

MARCUS J. MOLINARO
COUNTY EXECUTIVE



EOIN WRAFTER, AICP
COMMISSIONER

COUNTY OF DUTCHESS
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

November 15, 2017

To: Town of Poughkeepsie Planning Board
Re: Referral ZR17-362, MacDonnell Heights Town Center Site Plan and Special Use Permit
Parcels: 6262-04-723342, 761394, 754298, 749282, 758301, 864243, 892195; US 44

The Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development has reviewed the subject referral within the framework of General Municipal Law (Article 12B, Sections 239-l and 239-m).

ACTION

Our Department is in receipt of the site plan and special permit application for the proposed MacDonnell Heights Town Center Project. The proposed project consists of commercial and residential development in five phases on 60.87 acres at the former Frank Brothers Farm. The residential component includes 32 townhomes and 358 apartments, 54 of which are over commercial space. The commercial component includes 36,500 square feet of office space, 42,000 square feet of service retail space, and 15,000 square feet of restaurant space. The project includes 21 acres of recreation and open space for residents and the public.

COMMENTS

The MacDonnell Heights Center has been identified in the Poughkeepsie Town Plan as a priority location for growth appropriate for mixed residential and commercial development. To that end, we are pleased to see that the applicant is proposing a mixed-use, village-scale center surrounded by compact residential development. This will provide people with the opportunity to "park once and walk around" within a compact downtown and surrounding neighborhood, and will broaden the available housing options within the town.

Boulevard Design: The proposed boulevard configuration along the main entrance road may unintentionally reduce the interaction between customers and businesses on both sides of the street as the increased width creates extra distance (~140 feet) between them. Further, as it is flanked on both sides by vehicle travel lanes, we question whether the central median will be the kind of space where people want to linger, and may become more of a dividing element rather than a point of gathering and connection. We suggest consideration of removing the boulevard median in favor of much wider sidewalks with pedestrian amenities including street trees, benches, plantings, and outdoor restaurant seating that would create a more activated pedestrian realm along those first blocks and help draw customers in from Route 44.

Site Access, Circulation and Traffic:

We suggest the Town question the need for the westernmost, right-in/right-out curb cut on the east side of Route 44, adjacent to commercial building L. The site has a main access point to the east and Victory Lane already provides a signalized access point to Route 44, and is proposed to connect to the rear of the project site. In addition, the additional egress could create an unnecessary point of conflict along the state road. Internal to the site, we are concerned that it could result in a safety issue with some drivers attempting to quickly cut through that portion of the site, which is not primarily designed for through-traffic.

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At the main, signalized intersection to the project, the boulevard medians appear to be too close to Route 44 and could create vehicular conflicts. Also, the median U-turn lanes could cause a traffic hazard between vehicles attempting a U-turn, and vehicles entering the site because of their proximity to the intersection. If the medians are retained, we suggest discussing the possibility of moving their U-turn lanes further away from the intersection.

Various elements of the site circulation as shown on the plan are somewhat awkward. For example, on both the east and west sides of Route 44, the boulevard design creates awkward intersections with the blocks further in, requiring traffic heading straight to dodge a funny angle before proceeding down the second block. This odd alignment could cause confusion and result in a safety hazard. Another issue, on the west side of Route 44, is the right-angle parking shown along the entire length of the first parallel road that connects from the main entrance boulevard north to Concord Village Drive (and runs along the rear of the bank and daycare pad sites). It appears to be a main internal connector road, but reads more as an aisle in a parking lot. A shift to parallel parking along this roadway could improve both the efficiency and safety of the route. Overall, the Board should work with the applicant to ensure that the traffic circulation patterns provide safe and adequate access and maneuverability throughout the site.

Public Transit: The applicant should consult with the Dutchess County Department of Public Works, Division of Public Transit regarding public transportation related issues.

Parking: The site appears to be over-parked, and the parking table provided on sheet OP-1 does not appear to reflect the parking requirements outlined in the zoning regulations. Section 210-92 (O)(1) of the code states, "Minimum off-street parking requirements are as follows (the most restrictive requirements shall apply)" and lists the following for all center and hamlet districts, which would include the MacDonnell Heights Center District:

- 4 spaces for each 2,000 square feet of building area for a nonresidential use;
- 1.5 spaces for each residential unit.

Given these requirements, it appears that the minimum number of required spaces for the site is approximately 770, versus the over 1,100 spaces provided. We encourage the applicant to reduce the number of spaces to the minimum necessary. This would reduce the amount of asphalt on site and allow for more pockets of greenspace for residents' enjoyment. If concerns remain about long-term parking issues, areas could be designated on the site plan and land-banked for future parking use.

It is also worth noting that section 210-27(l)(3) encourages shared parking facilities within the MacDonnell Heights Center District.

