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SCOTT FRANCE, AICP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

March 24, 2025

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

Re: MCPC #25-0041-001
Plan Name: Deluca Horsham Residential Development
(24 lots / 22 du on approximately 40.9 acres)
Situate: County Line Road (S); west of Park Road
Horsham Township

Dear Mr. Walker:

We have reviewed the above-referenced subdivision and land development plan in accordance with Section 502 of Act 247, "The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code," as you requested on February 21, 2025. We forward this letter as a report of our review.

BACKGROUND

The applicant, DeLuca Horsham, LP, proposes to consolidate two existing parcels to create an approximately 40.9-acre tract and subdivide the subsequent tract into 24 parcels. A total of 22 single-family detached homes are proposed along a proposed cul-de-sac road off of County Line Road (which is a PennDOT road). In addition, a 1.5-acre lot will be created for HOA common element (proposed Lot 23) and a 12.3-acre lot will be created for common open space (proposed Lot 24). Additional improvements shown at this time include three stormwater basins (all located on proposed Lot 24), sidewalks along the proposed cul-de-sac road, and street trees and other landscaping. The property is located partially in the township's R-1 Low-Density Residential and R-2 Low-Density Residential zoning districts.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPLIANCE

This area of Horsham Township is shown as Suburban Residential Area in the Future Land Use Plan of the Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan, *Montco 2040: A Shared Vision*. Suburban Residential Areas are residential areas which depend on automobiles for transportation and often have extensive landscaping on

individual properties. Within Suburban Residential Areas, trees, steep slopes, wetlands, and other sensitive lands should be preserved as part of new developments.

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

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

A. Wetland Impacts. Section 230-49.D.(4) states that "wetlands shall not be altered, regraded, developed, filled, piped or diverted, or built upon." An area in the center of the site is shown as wetland on the existing features plan on Sheet 3; however, this area of wetland is not delineated on subsequent site plan sheets and appears to be impacted by the development of proposed Road A.

B. Riparian Buffer Impacts. Section 230-49.E.(4)(a)[2][a] and 230-49.E.(4)(b)[2][b] require conditional use approval for corridor crossings of "centralized sewer and/or water lines" within Zone One and Zone Two, respectively, of the Riparian Corridor Conservation District. The discharge pipes for all three of the proposed stormwater basins are shown cutting into both Zone One and Zone Two of the Riparian Corridor Conservation District, therefore it appears that a conditional use or site plan revisions may be needed.

C. Perimeter Buffer Landscaping. Section 230-52.C.(4) requires a 50-foot-wide perimeter buffer along all major arterial, minor arterial, and collector streets and that "the perimeter buffer shall be landscaped as required in Section 230-31.A." Such perimeter buffer is delineated on the site plan; however, the landscape plan does not appear to show the required landscaping within the perimeter buffer.

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. Existing Features. Section 198-18.B.(3)(p) requires that site plans for preliminary plan submissions show "all environmental protection areas as defined in Chapter 230, Zoning, as amended." We suggest that some environmental protection areas, such as the area of existing wetlands in the center of the site, could be more clearly shown on all site plan sheets.

B. Proposed Cul-de-sac Length. Section 198-31.C.(1)(e)[1] states that "a cul-de-sac shall not be more than 500 feet in length." We estimate the length of the proposed cul-de-sac to be over 1,800 feet long.

C. Snow Removal Easement. Section 198-31.C.(1)(e)[1] states that "a snow removal easement shall be provided at the rear of all cul-de-sac bulbs for the piling and storage of plowed snow." A snow removal easement does not appear to be identified at the rear of the proposed cul-de-sac bulb.

D. Sidewalk. Section 198-34.A.(1) establishes where sidewalks are required, including along major arterial streets, such as County Line Road. We commend the applicant for providing sidewalks along both sides of proposed Road A; however, we suggest that sidewalk, or an alternative walking path, also be provided along County Line Road.

E. Street Trees. Section 198-39.E.(4) contains street tree requirements, including spacing requirements. The plan submission does not appear to contain specific calculations demonstrating compliance with the number of required street trees; however, several gaps in the spacing of proposed street trees are identified in the image of Sheet 30 below. We noted that the placement of a retaining wall associated with the stormwater basin closest to County Line Road appears to preclude the planting of required street trees along a stretch of Road A, therefore a waiver may be needed unless the stormwater basin can be relocated.



