

JUSTIFICATION STATEMENT FOR AMENDMENT TO THE PATUXENT GREENS PUD-E PLAN FOR APPROVAL

I. INTRODUCTION

On February 8, 1982, the Mayor and City Council of Laurel, Maryland annexed ±267 acres of property, located on the east side of MD 197, approximately one-tenth of a mile south of its intersection with MD 198 and placed the entire property in the Planned Unit Development (“PUD”) zone and approved with a Preliminary Plan to have 753 dwelling units (670 multifamily/83 townhouse), 75,000 sf office/retail, and a recreational facility. The Preliminary Plan was amended in September, 1983 (Resolution No. 16-83) and September, 1984 (Resolution No. 12-84) to modify the development mix to be 569 dwelling units (133 single-family detached, 216 plexes, 220 low-rise condominium), 164,000 sf of office, and 12,000 sf of retail. The subject of this application concerns the golf course portion of the PUD, which is ±191.71 acres of the ±267 piece of land located at 14415 Greenview Drive in Laurel, Maryland, on the eastern corner of Greenview Drive and Clubhouse Boulevard, approximately one-tenth of a mile southeast from the intersection of Laurel Bowie Road (Maryland Route 197) and Clubhouse Boulevard (“Subject Property” or “Property”).

Cohen Siegel Investors (the “Applicant”), requests the Planning Commission’s and Mayor and City Council’s consideration of an amendment to the Preliminary Plan of Planned Unit Development (the “Amendment”) for the Property to accommodate a redevelopment of the golf course and adaptive reuse of the clubhouse. The details and justification of the proposed amendment are set forth in detail below.

This application is made pursuant to Section 20-10.7 and Section 20-4.5(a) and (b) of the City of Laurel Zoning Ordinance (“Zoning Ordinance”).

II. SUMMARY OF PUD-E AMENDMENT REQUEST

The requested amendment would allow the Applicant to seek Final Site and Landscape Plan approval in order to redevelop the Subject Property into a residential community with up to 450 dwelling units comprised of a mixture of single-family detached and attached houses grouped into eight (8) pods or land bays of various sizes. The proposed amendment will retain densities and development standards similar to the previously approved residential communities and in accordance with the Zoning Ordinance.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY

a. LOCATION

As stated previously, the Property is located at 14415 Greenview Drive in Laurel, Maryland, on the eastern corner of Greenview Drive and Clubhouse Boulevard, approximately one-tenth of a mile southeast from the intersection of Laurel Bowie Road (Maryland Route 197) and Clubhouse Boulevard. The ±191.7 acres Property is recorded as Amenity Area Patuxent Greens Golf Course on Plat No. 23135 in the Prince George’s County Records and is zoned PUD-E within the municipal limits of the City of Laurel (the “City”).

The Property is included within Neighborhood 10 in the City's Master Plan (Master Plan Map No. 10) and has approximately 300 linear feet of frontage along Green View Drive, abuts single-family detached and multifamily dwelling units to the west, the Patuxent River to the east, and City property to the northeast. A City community facility is located towards the entrance of the Property and shares a parking lot with the Property. The Property is approximately 65% developed as an 18-hole golf course, including a clubhouse, pro shop, maintenance sheds, parking lot, paved golf cart trails, driving range, and irrigation ponds. The site generally slopes 2 feet east to west with rolling hills, berms, and sand bunkers within the golf play area. Earthen berms are located along the Patuxent River and Bear Branch edges.

b. ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

The Property contains ± 0.14 acres of emergent wetlands, ± 0.87 acres of non-tidal vegetated wetland buffers, and ± 9.12 total acres of irrigation ponds. Approximately 2,800 linear feet of Bear Branch, which is a Waters of the US, runs through the northeast portion of the Property. The southeast boundary of the Property abuts the Patuxent River which is designated as Waters of the US. The Property drains to the Upper Patuxent River watershed (DNR 021311040939). The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) panel for Anne Arundel County (240008 0104 E) and Prince Georges County (245208 0053 E/0054E) shows the entire site and some of the adjacent residential properties lays within the 100-year floodplain. The development plans to submit for Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) once the appropriate floodplain mitigation strategy has been identified.

