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MONTGOMERY COUNTY
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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

November 8, 2024

Ms. Jamie Worman, Assistant Township Manager
Lower Gwynedd Township
1130 North Bethlehem Pike
Post Office Box 625
Spring House, Pennsylvania 19477

Re: MCPC # 20-0152-002
Plan Name: Riparian Buffer Improvements
1 lot comprising 25 acres
Situate: Norristown Drive (cross street: Tennis Avenue)
Lower Gwynedd Township

Dear Ms. Worman:

We have reviewed the above-referenced conditional use land development plan as you requested on October 16, 2024. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, Acts Retirement Life Communities Inc., is proposing a two-story building on an existing continuing care retirement community campus. The proposal includes modifications to existing access drives, an expansion of off-street parking, an emergency access drive onto Tennis Avenue, and new internal pedestrian walkways. In addition, the applicant is seeking conditional use approval to construct a trail extension, bridge, and stormwater management facilities within the riparian and wetland buffer area. The township prohibits "filling, grading, clearing or development related to any structure or improvement, including stormwater management facilities" within any wetland or riparian buffers (§ 1298.17); however stormwater management facilities, utility crossings, roads and driveway crossings may be permitted by conditional use if no other reasonable alternative exists. The property is located in the MF-3 Multifamily zoning district. We reviewed a previously submitted proposal for this site in a letter dated September 25, 2020.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

The proposal is generally consistent with the county's comprehensive plan*, MONTCO 2040: A Shared Vision,* which shows the area located in the "Suburban Residential" future land use areas. Suburban Residential

areas consist of single family detached homes, less dense single-family attached uses, and institutional uses. Residential development should match the character and type of housing found in the immediate neighborhood, and environmentally sensitive land should be preserved.

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

REVIEW COMMENTS

SITE PLAN

A. Tree Preservation. The property contains existing mature trees, which are shown on the submitted plans. Based on the plans provided, it is unclear how many trees would be removed for the development of the building and other site improvements. The township requires that the preservation of healthy trees and shrubs be considered during land development site planning (§ 1230.41(i)). We recommend the applicant coordinate with the township to determine the best location for any required replacement trees.

CONDITIONAL USE

A. Buffer Replacement. The proposal includes disturbance within the riparian and wetland buffer area, which is permitted by conditional use, per Section 1298.17(c). Township zoning requires that any riparian and wetland buffer area that is destroyed must be replaced elsewhere on the site. We recommend that the applicant demonstrate where they propose to add to the riparian corridor, to the satisfaction of the township engineer. In addition, inspection of the vegetation may be needed to determine if new riparian plantings would have an added environmental benefit.

CONCLUSION

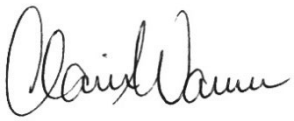
We wish to reiterate that MCPC generally supports the applicant's proposal but we believe that our suggested revisions will better achieve Lower Gwynedd's planning objectives for sustainable development practices.

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 (24-0223-001) on any plans submitted for final recording.

Sincerely,



Claire Warner, Senior Community Planner
Claire.Warner@montgomerycountypa.gov – 610-278-3755

c: ACTS Retirement Life Communities, Inc., Applicant
Bernadette Kearney, Applicant's Representative
Mimi Gleason, Township Manager
Kenneth Amey, AICP, Township Zoning Officer
Craig Melograno, Chairman, Planning Commission

