



September 4, 2018

Chris Wider- Chairman  
Town of Norfolk- Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)  
One Liberty Lane  
Norfolk, MA 02056

Re: Norfolk, MA- The Preserve at Abbyville/ Abbyville Commons  
Comprehensive Plan- Landscape Design

Dear Mr. Wider:

As requested, BETA Group, Inc. (BETA) has completed a follow-up review of the Landscape Design plans submitted by the Applicant. BETA previously provided comments to the Board in a letter dated February 6, 2018. The following materials were reviewed:

- *The Preserve at Abbyville and Abbyville Commons, Landscape Master Plan, dated 1/15/2018 (revised)*
- *Landscape Plans and Details revise date August 1, 2018.*

The review considered the requirements in the Norfolk 'Rules & Regulations for Subdivision of Land & Site Plan Approval,' amended September 16, 2010 (referred to herein as the Subdivision/Site Plan Regulations) and general landscape design practice.

The Applicant has provided responses to our previous comments. These are included along with BETA's follow-up comments.

#### SUBDIVISION/SITE PLAN REGULATIONS

The following comments are based on the requirements in the Subdivision/Site Plan Regulations. We recognize that waivers may be requested from some sections of the Subdivision/Site Plan Regulations.

##### Section 3.3.2.19 Tree Plan

Locate existing trees on the plan that are over 12 inches in diameter within the ROW and 10 feet beyond that are to remain or to be removed.

Due to the proposed site grading, it appears that all existing trees within the proposed ROW and 10 feet beyond will be removed. New street tree plantings are proposed. However, more critical areas are at the southeastern and southwestern edges of the project site where the project abuts existing residential areas along Lawrence Street and the town of Franklin. The landscape plans appear to show a limit of clearing. This line should be clearly labeled. It is suggested that a dimension be provided to the property line when the clearing limit is adjacent to abutting private property to ensure the work is contained on the Applicant's property.

*Response: The proposed limit of clearing will be staked in the field prior to the start of construction, as noted on sheet L-1. BETA - No dimensions provided however, a note that is worded above, is provided*

on L-1, Issue resolved.

#### Section 4.9.4 Trees

Proposed trees are to be planted in the grass strips along both sides of the roadways and shall be spaced 40 feet or less on center. See also Section 5.9. Proposed trees are shown on both sides of the proposed roads.

The current landscape plans show spacing of proposed trees to be approximately 50-70 feet on center. Given the proposed lot frontages and driveway locations, this is appropriate spacing.

*Response: The applicant agrees that the proposed spacing of 50-70' on center is appropriate and is seeking a waiver from Section 5.9 as noted on The List of Waivers and sheet L-1 in the zoning chart. BETA - Issue resolved, pending granting of waiver.*

#### Section 4.11 Open Space, Parks and Playgrounds

Planning Board may require a park or parks for playground or recreation purpose to serve residents. Applicant has provided a large (approximately 1.3 acre) open space (grass area above proposed treatment area) as part of the Abbyville Commons project and an open space area with gazebo as part of The Preserve at Abbyville project. Consideration should be given to adding a small playground and/or court area for residents.

*Response: Consideration has been given to playground and court areas for the residents, however, the applicant does not intend to include these elements at this time. The project includes large open spaces that connect to the existing trail network. Amenities on site include: A Central Pavilion, An Overlook Pavilion, a Gazebo and walking trails. BETA - Issue resolved.*

#### Section 4.12.1 Protection of Natural Resources

Developer shall mark trees greater than 4-inch diameter in the ROW. All trees except those approved for removal by the Planning Board shall be protected against construction damage. Plans should clearly show those trees to remain and/or to be protected during construction. See Comment on Section 3.3.2.19.

*Response: As noted above, all trees within the proposed Limit of Work will be removed. The balance of the site (approximately 140 acres), outside of the proposed right-of-way will be preserved. See also comment response on section 3.3.2.19 above. The applicant is seeking a waiver from Section 4.12.1 as noted on The List of Waivers. BETA - Issue resolved, pending granting of waiver.*

#### Section 4.14.9.6 Cul-de-sac Plantings

The applicant shall submit a landscape plan for the central portion of a cul-de-sac. Provide planting plans/details for central portion of cul-de-sacs. The submitted plans include proposed plantings in the center circle for the roundabout on Eliot Boulevard and the cul-de-sac on Green Circle. What treatment is proposed for the roundabout on Buckley Boulevard? The planting plans for the roundabout should be further developed in the final design to include loam and seed areas, hardscape areas and treatment of the splitter islands.

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*Response: The treatment for the proposed roundabout referenced above includes shade trees, flowering shrubs, perennials, and a lawn area. See sheet L-2 for planting layout and plant selection. BETA – Consider revising center planting at the Main Entrance Plan, Sheet L-2; both the Holly and the Forsythia will grow over 6 feet in height and this may impede driver’s sight distance. Coordinate plantings with underground utilities (water and sewer).*

#### Section 4.15 Slopes

Excavated cuts shall have a maximum slope of 3:1 and cut slopes higher than 15 feet shall be benched and approved by the Planning Board. Provide a typical cross section detail of these slopes showing the required bench and note locations on plans. Show landscape treatments for the slope.