There are six forest stands on the site totaling ± 67.34 acres, one of which is east of Bear Branch. Three forest stands have a high retention priority because they abut Waters of the US/State, have intermittent/ephemeral streams, wetlands, and provide potential forest interior dwelling bird habitat. Two of the forest stands are geographically isolated from larger contiguous forests, do not provide critical habitat for state/federal listed species, contain non-native and invasive plants, and are disturbed from past activities. Evidence of human disturbance include concrete piles, deposited lawn clippings and other material related to the golf course grounds maintenance. While significant and specimen trees exist on-site, no champion trees are evident. No tree variances are anticipated with this Project and a Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation Plan submitted. Per the Maryland Environmental Resource Land Information Network (MERLIN) and PG Atlas, no historic or cultural resources are located upon the Property. Lastly, no rare, threatened or endangered species were observed on the Property.

c. SURROUNDING AREA

For the purposes of evaluating the compatibility of the Project with the neighborhood, "Neighborhood" is defined as the properties located within one-half mile of the Property entrance at the intersection of Greenview Drive and Clubhouse Boulevard.

The Neighborhood is composed primarily of single-family detached residential and multifamily residential dwelling units with some office, religious, educational, and community uses. Along the western boundary, the Property abuts a City swimming pool and park, single-family detached and multifamily residential developments, and abuts forest/parkland along the northern, eastern, and southern boundaries. The abutting ±2.19 acres City recreational facility includes the Greenview Drive Pool Complex, the Greenview Drive Cabana, and Greenview Drive Park. The abutting single-family detached residential development known as Patuxent Glen, consists of 132 dwelling units built in the mid-late 1980s and is distributed among 1-2 story brick and siding homes. The abutting multifamily residential development known as The Village at the Green of Patuxent consists of 156 condominium units distributed in 3-story four-plex homes built in the mid-late 1980s. Directly across the Greenview Drive entrance is Lakeview at the Greens—±150,000 SF of Class-A office space distributed between two (2) brick and tinted glass 5-story office buildings constructed in the late 1980s, surrounded by surface parking. North of the office complex and northwest of the Property is Spring House Apartments, a garden style apartment complex of 220 dwelling units distributed among nine (9) 3.5-story buildings built in the mid-late 1980s.

IV. PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

a. INTRODUCTION

The proposed development will provide the City and surrounding neighborhoods with a thoughtfully-designed and welcoming community that promotes health, safety, welfare, and prosperity. The proposed development will preserve the natural environment and history of the property through environmental site design, protection of important views, and repurposing of existing structures. The proposed housing mixture is designed to appeal to a variety of incomes and aged groups in the hopes of developing and fostering a diverse community. It will provide a safe and efficient network of roads, sidewalks, and trails for complete connectivity within the community and to the surrounding neighborhood. The Property will promote healthy living by encouraging walking and cycling with an extensive trail network and expansive collection of passive and programmed recreational areas dispersed throughout the community.

b. DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Property will be accessed from the existing Greenview Drive entrance. A new community clubhouse with programmed recreational facilities will be provided for the future residents. The remainder of the Property will be programmed to incorporate housing, recreation, stormwater management, forest conservation, and open space uses. It is intended that the existing clubhouse be converted to a banquet rental facility subject to market viability. The housing is programmed as land bays around the natural features to preserve the environment and enhance important views. The land bays will include passive and active recreational areas. The housing mix will consist of ±200-300 townhomes and ±100-200 single-family detached homes for a total of up to 450 dwelling units with densities, lot sizes and setbacks similar to the surrounding residential communities. Overall the maximum proposed

density for the site is approximately 2.3 dwelling units/acre gross tract area or 5.6 dwelling units/acre net tract area. Current single-family detached houses lot sizes range between 4,000 SF and 6,000 SF and a respective density of 10.9 dwelling units/acre or 7.3 dwelling units/acre. The proposed single-family detached homes will have a comparable minimum lot size of 5,000 SF, while the proposed density is significantly less than currently permitted. Townhomes, meanwhile, will have lot sizes of 1,500 SF for inner lots and 2,000 SF for outer lots—comparable to the current maximum lot size of 2,000 SF for inner lots and 3,000 SF for out lots. The proposed density for townhomes is, also, much less than the 10 dwelling units/acre that is currently permitted.

