for employees to walk to public transportation, and control the impact of potential noise, light, and pollution on nearby residences.

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 Horsham Township may wish to consider prior to final plan approval. Our review comments are as follows:

REVIEW COMMENTS

ZONING ORDINANCE COMMENTS

The table labeled Schedule of Zoning Requirements on Sheet 4 of 37 lists the proposed impervious coverage as 69.0%; however, the zoning hearing board decision dated January 13, 2024 states that the "applicant's granted zoning relief will permit […] impervious coverage of 68.5%."

SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE COMMENTS

Based on our review, we have identified the following comments related to the township's subdivision and land development ordinance that we recommend be addressed as part of future submissions:

A. Parking Stall Size. Section 198-33.D.(8) states that "parking stall dimensions shall be not less than 10 feet in width and 20 feet in depth." It appears that all of the proposed parking stalls are only 9 feet wide and several rows of proposed parking stalls are only 18 feet deep.

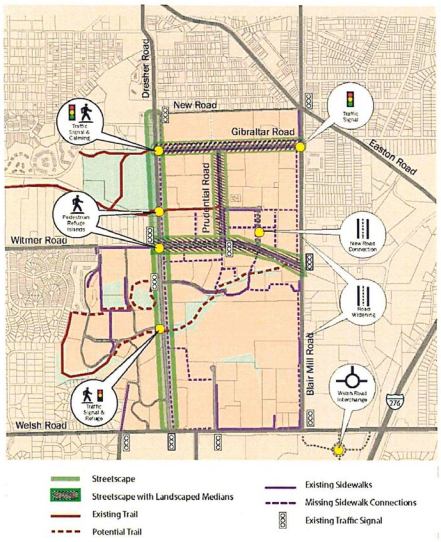
B. Development Standards for Horsham Business Park District. Article X of the township's subdivision and land development ordinance contains regulations to govern the development and redevelopment of property in the Business Park District to implement the objectives of the Horsham Business Parks Master Plan. We wish to emphasize the following standards, as they relate to this proposal:

- Section 198-64.A.(1) requires that a design manual be provided demonstrating how the development will comply with all applicable standards. "The design manual shall use full-color architectural drawings, landscape designs, photographs of lighting fixtures, benches, and trash receptacles, photographs of existing site conditions, building material samples, and any other materials requested by the Township."

  Future submissions should include the design manual. This would be particularly helpful in order to determine compliance with the architectural design standards contained in §198-64.E.

- Section 198-64.C. states that "all developments shall include an integrated and coordinated pedestrian circulation system" and that "pedestrian and streetscape improvements shall generally follow the recommendations outlined in the map below" (see map image to the right).

  A traffic signal at Gibraltar Road and Dresher Road and sidewalk along the Dresher Road frontage of the site were previously installed. The applicant proposes to install sidewalk and streetscaping along their Gibraltar Road frontage, which is consistent with the Master Plan. The Master Plan also calls for landscaped medians along Gibraltar Road.



- Section 198-64.C.(2) states that "all new developments and redevelopments shall provide internal pedestrian walkways that connect the public sidewalk system to the building entrances, parking areas, plazas, courtyards, transit stops, and other public amenities on the site."

  Internal pedestrian walkways are shown connecting the sidewalk along Gibraltar Road to each building; however, no internal pedestrian walkways are shown connecting Building #1 and #2.

- Section 198-64.C.(2)(b) states that "all internal pedestrian walkways and crosswalks shall be distinguished from driving surfaces through the use of pavers, bricks, scored concrete, stamped asphalt, or continental-style crosswalk striping to enhance pedestrian safety and comfort."

  It appears that all crosswalks are proposed to be a traditional-style crosswalk with two parallel lines. We recommend that all proposed internal crosswalks be of a higher-visibility type, as outlined in the SALDO.

- Section 198-64.D. states that "all developments shall include a well-designed and attractive streetscape that enhances pedestrian safety and fosters a sense of place within the Horsham Business Park Zoning District."

  Specifically, related to street trees, compliance with the maximum setback distance for street tree planting (§198-64.D.(1)(b)) and the minimum caliper size of 3" at time of planting (§198-64.D.(1)(c)) should be clarified.

- Section 198-64.D.(3) states that "all new developments and redevelopments shall provide pedestrian-scale streetlights along all lot frontages adjacent to public and private streets."

  The Lighting Plan on Sheet 17 does not appear to show any pedestrian-scale street lights along any of the street frontages.

- Section 198-64.D.(4) states that "benches shall be provided and spaced at a minimum of one bench per 500 linear feet of street frontage, or portion thereof." In addition, §198-64.D.(5) states that "trash and recycling receptacles shall be provided at bus stops, roadway intersections, and other actively used pedestrian areas."

  From the information provided, it does not appear that any benches or trash and recycling receptacles are proposed within the streetscape area.

- Section 198-64.F.(1)(a) provides standards for vehicular access to surface parking lots.

  Specifically, compliance with the maximum driveway width and minimum driveway spacing from intersections should be clarified.

- Section 198-64.G. states that "landscape standards shall meet all provisions of the Township's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance, except as modified or supplemented below."

  We recommend that the landscape compliance chart on Sheet 16 be amended to also show compliance with §198-64.G. of the SALDO.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

We commend the applicant for designing the stormwater management facilities on the site to include both underground and above-ground facilities in a sensitive manner. We believe that the proposed rain gardens along Gibraltar Road will contribute to an attractive landscaped setback area and improve the water quality of stormwater runoff from the adjacent parking area and building. In addition, the underground facilities below the parking areas appear to have been sensitively designed so as to allow plantings within the parking lot islands above. Given the applicant's demonstrated commitment to a robust landscape on the site, we encourage the applicant to also consider incorporating additional plantings within the basin floor of the detention basin near the corner of Dresher Road and New Road.