*Response: The proposed slope is 2:1 in some locations. These areas will be seeded with New England Conservation/ Wildlife mix that will be sprayed with tackifier to prevent erosion during germination, as noted on sheets L-1 and L-3. In some locations there are 4-5’ tall evergreens at the top of the slope adjacent to abutting house lots. Additionally, shrubs are proposed midway up the slope. See sheet L-3 for planting layout and plant selection. BETA - Issue resolved.*

#### Section 5.2.1.1 Minimum Width Requirements

Provide a 6.5-foot grass strip with a 5-foot-wide sidewalk on outside of grass strip.

*Response: These elements have been provided in the original submission package. BETA - Issue resolved.*

#### Section 5.9 Street Trees

Trees shall be planted in the grass strip (or in easements) at 35 feet on center on both sides of the road and shall be at least 3-inch diameter at the time of planting.

See comment on Section 4.9.4 Proposed trees are shown on both sides of the proposed roads. Spacing of proposed trees appears to be approximately 50-70 feet on center. Proposed trees are listed at 2.5-3” caliper. Suggest specifying 3-inch minimum caliper per Section 5.9.

*Response: The middle range of common nursery stock sizing for street trees is 2.5-3” caliper. This size allows the trees to adapt readily to their transplanted condition. BETA - Issue resolved.*

#### Section 5.9.1 Tree Species

Street tree species shall be chosen from the list provided.

All shade trees shown on the Landscape Schedule are in the approved list of street trees with the exception of Yellowwood. We note that Yellowwood is not shown on the plans as a street but rather planted within the proposed apartment area. American Hornbeam is more of an understory tree than a street tree. Consider replacing this species with the European Hornbeam. Consider replacing the Sugar Maples along the streets with other species that are more salt tolerant.

*Response: Modifications to the landscape plans have been made as noted: Yellowwood has been replaced with European Beech, European Hornbeam has been added, and Sugar Maple has been replaced with Sweetgum and White Oak. See Sheet L-1 for all tree species. BETA - Issue resolved.*

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Section 5.9.2 There shall be at least three species of trees planted per street. No species of tree be planted adjacent to any other tree shall be the same species as that tree.

The layout of the proposed street trees does not follow the prescribed method however; we feel the layout of tree species along the roadways and within the development is acceptable

*Response: The applicant agrees, and has not modified the overall concept of the street tree species distribution.* BETA - Issue resolved.

#### 5.10 Loaming and Seeding

The removal of topsoil from the development area will not be allowed. Existing topsoil shall be retained/reused on-site.

If excess material remains after all lawn and planting work is complete the developer should consider spreading topsoil within bare areas existing in adjacent wooded or partially wooded areas and seeding with a native mix, or in the open area near the boat house.

*Response: As requested, the Applicant intends to utilize material by providing 6" of loam on bare spots outside of the building area. This is the adjacent exposed (stripped) open area, it will be seeded with the New England Conservation/ Wildlife mix, as noted on Sheet L-1. The applicant is seeking a waiver from Section 5.10 as noted on The List of Waivers.* BETA - Issue resolved, pending granting of waiver.

#### PLAN COMMENTS

The following comments/suggestions are based on review of the provided landscape plans.

1. Consider a mix of evergreen trees and shrubs at the top of slope or along the property line as screening between #51-#25 Lawrence Street and the project site.

*Response: Evergreen trees are proposed along the property line as seen on sheet L-3.* BETA - Issue resolved.

2. Show location of house and driveway of #32 Lawrence Street on plans. The proposed main project entrance road connects to Lawrence Street near this property and the proponent should consider headlights of cars leaving the project site.

*Response: The house and driveway is shown diagrammatically on sheet L-1, for reference only.* BETA – Project site exit driveway appears to align with the neighbor's barn. Issue resolved.

3. Consider adding some shrubs and a berm to the evergreen tree (8 trees) planting southwest of the main entrance to screen the development from the road.

*Response: An understory planting of shrubs has been proposed along the front of the proposed evergreen trees, see sheet L-2.* BETA - Issue resolved.

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4. Consider adding a few evergreen trees at the rear of house lots northwest of the gazebo.

*Response: Evergreen trees have been added to the plans in this location, see sheet L-1 for exact locations.* BETA - Issue resolved.

5. Consider adding a few evergreen trees to the south of the drainage basins at the northwest corner of the property.

*Response: Evergreen trees have been added to the plans in this location, see sheet L-1 for exact locations.* BETA - Issue resolved.

6. Consider adding some native deciduous and evergreen shrubs to all areas between the rear of homes that have some evergreen trees and conservation seed mix.

*Response: Additional shrubs between the rear of homes and the evergreen tree plantings can be seen in the prototypical plan on sheet L-7.* BETA - Issue resolved.

7. Consider adding some native deciduous and evergreen shrubs for screening of basins and areas along the edge of the project site.

*Response: Additional evergreen trees have been added to the plans in these locations, see sheet L-1 for exact locations.* BETA - Issue resolved.

