

Memo

To: Ms. Ashley Neale
Verona Planning Board Secretary

From: Updated Plan Review Committee of the Verona Environmental Commission

c: Verona Environmental Commission Chair

Date: August 24, 2020

Re: **Site Plan Application**
25 Prospect Avenue [Block 601, Lot 1]
Verona, New Jersey

Zone: R-100 (Very Low Density Single Family)

The Plan Review Committee of the Verona Environmental Commission (VEC) reviewed the site revised plan application for 25 Prospect Avenue in Verona submitted by the Montclair Golf Club (Applicant), which we received on August 22, 2019. We understand that the Applicant has classified proposed type of construction as, "tennis court resurfacing." The comments below supersede those we provided to the Board on January 10, 2020 are provided for the Board's consideration:

- 1) We understand that the proposed project is to disturb approximately 2.60 acres of land, meets the criteria for a redevelopment major development, and includes the following:
 - Removal of the seven existing tennis courts and tennis practice area.
 - Construction of six new tennis courts.
 - Re-grading of the upper portion of the existing golf practice range.
 - Re-sodding and installing underdrains in the lower portion of the golf practice range.
 - The reconstruction of areas affected by the improvements listed above.
- 2) The VEC Plan Review Committee has reviewed the "Site Plan Review – Engineering" letter prepared by Beckmeyer Engineering, P.C. and dated August 20, 2020. We agree with Mr. Beckmeyer's comments, questions posed, and requests stipulated in his updated engineering and drainage review.
- 3) Trees to be removed have increased from 79 to 91 with only 58 new trees to be planted. This is in addition to the removal of 87 trees proposed by the Applicant in the West Orange portion of the Applicant's project. We understand from testimony given by Mr. Timothy Derrick (Applicant's Engineer), summarized in the minutes for the West Orange Planning Board meeting dated March 4, 2020, that 51 trees will be replaced in West Orange.
- 4) We understand that Dwg. No. LA-111, prepared by Moss Gilday Group, LLC and dated June 9, 2020, indicates that 116 trees were identified on the plan with 92 trees marked for removal and 24 marked to remain. Subsequent to the issuance of Dwg. No. LA-111, the Applicant's Arborist, Mr. Robert B. Finnesey of Tree-tech, Inc., identifies in a letter

dated June 11, 2020 that only 17 trees are identified to remain. It appears that the tree removal schedule has become more aggressive without being reflected on Dwg. No. LA-111. We request that the Applicant's Arborist clarify this discrepancy and that the Applicant provide an updated summary table for the Mature Trees that they intend to remove with a corresponding replacement schedule, if applicable, in accordance with Verona's Tree Ordinance.

- 5) During his testimony at the February 27, 2020 Verona Planning Board meeting, the Applicant's Landscape Architect, Mr. James Gilday, indicated that most of the trees fall in the Right-of-Way (R.O.W.) area and that they would all remain. According to Dwg. No. LA-111, there are two different lines marked as R.O.W., one of which is identified as Proposed R.O.W., and approximate. The more easterly line depicts that only one full tree exists in the R.O.W. and that tree is currently marked for removal. Within the Proposed R.O.W., delineated 21 feet west of the easterly line depicts, about 40 trees in that area and that only 5 are to remain.

We request that the Applicant's Landscape Architect clarify which R.O.W. line is correct and readdress their statement concerning the trees in this area from the February 27, 2020 meeting. Additionally, if trees within the delineated R.O.W. will remain, we recommend that the location of the R.O.W. on the drawing not be approximated but verified in plan by a licensed professional land surveyor or a reasonable buffer used along the approximated R.O.W. to evaluate trees to remain.

- 6) The USDA website provides information about invasive species. The NJ Invasive Species Strike Team, in association with the NJDEP, lists the following 18 plantings in the proposed landscaping plan as invasive species plants on their "Do Not Plant" list.
 - Kousa Dogwood: Emerging (6 planned for planting).
 - Zeikova Serrata: Emerging (6 planned).
 - Euonymus Alatus: Widespread (6 planned).
- 7) The Revised Stormwater Calculations Summary Memo prepared by Langan and dated July 15, 2020, indicates on Page 3 that Watershed B (practice area) drains to the Golf Course. There were two contradicting statements made at the February 27, 2020 Verona Planning Board meeting regarding the existence of catch basins/inlets in this practice area. Mr. Gilday indicated that there were none and that none were found in his survey whereas Mr. Derrick indicated that there were two catch basins/inlets in the practice range and that currently a portion of the range and the future range is collected by these catch basins and then discharge out to the Golf Course System. He further indicated that they were maintaining those, that they would remain and the pipes connected to them would go out to the golf course.

We recommend that the Applicant's professionals provide testimony to answer the following questions:

- Are there catch basins in the practice area and where do they drain?
- If the basins only collect a portion of the area, where does the other portion of the site's stormwater runoff eventuate?
- As indicated by Mr. Derrick, these inlets discharge out to the golf course system;

- where on the golf course system and what controls are in place to slow their discharge to neighboring properties or off site to surrounding roadways?
- How can a dependable Stormwater management system be calculated without all of the structural piping elements included in the plans?
- 8) As a result of water runoff into the general golf course system and due to the aggressive tree removal schedule, we recommend that additional trees be planted at the bottoms of the steeply sloped areas where stormwater currently terminates, to properly mitigate this runoff onto private properties and roadways adjacent to the course. These trees should be planted inside of the golf course's fencing and be maintained to ensure longevity.
- 9) Dwg. Nos. LA-106 and LA-107 submitted by the Applicant depict that soil berms will be constructed along the property line along Mt. Prospect Avenue. However, the Revised Stormwater Calculations Summary Memo submitted by the Applicant does not address any of the possible sheet flow that will be directed off site to Mt. Prospect Avenue now that this area of the site will have up to 4-foot-high berms with slopes up to 30 percent. The pre-development grades in this area were relatively flat and we request that the Applicant properly address sheet flow runoff from the site.
- 10) We note that the Revised Stormwater Calculations Summary Memo prepared by Langan and dated July 15, 2020 with associated watershed area maps (CG101 and CG102) now indicate the direction of the conveyance pipe from the catch basin located in Mt. Prospect Avenue. The memo indicates that stormwater runoff from Watershed A eventuates to the Eagle Rock Reservation, which appears to be new information for the Board's consideration. We request that the Applicant's Engineer provide testimony to clarify how this information was ascertained (direct survey, review of additional County Roadway drainage plans, etc.) and where exactly Watershed A drains to in Eagle Rock Reservation.