

Call to Order:

The regular meeting of the Monroe Township Planning Board was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Chairman O'Brien. The Board saluted the flag.

Roll Call:

Present – Mr. Caspar, Mayor DiLucia, Mr. Garbowski, Mr. Kozak, Mr. Laughlin, Mr. O'Brien, Mr. O'Reilly, Mr. Verratti. Absent – Mr. Boorstein, (excused), Mr. Hesel, (excused), Mr. Schwaiger, (excused). Also present – Ms. Gaglione, Solicitor, Ms. Pellegrini, Planner, Mr. Humphreys, Engineer, Mrs. Farrell, Secretary, Mrs. Orbaczewski, Clerk Transcriber.

Proper notice of this meeting was give as required by the Open Public Meetings Act in the Annual Notice of Meetings on January 8, 2021. Notice for this evening's public hearing was provided by the applicant's attorney on December 23, 2020 and published in the newspaper on December 30, 2020.

Final Major Subdivision:

1. #1838 – Blaze Mill Development Group, LLC – Final Major Subdivision

Present – Richard Hoff, applicant's attorney, Rick Clemson, applicant's engineer, Don Paparone, applicant, Ken Schatz, applicant.

The applicant is requesting final major subdivision approval for the first five phases of this project. They were granted preliminary major subdivision approval along with variances and waivers on December 18, 2014, which allowed them to subdivide Lots 1 and 1.01 into 250 lots for development; 244 single-family attached units, 4 open space lots, and 1 sanitary sewer pump station lot. The property is located at the intersection of Fries Mill Road and Route 322, also known as Blocks 14101, Lot 1 and 141.0602, Lot 1.01, in the MU Zoning District.

Mr. Clemson, Mr. Paparone, and Mr. Schatz were sworn in by Ms. Gaglione. Mr. Hoff introduced himself as the applicant's attorney. He stated that in late 2014 the applicant received preliminary approval for the entire project. Due to market conditions, they were not prepared to move forward with a final approval. This final approval application does not seek to amend anything already approved at the preliminary. They are before the Board this evening asking for final approval on part of the project. The project is a mixed use project consisting of a total of 244 townhouse units; however, final approval is being sought for Phases 1 through 5, for a total of 105 townhouse units. The balance of the project will come in for approval in subsequent phases.

Final Major Subdivision: (continued)

1. #1838 – Blaze Mill Development Group, LLC (continued)

Mr. Hoff stated they noticed for the extension of the preliminary approval as well as to get them through to this date and through the final for Phases 1 through 5. Mr. O'Brien asked if the applicant has received the Board professional reports. Mr. Hoff stated they have received the reports and he asked if the Board would like to handle the completeness first. Mr. O'Brien replied that completeness will be handled first.

Mr. Humphreys and Ms. Pellegrini were sworn in by Ms. Gaglione. Mr. Humphreys stated he has received multiple documents from the applicant since he issued his original letter in November. A waiver is required for the plan submitted at one inch equals eighty where the requirement is one inch equals fifty. Mr. Humphreys did not take issue with the Board granting the waiver. Any outstanding items noted in his report will be submitted by the applicant as noted in the response letter from Mr. Clemson. Mr. Humphreys stated the application can be deemed complete by the Board. Motion by Mr. Kozak, seconded by Mayor DiLucia to deem application #1838 complete. Roll call vote: Ayes – Mr. Caspar, Mayor DiLucia, Mr. Garbowski, Mr. Kozak, Mr. O'Reilly, Mr. Verratti, Mr. Laughlin, Mr. O'Brien. Nays – Zero. Abstentions – Zero.

Mr. Clemson stated his credentials on the record as a licensed professional engineer in the State of New Jersey. The Board accepted Mr. Clemson as an expert in his field. He stated he wanted to provide some background information on the application as it has been a number of years since they received preliminary approval. An aerial photograph was displayed for the Board to orient them as to where the project is proposed. The property has frontage on Route 322 and on Fries Mill Road and consists of approximately 62 acres. The Hunter Woods development is just to the south of their property. The lots adjacent to the subject property located in Hunter Woods are approximately 120 feet from the perimeter of the site and there is also a 50-foot buffer between the improvements on the site and the tract boundary. There is an out parcel on their side of the property along Fries Mill Road and that parcel contains the Downer United Methodist Church as well a cemetery behind the church and a church owned residence.

The subdivision plan was displayed for the Board which was marked as Exhibit A-4. The preliminary subdivision approval allowed for 244 townhouse units, 4 open space lots, 1 pump station lot, and 1 lot reserved for future commercial development. The commercial lot is located on the westerly side of the site along Route 322 and Fries Mill Road. The residential component of the site will be approximately 48 acres, the commercial component is 13 acres, and the total amount of open space is approximately 23 acres. All of the open spaces lots and the stormwater management facilities will be owned and maintained by the homeowner's association. The minimum lot area for the townhouse units is 2000 square feet, lot frontage and width is 20 feet, and lot depth is 100 feet.

