



May 4, 2020

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

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

Dear Mr. Wider:

As requested, BETA Group, Inc. (BETA) has completed a review of the revised Landscape Design plans submitted by the Applicant. The following materials were reviewed:

- *The Preserve at Abbyville, Landscape Plans, L1-L, 6 dated 3/9/2020 (revised)*

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 design and our initial comments were discussed with the Applicant and design team in a teleconference on May 1, 2020.

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 and dimensioned on the plans. This line should be staked in the field prior to construction. 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.

4/13/20 Bohler Response: The applicant will be requesting a waiver for trees to be preserved within the ROW. The Site Plan has been revised to show when the limit of clearing is less than 10' from the property line that the distance to the property line will be flagged or staked in the field.

BETA –This approach is acceptable. Issue resolved

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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 most proposed trees to be spaced approximately 40-50 feet on center. Given the proposed lot frontages and driveway locations, this is appropriate spacing.

4/13/20 Bohler Response: The landscape plan has been updated to show these trees located on the backside of the sidewalks.

BETA – Issue resolved

Section 4.11 Open Space, Parks and Playgrounds

Planning Board may require a park or parks for playground or recreation purpose to serve residents. Consideration should be given to adding walking trails or a small playground for residents. Show proposed/existing recreation elements on the plans.

4/13/20 Bohler Response: The landscape plan has been updated to show a trail that connects to an open space area located in the northwest corner of the property

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. Request waiver(s) as needed.

4/13/20 Bohler Response: Applicant will seek a waiver.

BETA – Issue resolved pending disposition of waiver request.

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-sac. We note that the Board requested inclusion of a center island at its meeting on March 12th.

4/13/20 Bohler Response: The site plan has been updated to show an island within the cul-de-sac. The landscape plans have been updated to show landscaping within this island.

BETA – Issue resolved. We understand that maintenance responsibility for the planting will be through the HOA.

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. This was also requested as part of the Civil/Site review in our letter dated March 5, 2020.

4/13/20 Bohler Response: A cross section detail has been created and incorporated in the landscape

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package.

BETA – The cross section has been provided and reviewed. Some concern remains regarding the grading as shown. This is also noted in our civil/site review letter. However, based on discussion with the Applicant's team on 5/1/2020, an alternate grading concept is being considered. We believe that the grading can be accomplished in a satisfactory manner.

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. It appears that the grass strip is 6.5 feet on the main road and less on the side road.

4/13/20 Bohler Response: The site plan has been updated to show a continuous grass strip between the road and sidewalk.

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 40-50 feet on center. Proposed trees are listed at 2.5-3" caliper. Suggest specifying 3-inch minimum caliper per Section 5.9.

4/13/20 Bohler Response: The landscape schedule has been updated to specify 3" caliper trees for the street trees.

BETA – Issue resolved

Section 5.9.1 Tree Species

Street tree species shall be chosen from the list provided – or other such tree variety, as appropriate, and as may be approved by the Planning Board.

All street trees shown on the Landscape Schedule are in the approved list of street trees with the exception of Tupelo however, it is solid native tree and we feel it can be used.

4/13/20 Bohler Response: No comment.

BETA – Issue resolved

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 follows the prescribed method.

4/13/20 Bohler Response: No comment.

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.

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

4/13/20 Bohler Response: Applicant agrees to comply to the extent that if after all existing bare areas are spread with 6" of topsoil, then the balance would need to be removed offsite.

BETA – During a tele-conference on it was suggested that a waiver be requested to allow removal of topsoil with the condition that the Applicant will make a reasonable effort to use all topsoil on site

PLAN COMMENTS

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

1. The last lots (lots 8, 9, 10 & 11) on the east side of the main road contain significant amount of retaining walls. Is it possible to use the property to the east to perform grading that might eliminate or substantially reduce the amount of retaining walls needed?

4/13/20 Bohler Response: The applicant has expressed that it is not possible.

BETA – Issue resolved. Also see comment #2 below

2. Provide cross section at 1"=10' vertical and horizontal, through unit and retaining walls in the back yard. Show heights of walls, spaces between walls, and a scaled human figure.

4/13/20 Bohler Response: A cross section detail has been created and incorporated in the landscape package.

BETA – See comment 4.15 above. Various grading and wall options were discussed during tele-conference – Applicant will submit additional information on wall layout, grading, planting, and plant maintenance for review/discussion.

3. Provide information on how the plants at the retaining walls will be maintained over time and by whom. Will these plantings be irrigated?

4/13/20 Bohler Response: The plants on the retaining walls will be maintained by the individual homeowners. Proposed plants will not require irrigation beyond the establishment period.

BETA – Applicant will provide additional information for review – see comment #2 above.

4. Provide vegetated screening of basin from the units to the east.

4/13/20 Bohler Response: The landscape plan has been updated to include vegetated screening between the basin and the impacted units.

BETA – Issue resolved

5. Plans show seeding over exposed bedrock. Provide details on how this will be constructed.

4/13/20 Bohler Response: There are two areas where bedrock is anticipated to be encountered. The first,

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in the center of the development, is exposed at grade and no proposed grading is intended for that area. Therefore, no proposed topsoil and seeding is anticipated in that area – it falls outside of the limit of grading. The second area, to the southwest of condo units 5 and 6, is anticipated to be a loamed and seeded slope as shown on the grading and landscape plans. However, if ledge is encountered during construction, it will be graded into a more vertical face, which will allow for less disturbance of existing vegetation to remain at the top of the slope.

BETA – This approach is acceptable. Issue resolved

6. There is a +/- 200 linear foot open area, along the property line, to the northeast of the last house on Camden Way in Franklin. Provide additional vegetative screening in this area.

4/13/20 Bohler Response: The landscape plan has been updated to show screening in gaps with less vegetation along the property line to provide a visual buffer between the proposed units and the last house on Camden Way.

BETA – Issue resolved

7. Consider adding a cross walk across Lawrence Street and bituminous sidewalk connecting to the existing sidewalk at Bretts Farm Road.

4/13/20 Bohler Response: The site plan has been updated to include a handicap ramp on the development's side of Lawrence Street. The applicant is not proposing a cross walk on Lawrence Street.

BETA – Issue resolved

8. 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?

4/13/20 Bohler Response: There will be language covered in the HOA and condo documentation.

BETA – Issue resolved

9. Confirm that the existing streetlight on Lawrence Street works. Fix or replace the light if does not work.

4/13/20 Bohler Response: The applicant will confirm the operational condition of the existing streetlight on Lawrence street and will replace if necessary.

BETA – Issue resolved

10. 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 has provided a photometric layout showing foot-candle distribution at each proposed light.

4/13/20 Bohler Response: The applicant will confirm the operational condition of the existing streetlight on Lawrence street and will replace if necessary.

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BETA – Issue resolved

11. Streetlights should be full-cut off dark sky compliant fixtures.

4/13/20 Bohler Response: The fixtures proposed are full-cut off dark sky compliant.

BETA – Issue resolved

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

Very truly yours,
BETA Group, Inc.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "William P. McGrath".

William P. McGrath, P.E.
Senior Associate

cc:
Job No: 4980.23