c. OPEN AND TRANSITION SPACES

The proposed land use will follow a cluster development pattern with a traditional neighborhood development influence. The units are being clustered to provide more usable open space and better forest preservation opportunities. Forested, passive, and active recreation areas will be provided within and around the residential land bays giving residents easy access to open space. Open space areas will complement the abutting properties in a harmonious manner. Where residential lots abut off-site residential lots, lot sizes and housing type will be compatible and of an appropriate nature.

Through the golf course conversion, open space and forest will be accessible to all future and current residents with possible connections to and from the surrounding communities. The proposed open spaces will tie the community together, create a more cohesive neighborhood and provide safe pedestrian travel. Trails and sidewalks will be tied-in to the existing off-site network to provide a greater integrating of the Property to the surrounding neighborhood and public transit system. On-site forested areas that abut the wildlife refuge and Patuxent River, will be preserved to augment the wildlife refuge's conservation efforts, while also protecting the River.

d. CONNECTIVITY

The Property will use an extensive road, sidewalk, and trail system network to promote safe and efficient travel within the community and provide greater connectivity to the adjacent neighborhood and beyond. The Property is ± 0.10 mile east from Maryland Rt. 197 (Laurel Bowie Road), ± 0.5 mile south from Maryland Rt. 198 (Ft. Meade Road), ± 1.1 miles east of US-1 (Baltimore Avenue), ± 3 miles west from Interstate 95, and ± 3.3 miles northwest from Maryland Rt. 200 (Intercounty Connector). An existing sidewalk connects the Property to the residential and office developments to the west. The existing sidewalk is also within ± 0.10 mile from the WMATA 87 bus stop (Laurel Express Line) which further connects residents to multiple shopping centers and the Greenbelt and New Carrollton Metro stations.

The primary spine road will extend from the Greenview Drive entrance and connect the various housing land bays. Sidewalks and crosswalks will provide pedestrians safe access to, from and throughout the site. One benefit to redeveloping an existing golf course is the existing

network of trails. These existing trails will be modified and expanded to allow residents to move freely and quickly throughout the Property and within protected areas where vehicular traffic is discouraged. The trails will encourage residents to walk and allow them to interact with nature and the community.

e. STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Through the conversion of the golf course to a residential development, the Property will implement environmental site design (ESD) technologies to the maximum extent practicable (MEP). Environmental Site Design utilizes small scale treatment practices spread through the development to capture, treat, and control the stormwater runoff from the site. Per the Maryland Department of the Environments design manual, implementing these small-scale practices will reduce the runoff from the site during a storm event to the level of runoff that would be produced by a wooded site in good condition. Also, by treating the runoff in smaller decentralized practices that are spread throughout the site instead of one large treatment facility allows the water to more naturally infiltrate into the ground and recharge the underlying water table while slowing and reducing the volume of site runoff to the adjacent streams. This prevents erosion of the sensitive stream banks and habitat. The existing on-site stormwater management pond is currently treating water from the adjacent residential developments. This pond will be retrofitted and will have the outfall upgraded. This will allow the pond to function as it was originally intended and manage the stormwater runoff from the adjacent sites. There will be no stormwater runoff or flooding on adjacent properties caused by the proposed development.

f. ENVIORNMENTAL BENEFITS

i. FOREST

A Natural Resource Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD) has been prepared for the project. The NRI/FSD document prioritizes the preservation of existing forest stands and regulated environmental features. Based on this NRI/FSD, a tree conservation plan will be prepared and submitted. The tree conservation plan will preserve the areas of the site identified on the NRI/FSD as having the highest priority for preservation, particularly the ±55 acres of forest stands to the northeast of Bear Run. Regulated environmental features such as streams, wetlands, and their associated buffers will be preserved in accordance to current code requirements. All preserved forest stands will be placed in a perpetual conservation easement that will preserve both the forest and the environmentally sensitive features contained within.

ii. Nutrient Mitigation

Through the conversion of the Property from a golf course to a residential development, modern stormwater management methods that meet the State's current water quality standards will be implemented to capture and treat stormwater runoff.