Final Major Subdivision: (continued)

1. #1838 – Blaze Mill Development Group, LLC (continued)

Almost every unit actually has an area that exceeds 2200 square feet and a lot depth that exceeds 110 feet. No variances were required for any of the residential lots during preliminary approval. Access to the property will be from both Fries Mill Road and Route 322. All interior roads will have a 30 foot wide cartway and a 50 foot wide right-of-way which is consistent with RSIS. All streets will have granite block curbing and sidewalks will be provided on both sides of the street. There is a 50 foot landscape buffer being provided around the entire residential area except along the perimeter to the commercial development where a 25 foot landscape buffer is being provided. They are also proposing a six foot wide path that will connect to the existing township bike path. That path will extend into the site up to the middle of the site where they are proposing a gazebo and then the path will continue to the commercial portion of the site. This path will provide a pedestrian linkage right through to the commercial area. The site will be serviced by public water and sewer and all the utilities will be underground. The stormwater management system was reviewed and approved at preliminary and is fully compliant with the New Jersey stormwater management regulations.

Mr. Clemson stated they are before the Board this evening for final approval on Phases 1 through 5. The color exhibit currently displayed shows townhouse units in a brownish color. Those units represent the limits of Phases 1 through 5. The rest of the units are displayed in a grey color and they are units for future development. The initial access to the site will be from Fries Mill Road. Mr. Clemson depicted on the displayed plan where the limits of the roadways will be during the Phase 1 through 5 construction and stated that temporary cul-de-sacs will be provided at the end of Prestwick Drive and Spyglass Hill Drive that will act as a turn around. Phases 1 through 5 will consist 107 lots; 105 townhouse lots and the two remainder lots which consists of the remaining portion of Lot 1 and Lot 1.01 which will be further subdivided during the subsequent phases. There are a total of four roadways included in Phases 1 through 5; Prestwick Drive, which is the access roadway off of Fries Mill Road, Spyglass Hill Drive, Augusta Court, and Turnberry Drive. They have provided parking for 105 townhouse units; the required parking for those units is 252 spaces and the plan provides 271 parking spaces. The RSIS does require that they provide guests parking spaces at one half space per unit in the form of either on-street or off-street parking. For the 105 townhouse units, they are required to provide 53 parking spaces. These spaces will be off-street ninety degree spaces. Mr. Clemson pointed out on the plan where they have provided for 37 guests parking spaces; however, since 53 spaces are required, they do not have a problem providing for those additional spaces in Phases 1 through 5. He pointed out the guests parking spaces located on Spyglass Hill Road and stated that the first phases only include the first three parking spaces where that roadway will temporarily end; however, they would now propose to include the other proposed guest spaces along that roadway which will give them more than the required number of guests parking spaces.

Final Major Subdivision:

1. #1838 – Blaze Mill Development Group, LLC (continued)

Directly across from those guests parking spaces on Spyglass Hill Drive, there is an open space lot where they could provide an additional eight or nine spaces for any overflow guests parking for the entire community, if the Board is in agreement. If the Board is in agreement, they will add them as part of the compliance plans they submit to the professionals for their review. Mr. Kozak inquired about the proposed parking spaces in the open space area along Spyglass Hill Drive and asked if they will interfere with regard to backing out since there are parking spaces across from them as well. Mr. Clemson replied that is not unlike any other parking lot and the spaces they are proposing will not be on the curve of Spyglass Hill Drive, but on the straight portion just before the curve. Mr. Verratti asked if those proposed spaces are temporary or permanent. Mr. Clemson replied they would be permanent spaces as they believe they will be beneficial to the community. Mr. Clemson displayed the architectural plans for the Board. Mr. Hoff stated that the exhibit is not necessarily the exact ones that will be built but they will not know for certain until they have a builder. The final architectural plans will be required for construction permits. The architectural plans were marked as Exhibit A-5. Mr. Clemson stated that there is a variety of materials being utilized on each of the units to create some interest. There is also a greater three dimensional look instead of a flat face so to speak and some other architectural features that create a pleasing aesthetic.

Ms. Pellegrini reviewed her report for the Board. She stated the applicant submitted a response letter to her report. She inquired about temporary easements for the streets proposed to have the temporary cul-de-sacs. Mr. Clemson replied that they can create temporary easements if necessary and the temporary cul-de-sacs are depicted on the phasing plan that was approved at the preliminary hearing. Mr. Hoff stated that they can create the temporary easements for the roadways. In addition, Ms. Pellegrini commented that the inclusion of the depicted parking spaces along Spyglass Hill Drive would further extend that road into the temporary cul-de-sac and the plans should be revised to show that extension. Mr. Clemson agreed the compliance plans will include the extension of that roadway and the additional parking spaces for the first phases. Ms. Pellegrini stated that the applicant has provided the outstanding issues listed in her report as well as agreeing to provide the HOA documents, the developer's agreement, COAH, etc. The applicant has also agreed to provide no parking signs since there will not be any parallel parking permitted on the streets. Mr. Kozak asked if the homeowner's association will be responsible to maintain the path that extends off of the township bike path and if the applicant agreed to the five foot, black on black chain link fencing around the basins. Ms. Pellegrini responded that she believes the path will be the responsibility of the homeowner's association and that the applicant has agreed to the five foot, black on black chain link fencing around the basins.