F. Softening Buffer. Section 198-39.E.(5)(b) states that "along the sides and rear of property lines of all developments where existing vegetation is not sufficient, and screen buffer is not required, a permanent softening buffer shall be planted." We suggest that additional plantings be added within the buffer, as required.

G. Individual Lot Landscaping. Section 198-39.E.(9)(a) requires that "each single-family detached dwelling shall have three deciduous or evergreen trees as listed in Subsection F." It does not appear that any trees are proposed to be planted (other than street trees) on proposed Lots #1 through #13.

GENERAL SITE LAYOUT

The proposed single, cul-de-sac street and uniform lot placement appears to contribute to the need for extensive grading on the site. We encourage the applicant to explore whether alternative street and lot configurations, such as a single-access loop street (see example to right from Hilltown Township), might allow the lots to be terraced along multiple frontages and reduce the amount of grading needed.



STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

A. Stormwater Basin Configuration. All of the stormwater basins are proposed to be located wholly within the common open space area, which limits the ability to create more natural grading formations around each basin. Expanding or shifting the stormwater basins partially onto individual home lots (with necessary easements), could potentially allow for less grading and less woodland removal within the common open space area.

   With regards to the stormwater basin closest to County Line Road (Detention Basin #2), the basin is proposed to be surrounded on two sides by a retaining wall, which creates an angular appearance. We encourage the applicant to explore whether alternative designs, such as spreading out the area of the basin, could reduce the angular appearance of the retaining wall and allow for a more naturalized appearance.

   Specifically, related to the retaining wall, according to a detail on Sheet 36, the retaining wall will be composed of modular blocks. In our experience, a modular block wall of the proposed height would require more horizontal space than what appears to be shown on the site plan because each block creates a slight lateral offset.

B. Stormwater Basin Outfalls. All three of the proposed stormwater basins have an underground pipe between the basin and a proposed outfall discharging directly into the tributary to the Little Neshaminy Creek. We encourage the applicant to consider whether alternative outfall configurations, such as a level spreader closer to the base of the basin could be feasible. Reducing the amount of underground pipe needed could reduce or eliminate disturbance to the Riparian Corridor Conservation District.

C. Plantings on Stormwater Basin Berms. Section 198-39.E.(7)(b) of the township's subdivision and land development ordinance states that "the basin shall be so designed that the plantings in and adjacent to it shall not have a negative effect on the hydrological function of the basin." In addition, it is our understanding that the Montgomery County Conservation District may not allow the extensive tree planting proposed on berms that are designed to hold water in the stormwater basin due to the potential for tree roots to destabilize the berm itself. Some of the trees proposed to be planted on the berms could instead be planted within the riparian buffer, within the softening buffer, and on individual lots.

D. Stormwater Easements. Future submissions should clearly show easements around stormwater pipes that cross through proposed individual homes lots, as applicable.