Additionally, the change in plant material from a golf course typology to a residential typology will facilitate a change in landscape maintenance methodology and intensity. This will result in a reduction of pesticide, herbicide, and fertilizer use. The combination of stormwater management and changed landscape typology will minimize the amount of nutrients entering the hydrological system and improve the water quality of the surrounding streams, wetlands, and groundwater.

iii. Floodplain Mitigation

Currently there are earthen berms on the Property that runs along the Patuxent River and Bear Branch. Although the site is designated to be within the floodplain by the existing FEMA maps, these berms currently prevent the Property from flooding in a 100-year flood event. Additionally, an engineering analysis of the floodplain was performed by the project's civil engineer that determined the floodplain elevation to actually be 2' lower than what is indicated on the FEMA floodplain map. This verified level brings the property and most of the existing adjacent residential properties above the floodplain elevation. Accordingly, as part of the development review, information will be submitted to revise the FEMA maps. In cooperation with the City, it may be possible to revise FEMA maps for adjacent communities as well. To mitigate the addition of fill in the floodplain, the client will excavate area within the floodplain to provide compensatory storage equal to the amount of fill added to the site to bring it above the floodplain elevation. A Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) will be submitted to FEMA for evaluation and approval of the revised floodplain delineation, followed by a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) once the site has been constructed and the proposed grades can be verified to be above the floodplain elevation.

V. REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCEDURES

The present application is being filed in accordance with Map Amendment procedures pursuant to § 20-24.5 of the Laurel Code—the present application being consistent with previous Map Amendments for the Subject Property. The present application is consistent with the intent of the PUD-E Zone. Sec. 20-10.1 of the Laurel City Code sets forth the intent of the PUD-E Zone as follows: “[t]o provide for certain uses and structures that are a part of a preliminary development plan or final development plan approved by the Mayor and City Council to continue as uses permitted by right. As previously stated, the present application is a request to amend the existing PUD development in the manner previously discussed and to permit redevelopment subject to new Final Site and Landscape Plan approval. Following discussions with Staff from the City of Laurel’s Department of Economic and Community Development, it was determined that the requested amendment constitutes a departure from the intent of the prior approvals. Thus, this amendment is subject to process by the Planning Commission and Mayor and City Council in accordance with § 20-4.5 (a) & (b) of the Laurel Code.

Despite being a departure from the intent of the prior approvals, this request remains consistent with Resolution NO. First 1981 Annexation, which annexed the Subject Property and placed it in the Planned Development Zone (now PUD-E Zone). “It is the desire of the Mayor and City Council of

Laurel, Maryland to provide for an appropriate use of the land while preserving a maximum portion of the aforesaid property in open space and protecting the portion of the property located within the flood plain of the Patuxent River.” This request converts the underused golf course portion into a high-quality residential subdivision, a more appropriate use of the land given the needs of the City of Laurel for more owner-occupied homes and the oversaturation of golf course in Prince George’s County. This request also retains nearly half of the total site as open space with various active and passive recreational areas that can be enjoyed by all residents. The development will protect any remaining portion of the Property within the flood plain after working with the City to readjust the FEMA floodplain maps.

VI. JUSTIFICATION AND SUPPORT FOR PUD AMENDMENT

The proposed development community is in conformance with and effectuates several of the goals and objectives promulgated in the 2016 City of Laurel Master Plan (“Master Plan”) as described in greater detail below. Specifically, this development aligns with General Goal No. 4: “[p]rovide for a quality living environment by continuing to upgrade existing neighborhoods, and by providing necessary infrastructure and facilities including active and passive parkland areas.” Pg. 50. Moreover, the present application furthers Land Use Objective No. 2: “[p]rovide adequate open space in regard to both acreage and quality for each neighborhood and community area” and Housing Objectives Nos. 1 and 5, which state, respectively: “[e]ncourage a substantial portion of future housing stock to be single-family detached homes, including high-quality custom-built homes” and “[e]ncourage new residential developments to be placed in a manner sensitive to the environment and existing land uses.” Pg. 51 and 52.