8. Consider adding a few evergreen trees to the northeast side of the 6 guest parking spaces just southeast of the gazebo.

*Response: Evergreen trees have been added to the plans in this location, see sheet L-1 for exact locations.* BETA - Issue resolved.

9. The expanse of evergreen plantings and conservation mix between buildings is a real plus to the development in terms of visual connectivity and habitat creation for creatures and pollinators. How will the Applicant prevent the residents from mowing down these areas?

*Response: These areas will be maintained by the Applicant's landscape contractor.* BETA - Issue resolved.

10. Consider adding a few shade trees to the lawn area between the eastern project entrance and the proposed boat house.

*Response: Additional trees have been added, see sheet L-1 and L-4.* BETA - Issue resolved.

11. Are the tanks and equipment associated with the pump station above grade? For safety, do these structures need to be fenced or walled off? Provide adequate visual screening and protection.

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*Response: See civil plans for details on the pump station. Evergreen trees for screening have been added, see sheet L-1 and L-4. BETA – Have reviewed additional information received from the design team. Building is the only structure above grade. Architectural design of building design fits into residential development. All other equipment for the WWTF is below grade. These items will be accessible by manholes. Issue resolved.*

12. Consider curving the walk from the sidewalk to the boat house through the open area instead of between the pump station and a first house.

*Response: A new layout has been proposed to utilize one of the existing foundations on site. Proposed sidewalks connect the pump station and the existing trailhead. BETA – Issue resolved.*

13. To the north of the round-about on Eliot Boulevard there is one common driveway for 2 houses. This is the only common driveway on the project. Consider revising so each house has its own driveway.

*Response: The shared driveway has been removed from this location. BETA - Issue resolved.*

14. Consider breaking up the long expanse of garage doors by removing the center 2 and installing planting space for a tree and shrubs. This open space could lead pedestrians to the rear of the garages. We understand that the Applicant is proposing changes to the layout of the garages for Abbyville Commons. We'll comment as appropriate on the revisions once they are available for review.

*Response: See civil drawings for the new site layout. BETA – Building layout has been revised and number of doors has been reduced. Issue resolved.*

15. Consider options for treating the large open space at the backs of the long garages by including a playground or play space or large shade trees. We understand that the Applicant is proposing changes to the layout of the garages for Abbyville Commons. We'll comment as appropriate on the revisions once they are available for review.

*Response: Evergreen trees have been added to the back of the garages, see sheet L-6. BETA - Issue resolved.*

16. Consider adding benches along interior paths though open spaces, at the gazebo, or along the walks on the outer edge of the common green space.

*Response: Benches have been added along the paths in the gazebo area and along the common green space. See L-1 for bench locations. BETA - Issue resolved.*

17. Consider landscape treatments around the exposed ledge in the northwest corner of the site.

*Response: Shrubs, evergreen trees, and lawn have been added to this location, see sheet L-1. BETA - Issue resolved.*

18. Consider adding some screening of rear decks from abutting homes where applicable.

*Response: Additional screening has been added, see sheet L-1 for tree locations. BETA - Issue resolved.*

19. Provide typical planting plan for a rental duplex unit.

*Response: A prototypical planting plan has been created for the two duplex architectural styles, see sheet L-6. BETA - Issue resolved.*

20. Provide typical planting plan for a rental garage building.

*Response: A prototypical planting plan has been created for a garage building, see sheet L-6. BETA - Issue resolved.*

21. Provide an illustrative cross section from west to east through the single family homes, garage, rental units, and green space/common, and back through the single family homes on the other side. Show buildings, trees, and scaled people.

*Response: A cross section is provided on sheet L-6. BETA - Issue resolved.*

22. Provide an illustrative cross section through the evergreen plantings and conservation seed that shows the houses, yards, and conservation areas. Show buildings, trees, and scaled people.

*Response: A cross section is provided on sheet L-3. BETA - Issue resolved.*

23. The street lighting design proposes to provide lighting at critical areas such as intersections and roundabouts. Street lighting is not proposed continuously along the roadways. A lamp post will be installed at each property driveway to provide some pedestrian level lighting. This approach is reasonable for this type of residential development. The Applicant should provide a photometric layout showing foot-candle distribution at each proposed light.

*Response: The photometric information has been added to the plan set, see sheets L-10- L-12. BETA - Issue resolved.*

24. Street lights should be full-cut off dark sky compliant fixtures.

*Response: The proposed street light fixtures are full cut off dark sky compliant. BETA - Issue resolved.*

NEW COMMENTS (8/1/2018 Plans)

25. Overlook Pavilion Area – Sheet L-4

- § It appears that the walkway to the plaza area shown on Sheet L-4 has a slope of approximately 10%. If this walkway is intended to be ADA accessible, then handrails and landing areas should be included and noted on the plans.
- § Consider using native plants within the wetland setback areas.

If we can be of any further assistance regarding this matter, please contact us at our office.

Very truly yours,  
BETA Group, Inc.



William P. McGrath, P.E.  
Senior Associate

cc:  
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