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

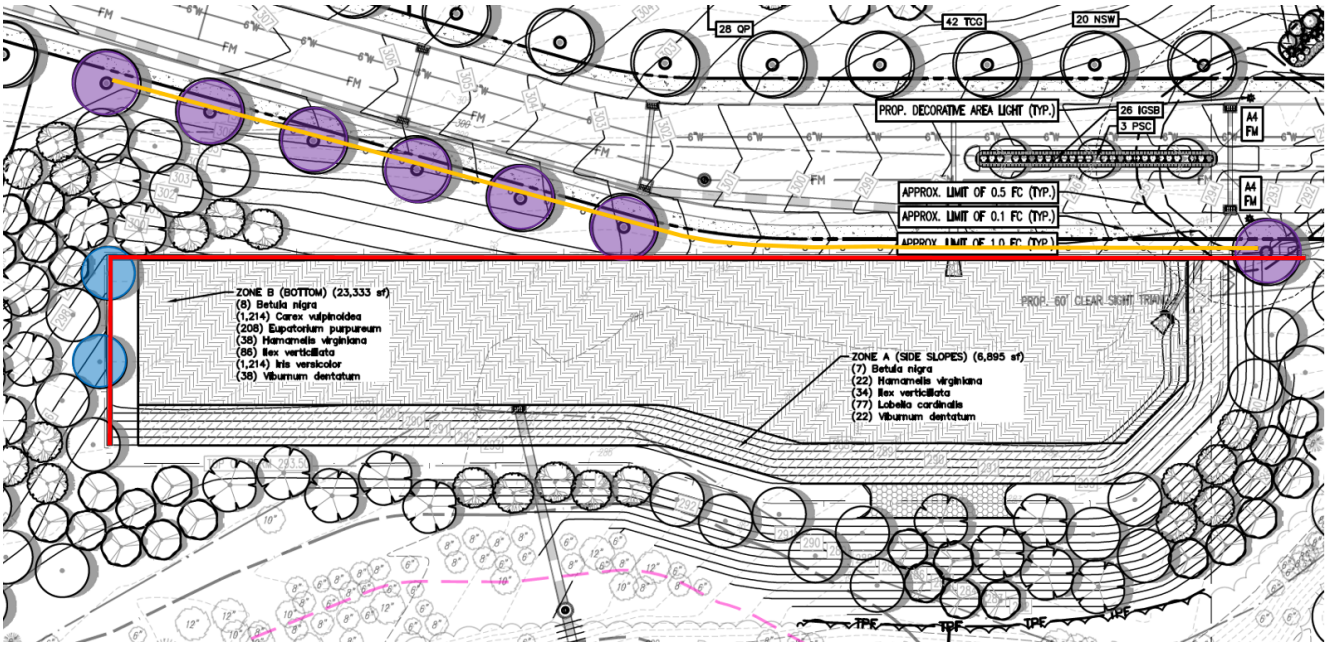
A. Stormwater Basin Plantings. Notations on Sheets 31-33 list the number and species of tree, shrub, and perennial plantings that are proposed to be planted on the bottoms and side slopes of each of the three stormwater basins. However, these plant species do not appear to be included in the plant schedule on Sheet 35 and the landscape plan does not show the proposed placement or spacing of these plantings. Special care should be taken when designing the planting plan within the basins, especially MRC Basin #1 and MRC Basin #2, which have underground infiltration pipes that should not be disturbed by tree roots. We commend the applicant for proposing such extensive plantings within the basin, as this has the potential to contribute to a more naturalized appearance and provide other ecological benefits over time; however, we wish to point out that extensive landscaping will required extensive maintenance and care, especially during the first few years after planting. The applicant may wish to include a detailed stormwater basin landscape maintenance plan to be used by the future HOA.

B. Evergreen Trees. We noted that only three evergreen trees are proposed to be planted on the entire site – all of them around the entrance sign. We suggest that additional evergreen trees would be a beneficial addition to the landscape plan, especially within the required softening buffer area. For example, American holly and Eastern red cedar are both native evergreen tree species.

C. Tree Species Selection. We wish to offer the following observations related to the proposed tree species:
   - A total of 623 trees are shown on the plant schedule and 155 of these trees (approximately 25%) are shown as littleleaf linden, which is a non-native species. We suggest that additional native tree species could be added to the plant list to increase the diversity of tree species proposed, such as swamp white oak, sugar maple, pagoda dogwood, and Eastern redbud.
   - A total of 80 street trees are proposed of three varieties: red maple, American elm, and black gum. We wish to point out that in our experience black gum trees are very slow-growing and do not grow as large as elm trees. Therefore, they may not be best planted next to each other if a uniform street tree form is desired. We would suggest American linden or sweet gum as potential alternatives.

D. Tree Protection Fencing. Each of the three proposed stormwater basins have an underground discharge pipe cutting through the riparian buffer area. The proposed pipes and outfalls are shown as part of the limit of disturbance; however, a tree protection fence is not shown around the proposed pipes and outfalls. Installation and regrading around the underground pipes has the potential to impact the root zones of existing mature trees in the immediate vicinity. Therefore, we suggest that appropriate precautions be taken during construction.

E. Tree Placement around Detention Basin #2. We wish to offer the following observations about the proposed placement of trees in the vicinity of Detention Basin #2, which are noted in the annotated image of Sheet 33 below.
   - Two trees (blue circles in image below) appear to be shown too close to the proposed retaining wall (red line in image below).
   - Several street trees (purple circles in the image below) appear to be shown too close to what appears to be a guard rail (orange line in the image below) between Road A and the retaining wall around Detention Basin #2.



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 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 (#25-0041-001) on any plans submitted for final recording.