Final Major Subdivision: (continued)

1. #1838 – Blaze Mill Development Group, LLC (continued)

Mr. Humphreys reviewed his report for the Board. He stated the applicant provided a response letter to his report as well and he would address some of the outstanding items that have not been testified to this evening. He commented that waivers are required from the applicant providing a topographic survey extending 300 feet beyond the property lines and a design waiver to allow no more than 0.25 footcandles at the property line. Mr. Clemson stated the issue related to the 1-foot candle as opposed to the 0.25-foot candle occurs in the intersection of Spyglass Hill Drive and Route 322. They believe this provides a safer condition to let people know this is where the driveway is into the development. With regard to the topographic survey, Mr. Clemson stated that information is provided on the CAD files that they will be providing to the engineer. Mr. Clemson also agreed to Mr. Humphrey's comments regarding the streetlights and the plans will be revised accordingly. Mr. Humphreys asked if there was any adjustment to the stormwater management calculations with the proposed new eight or nine parking spaces. Mr. Clemson replied that any runoff will be insignificant and almost immeasurable in comparison to the overall project. Mr. Kozak asked Ms. Pellegrini and Mr. Humphreys how they feel about the additional parking spaces proposed in the open space area. Mr. Clemson responded that they do not need those additional spaces as they are in excess of what is required by RSIS; however, they believe in this development they will be beneficial. Mr. Humphreys replied that he did not have an issue with those eight or nine additional spaces from a safety standpoint.

Motion passed to open the hearing to the public.

1. Christopher Marchesani, 1836 Cornus Court, was sworn in by Ms. Gaglione. Mr. Marchesani expressed his concern with the additional traffic on Route 322 and Fries Mill Road. Mr. Hoff replied that traffic mitigation has been an issue and there are improvements proposed for that intersection that have been designed some time ago and will be implemented by the County. The plans have been in the hands of the NJDOT and upon approval from them, the County is prepared to implement those improvements. Mayor DiLucia added that he was informed today by the Township Solicitor that the NJDOT has finally approved the plans. They will enter into an agreement and talk to the County with regard to those improvements. Mr. Marchesani also inquired as to the buffer between the site and the residents in Hunter Woods. Mr. Clemson replied that there is a 50-foot buffer that runs along the entire perimeter of the site along the bike path. That buffer is comprised of existing vegetation and in some areas existing vegetation and newly planted vegetation. Mr. Marchesani commented that in recent years they have experienced an increase in water retention in their backyards and asked if this project will cause their backyards to have more water runoff. Mr. Clemson replied that the stormwater management system is designed to contain all the water runoff from the site and actually decrease the runoff from the site. Mr. Marchesani asked the distance from the basin to his home and raised a concern about mosquitos. Mr. Kozak commented that the basin will have an aerator for mosquito prevention.

Final Major Subdivision: (continued)

1. #1838 – Blaze Mill Development Group, LLC (continued)

Motion passed to close the hearing to the public.

Mr. O'Brien stated it appears the applicant is requesting two waivers and the extension request. Ms. Gaglione replied that there are two waivers and the extension request which is actually for five years; the three years since the last extension and then the two years moving forward. Motion by Mr. Kozak, seconded by Mr. Garbowski to grant the extension and the waivers. Roll call vote Ayes – Mr. Caspar, Mayor DiLucia, Mr. Garbowski, Mr. Kozak, Mr. O'Reilly, Mr. Verratti, Mr. Laughlin, Mr. O'Brien. Nays – Zero. Abstentions – Zero. Motion by Mr. Laughlin, seconded by Mr. Kozak to grant final approval for Phases 1 through 5 subject to comments in the planner and engineer review letters and agreed to on the record and the submission of compliance plans. Roll call vote: Ayes – Mr. Caspar, Mayor DiLucia, Mr. Garbowski, Mr. Kozak, Mr. O'Reilly, Mr. Verratti, Mr. Laughlin, Mr. O'Brien. Nays – Zero. Abstentions – Zero.

Public Portion:

Motion passed to open the meeting to the public. There being none, motion passed to close the meeting to the public.

Reports:

No reports.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

These minutes are an extract from the meeting that was held on the above date and are not a verbatim account or to be construed as an official transcript of the proceedings.

Respectfully submitted by: Ninette Orbaczewski, Clerk Transcriber.