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

ATTACHMENTS A & B

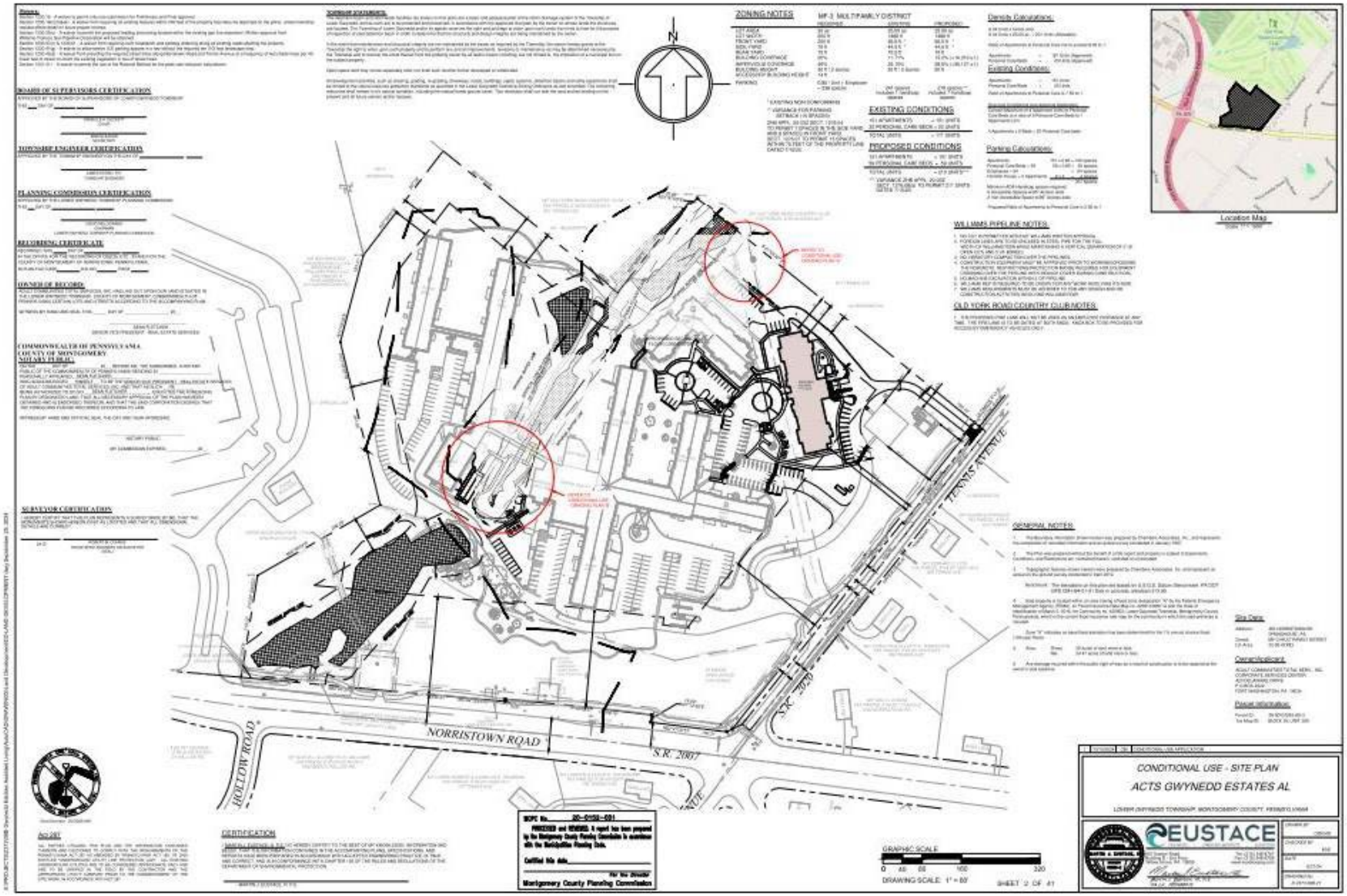


Riparian Buffer Improvements
MCPC#240230001

Montgomery County Planning Commission
Montgomery County Courthouse - Planning Commission
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(p) 610 278-3722 (f) 610 278-3941
www.montcopa.org/planning
Aerial photography provided by Nearmap

0 100 200 400 Feet

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ZONING NOTES
MF-3 MULTI-FAMILY DISTRICT
EXISTING CONDITIONS
PROPOSED CONDITIONS
Density Calculations:
Existing Conditions:
Parking Calculations:
Location Map
WILLIAMS PIPELINE NOTES:
OLD YORK ROAD COUNTRY CLUB NOTES:
GENERAL NOTES:
NORRISTOWN ROAD
S.R. 2007
TENNIS AVENUE
BELLOW ROAD
CONDITIONAL USE - SITE PLAN
ACTS GWYNEDD ESTATES AL
LOWER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA
EUSTACE
GRAPHIC SCALE
DRAWING SCALE: 1" = 60'
SHEET 2 OF 41