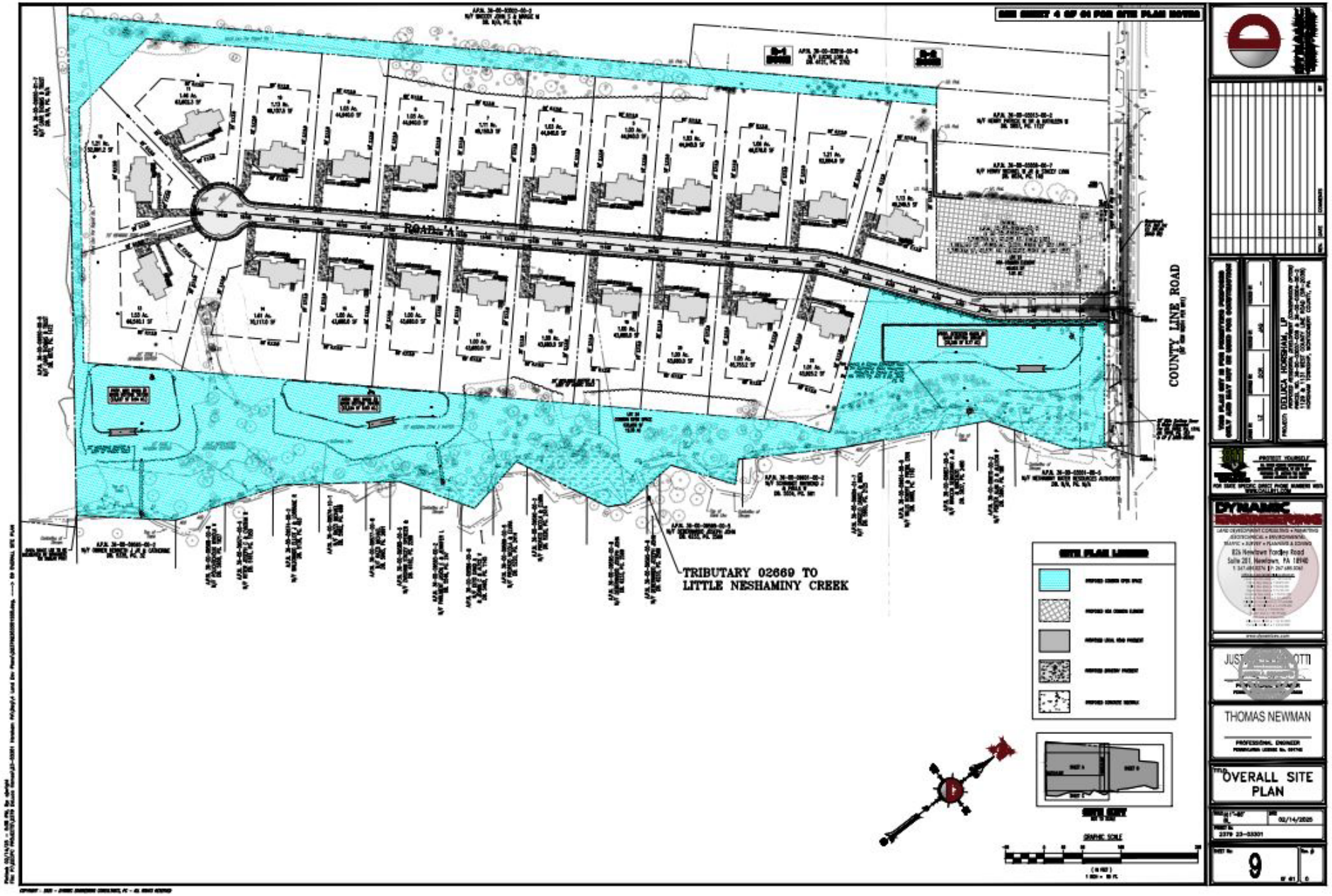
Sincerely,

Marley B Bice

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

c: Dynamic Engineering Consultants, PC, Applicant's Engineer
Michael Shinton, P.E., Township Director of Codes & Community Planning
David W. McCullough, Chrm., Horsham Township Planning Commission
Erik Garton, P.E. and Geoffrey Attanasio, P.E., Township Engineer
Mary C. Eberle, Township Solicitor
Fran Hanney, Scott Burton, Paul Lutz, PennDOT

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


ROAD "A"
COUNTY LINE ROAD
TRIBUTARY 02669 TO
LITTLE NESHAMINY CREEK
SITE PLAN LEGEND
DELICA HORSHAM, LP
DYNAMIC ENGINEERING
THOMAS NEWMAN
PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER
OVERALL SITE PLAN
02/14/2025
2379 23-03301
9



Deluca Horsham Residential Development
MCPC#250041001

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