Landscaping: We encourage the applicant to incorporate additional landscaping throughout the site, such as around the residential buildings, accenting the mixed-use buildings, and within the green and recreation areas. The landscaping plan sheets SP-1.1 & 1.2 include plant symbol locations but no plant names. A complete landscape plan including species, numbers of each and plant size should be provided. To ensure early landscape benefits, all shade trees should be a minimum of 3" caliper.

Given the additional lighting requirements for ATM areas, additional screening could be provided along the boundary shared by the residential property and the bank drive-through.

Lighting: We suggest that the lighting levels be reevaluated. The photometric plan shows excessive lighting along both east and west main boulevard entrances, streets, parking areas, and surrounding the greenspace between the mail building and the community center. The Board should ensure that lighting levels do not exceed the

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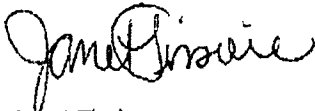
recommended average of one (1) footcandle in building and parking lot areas. Anything brighter is unnecessary and creates unwanted glare and light pollution. Fixtures should be pedestrian-scale with lighting directed downward and shielded to reduce light pollution and unintended glare. The Board should also ensure that the New York State ATM Safety Act lighting security requirements are met with respect to the area surrounding the bank and any proposed outside ATM.

Other: The Mail Building/Kids Center denotes a wooden post and rail fence surrounding the outdoor playground. For increased safety, the applicant may want to consider a more substantial fence/barrier surrounding the play area that would provide adequate containment for young children within the space.

The community garden shown along the eastern edge of building #1 will be shaded for much of the day and is therefore not the best location for this amenity. We suggest relocating it to a sunnier location near the building.

Sincerely,

Eoin Wrafter, AICP
Commissioner
By



Jahet Tissiere
Junior Planner

C: Stephen E. Gill, Dutchess County Department of Public Works - Engineering Division (via email)
John Andoh, Dutchess County Department of Public Works – Division of Public Transit (via email)

Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development	To: <u>Carol Barone</u>	Date: <u>11/15/17</u>	# pgs: <u>4</u>
	Dept: <u>Planning Board</u>	From: <u>Janet Tisciore</u>	
	Fax #: <u>486-7885</u>	Phone #: <u>486-3600</u>	

239 Planning/Zoning Referral - Exemption Communities

Municipality: Town of Poughkeepsie

Referring Agency: Planning Board Zoning Board of Appeals Municipal Board

Tax Parcel Number(s): 0262-04-723342, -761394, -754298, -749282, -758301, 864243, 892195

Project Name: MacDonnell Heights Town Center

Applicant: Meadow View Properties LLC

Address of Property: US 44

Parcel(s) within 500 feet of:

- State Road US 44
- County Road
- State Property (w/public building or recreation area)
- County Property (w/public building or recreation area)
- Municipal Boundary
- Farm operation in an Agricultural District

Actions Requiring 239 Review

- Comprehensive/Master Plans
- Zoning Amendments (standards, uses, definitions, district regulations, etc.)
- Rezoning involving all map changes
- Other Local Laws associated with zoning (wetlands, historic preservation, affordable housing, architectural review, etc.)
- Site Plans (all)
- Special Permits for all non-residential uses
- Use Variances for all non-residential uses
- Area Variances for all non-residential uses

Exempt Actions:*
239 Review is NOT Required

- Administrative Amendments (fees, procedures, penalties, etc.)
- Special Permits for residential uses (accessory apts, home occupations, etc.)
- Use Variances for residential uses
- Area Variances for residential uses
- Renewals/Extension of Site Plans or Special Permits that have no changes from previous approvals
- Subdivisions / Lot Line Adjustments
- Interpretations

* Exempt Actions Unavailable for 239 Review

Date Response Requested (if less than 30 days): _____

If subject of a previous referral, please note County referral number(s): SQ 16-294-394, ZR 11-429, ZR 14-127-128, GN 16-147, ZR 06-199, SQ 17-350

* These actions are only exempt in municipalities that signed an intermunicipal agreement with Dutchess County to that effect.

FOR COUNTY OFFICE USE ONLY

Response from Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development

<p>No Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Matter of Local Concern <input type="checkbox"/> No Jurisdiction <input type="checkbox"/> No Authority <input type="checkbox"/> Project Withdrawn <input type="checkbox"/> Exempt from 239 Review 	<p>Comments Attached:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Concern with Comments <input type="checkbox"/> Conditional <input type="checkbox"/> Denial <input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete — municipality must resubmit to County <input type="checkbox"/> Incomplete with Comments — municipality must resubmit to County <input type="checkbox"/> Informal Comments Only (Action Exempt from 239 Review)
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Date Submitted: <u>10/17/17</u>	Notes:	<input type="checkbox"/> Major Project
Date Received: <u>10/17/17</u>		
Date Requested: _____		Referral #: <u>ZR 17-362</u>
Date Required: <u>11/15/17</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Also mailed hard copy	Reviewer: <u>Janet Tisciore</u>
Date Response Faxed: <u>11/15/17</u>		

