



THOMAS COMMITTA ASSOCIATES, INC.  
Town Planners & Landscape Architects

## MEMORANDUM

TO: East Vincent Township Officials, Staff and Consultants  
446 Stony Run Road (Bechtel Farm at Stony Run) Team

FROM: Thomas J. Comitta, AICP, CNU-A, RLA  
Erin L. Gross, AICP, RLA

DATE: November 6, 2023

SUBJECT: **REVIEW COMMENTS: 446 STONY RUN (BECHTEL FARM AT STONY RUN) -  
CONDITIONAL USE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (53 LOTS), DATED REVISED 9-29-2023**

Please note the enclosed Review Comments pertaining to the following documents that we received on October 5, 2023, and to a site visit on September 2, 2022 including:

- Sketch Conditional Use Development Plan (53 Lots) – Bechtel Farm at Stony Run (2 Sheets), prepared by EB Walsh & Associates, Inc. and Stuart and Associates, dated revised 9-29-2023;
- Response Letter to TCA June 15, 2023 Letter, per the 53 Lot Conditional Use Development Plan, prepared by Artisan Construction Group, LLC, dated 10-4-2023; and
- Waiver Request Letter, prepared by Artisan Construction Group, LLC, dated 10-4-2023.

Please call if there are any questions.



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November 7, 2023

Please note the comments below are general, overarching, informal, planning considerations and comments that pertain to the documents listed on the cover Memorandum.

**1. Overall Planning and Layout**

1.1. Overall, TCA believes that the 87 lot Plan reflects a better holistic design. While the 87 lot Plan provides denser development on the northern parcel, the clustered, compact development concentrates the density and provides for more preserved open space and natural areas.

In contrast, the 53 lot Plan may result in a more sprawling development in the future if the southern 80 acre parcel is also developed (and not dedicated to the Township for preservation), which would consume more land and leave less land to be preserved as open space.

1.2. TCA believes that the overall layout of lots is daunting. The layout exhibits a sameness, without variation to lot widths, and front yard building setbacks. Further, we believe that the layout will be lacking character and a sense of place.

1.3. The Applicant has submitted a 53 lot Plan, which proposes to utilize the Open Space Design Option/TDR Ordinance in order to increase the base density of 41 lots to 53 lots. The Applicant should clarify the tract from which the TDRs are being sent, and how the TDRs are being calculated. For example, if a portion of the Sending Area tract is being reserved for potential future development, what portion is proposed to be utilized as a Sending Area for the TDRs, and do these parcels contain any constrained lands per Section 27-2403.1.B.(4)(ZO).

1.4. The Applicant indicates that the 80 acre parcel adjacent to the south is no longer proposed to be dedicated to the Township, but will be reserved for potential future development. If the TDRs utilized for the 53 Lot Plan are being sent from the adjacent parcel, please clarify how this impacts the potential future development for the adjacent 80 acre parcel, and what the total yield for the southern parcel might be.

**2. Open Space Design Option Purpose**

2.1. Section 27-901 (ZO), outlines the Purpose of the Open Space Design Option. Please see our comments below relative to the 53 lot Plan and the Purpose of the Open Space Design Option.

a. Section 27-901.2. (ZO) To provide for a more varied, innovative, and efficient development pattern.

TCA does not believe that the 53 lot Plan provides a varied, innovative, or efficient development pattern.

b. Section 27-901.4. (ZO) To preserve unique and sensitive landscapes and site features, including agricultural soils, woodlands, wetlands, and scenic views, by locating new dwelling sites in areas removed from such features.

The proposed 53 lot Plan consumes as much land as the 87 lot Plan, and does not preserve the parcel to the south, thus having the potential to consume more unique and sensitive landscapes and site features. Therefore, TCA does not believe the 53 lot Plan achieves this Purpose.



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- c. Section 27-901.5. (ZO) To protect scenic vistas from encroachment by development.