The present application proposes the development of several hundred, high-quality single family detached houses and townhouse in the eastern area of the City of Laurel in close proximity to the intersection of MD 198 and MD 197. The Master Plan states that the population of Laurel is expected to grow, and that barring additional annexations, growth will be limited to infill development in existing residential areas and redevelopment. Pg. 35. The proposed homes would help satisfy a portion of this increasing demand through redevelopment of an underutilized recreational facility—a recreational facility that, as a whole, faces a decline in the number of uses. See May 2013 Golf Course Study by Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.¹ Moreover, this development—with high-quality homes and varied recreational amenities—is the type of development that will attract and retain residents that will invest in the City of Laurel for the long run. In 2010, the percentage of renter-occupied units was 49.5%, significantly higher than the State at 32.5% of residents, as well as the rest of Prince George’s County at 37.2%. Pg. 32-33. This development also addresses another potential problem retaining residents could stem from the age of the existing housing stock. As of 2010 less than 20% of all dwelling units were constructed since 1990. Pg. 100.

¹ While the report was initiated by the County Council for Prince George’s County to study the recent closures of Lake Arbor Golf Course and Marlborough Country Club, the study’s conclusions also focus on golf as a whole in the County. To state the concisely, the study determined that “the projected forecast for the golf industry is not favorable” in general and that there was a surplus in courses in Prince George’s County (based on demand) in particular.

Redevelopment of this site will not strain or negatively impact the existing or proposed public facilities. While currently serviced by private water and sewer, the infrastructure exists for community water and sewer. Additionally, based on preliminary calculations, the intersection of Greenview Drive and MD 197 is also able to handle the increased volume expected from the additional units. A traffic study is currently underway and should be available to submit prior to the October 30, 2017 submittal deadline. Furthermore, the benefits from the recreational facilities proposed have previously been discussed. Nor would the additional residential units overburden area schools. While, the exact numbers and potential school district will be determined at the time of Final Site plan, the probable public schools serving the community based on proximity would be Oaklands Elementary, Dwight D. Eisenhower Middle and Laurel High School. As of the September 30, 2016 enrollment lists, available on Prince George's County Public Schools website, all three schools currently operate below their state rated capacity.

This redevelopment will be in harmony with the adjoining and abutting residential communities. Single-family detached homes will be proposed to abut existing single-family detached homes. Moreover, The Applicant is proposing an additional 25' setback between existing and new single-family homes in addition to any required setback or building requirements to provide even greater protection.

VII. CONCLUSION

The proposed Amendment is in conformance with the permitted buildings and uses described in Section 20-10.2 of the Zoning Ordinance for the PUDE-E zone and proposes new development standards to control future development of the Subject Property. As shown the proposed densities and development standards conform to Zoning Ordinance requirements and are compatible with the existing development standards and densities governing the adjoining residential communities. The proposed development standards will create a more walkable and environmental conscious development pattern. The conversion of the Property from a golf course to a residential development will supply several community benefits to the neighborhood and the City. Access to the Property's natural features and open spaces will now be possible through an extensive network of sidewalks, trails, and roads. The water quality of the stormwater runoff entering the Bear Branch, Patuxent River, and groundwater will improve since the current State ESD standards will be implemented through the conversion. The proposed uses will be more compatible with the neighboring uses and be designed as an extension of the neighborhood. Furthermore, this Property will be designed to celebrate the rich natural features of the site and provide the City with a greater diversity of housing options that will allow for a mixture of incomes and age groups to purchase a home. The housing being proposed is responsive to the City's goal in restoring the balance of ownership between owner-occupied homes and rental properties in favor of owner-occupied homes.