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN FEATURES

The Horsham Business Parks Master Plan includes recommended design guidelines that encourage sustainable office park features that the applicant may wish to consider. For example, given the large building footprints proposed, we encourage the applicant to explore creative uses of the roof area such as a partial green roof or strategically-placed solar panels. In addition, the applicant may wish to consider installing electric vehicle charging stations for employees and visitors to the site.

CONCLUSION

We wish to reiterate that MCPC generally supports the proposed development; however, we believe that our suggested revisions will better achieve Horsham Township's planning objectives for non-residential development.

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 (#24-0192-001) on any plans submitted for final recording.

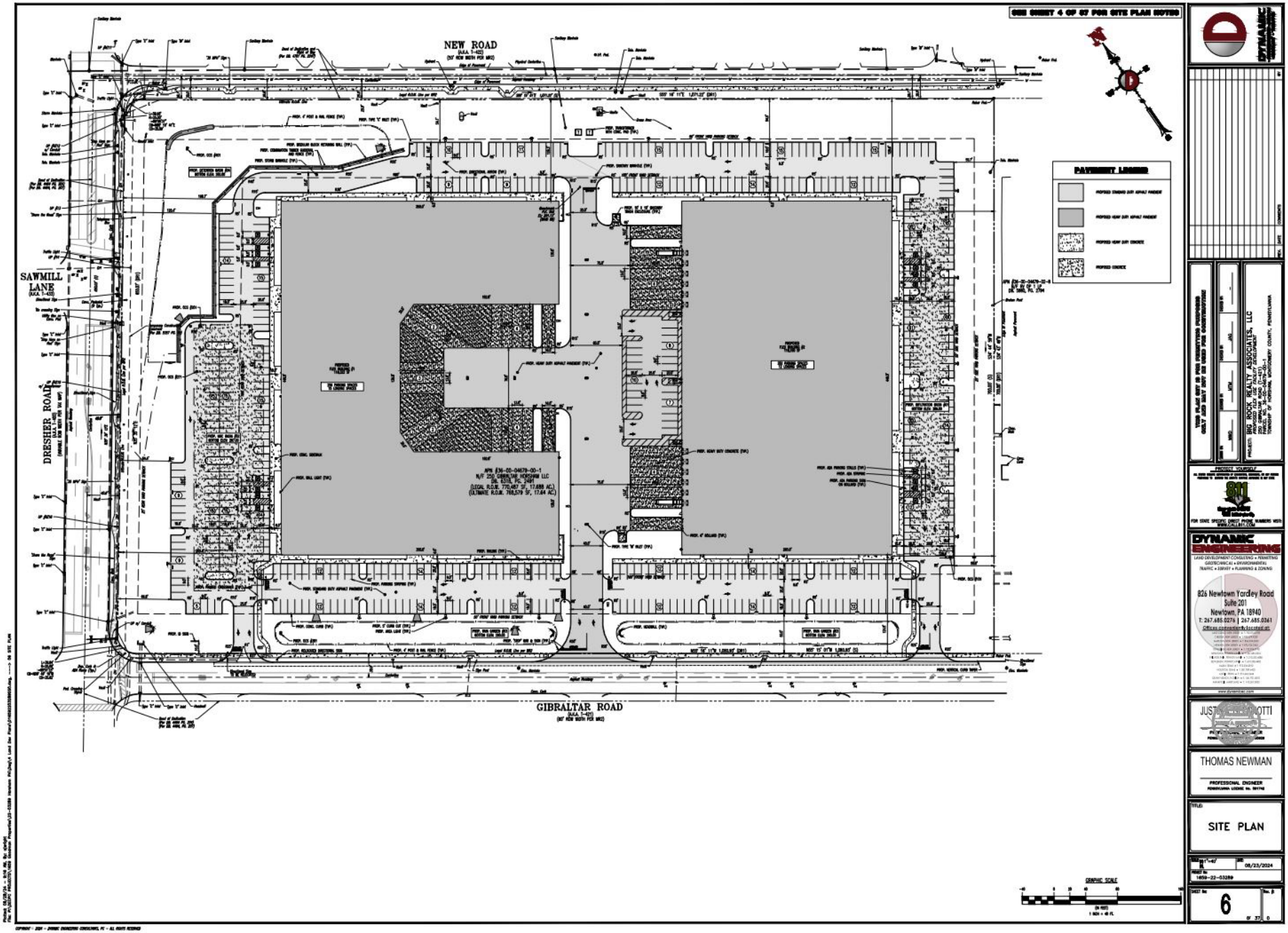
Sincerely,

Marley B Bice

Marley Bice, AICP, Community Planning Assistant Manager
610-278-3740 – marley.bice@montgomerycountypa.gov

c: Bruce Goodman, Applicant
Michael Shinton, P.E., Township Director of Codes & Community Planning
Eric Frary, Chrm., Horsham Township Planning Commission
Erik Garton, P.E., Township Engineer
Mary C. Eberle, Township Solicitor

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


NEW ROAD
SAWMILL LANE
DRESHER ROAD
GIBRALTAR ROAD
PAVEMENT LEGEND
SITE PLAN
DYNAMIC ENGINEERING
826 Newtown Yardley Road
Suite 201
Newtown, PA 18940
T: 267.685.0276 | 267.685.0361
THOMAS NEWMAN
PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER
08/23/2024
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250 Gibraltar Rd
Flex Use Facility Development
MCPC#240192001

Montgomery County Planning Commission

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Aerial photography provided by Nearmap