The proposed 53 lot Plan consumes as much land as the 87 lot Plan, and does not preserve the parcel to the south, thus having the potential to impact additional site vistas from development. In addition, the 53 lot Plan provides very limited screening and buffering between the proposed lots and the adjacent parcels. In addition, the planting buffer along Stony Run in the proposed 53 lot Plan is narrower in width than what is depicted on the 87 lot Plan, and will not provide as much buffering and protection of view sheds. Therefore, TCA does not believe the 53 lot Plan achieves this Purpose.

- d. Section 27-901.6. (ZO). To retain and protect open space areas within residential development.

The proposed 53 lot Plan consumes as much land as the 87 lot Plan, and does not preserve the parcel to the south, thus having the potential to consume more open space. In addition, the 53 lot Plan does not include any internal open space like the 87 lot Plan provides. Therefore, TCA does not believe the 53 lot Plan achieves this Purpose.

- e. Section 27-901.7. (ZO) To provide a means to attain the aims and objectives of the East Vincent Township Comprehensive Plan relative to orderly growth and the enhancement of environmental resources.

The proposed 53 lot Plan consumes as much land as the 87 lot Plan, and does not preserve the parcel to the south, thus having the potential to consume more open space and less protection of environmental resources. In addition, since the Applicant is no longer proposing to dedicate the 80 acre parcel to the Township, additional development may occur, which is not being planned in an orderly or holistic manner. Therefore, TCA does not believe the 53 lot Plan achieves this Purpose.

- f. Section 27-901.8. (ZO). To support the specific objectives of the East Vincent Township Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resources Plan.

The East Vincent Township Open Space, Recreation and Environmental Resources (OSRER) Plan indicates that “As development occurs, it would be prudent for the Township to guide development in such a way so as to optimize both the actual preservation of open and environmental resources and the “image “ of a rural community. Key to accomplishing these factors are the distribution pattern of development and the overall density of development in certain areas.”. Since the southern parcel is no longer proposed to be dedicated to the Township and preserved as open space, the 53 lot Plan has the potential to consume more land with future development and is not in keeping with the recommendations of the OSRER Plan. Therefore, TCA does not believe the 53 lot Plan achieves this Purpose.

**3. Open Space and Pedestrian Gathering Space**

- 3.1. The Applicant should indicate the uses proposed for the areas designed for open space, in accordance with §27-906.B.(ZO), such as crop or pasture land, any type of recreation area, etc.



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- 3.2. The 53 lot Plan does not propose any internal open space or central green feature. The Applicant indicates that the lots are larger, and thus provide enough space for individual recreation. However, the lack of a central green feature creates a very conventional, lackluster development in our opinion, with no sense of place or sense of community. The proposed layout for the 53 lots does not provide any gathering space and, therefore, does not promote any type of community interaction or neighborly environment. The lack of open space does not facilitate a varied or innovative design or retain open space within the residential development, per Sections 27-901.2 and 27-901.6 (ZO).

We recommend that a green feature be added to the Plan. If a green is not internal to the layout, then we recommend that it be added off of the proposed cul-de-sac in the southeastern portion of the site near the proposed trail.

- 3.3. As part of a forthcoming Open Space Management Plan, the Applicant should specify the long-term management provisions that will be established for any riparian buffer area in accordance with §22-429.E. (SALDO).

**4. Landscaping and Buffering**

- 4.1. The majority of the proposed landscaping and buffering on the 53 lot Plan is depicted to be on individual lots. Section 22-422.3.B.(1) (SALDO) requires that the entire perimeter of any tract undergoing subdivision or land development shall be provided with a planting strip with a minimum of 20 feet in width. Therefore, the Applicant should address how proposed landscaping and buffering will be maintained in perpetuity.
- 4.2. As part of the riparian management, we believe that stream corridor plantings should be included as part of the proposed Landscape Plan in order to properly achieve conservation and to implement best land management techniques and practices as required per §22-429.E.(SALDO).

**5. Trail**

- 5.1. We believe that the current location of the trail located west of Basin #2 should be modified, as it is too close in proximity to the tract boundary property line.

Please call if there are any questions.