MEMORANDUM

April 15, 2015

TO: Town Board

FROM: Eric W. Gillert, AICP, Planning Director

SUBJECT: Comments – Revised DGEIS
Rezoning & Planned Unit Development of 772 North Forest Road and 385
391 Maple Road (“Westwood Neighborhood”)

The following is a summary of all comments received by the Planning Department regarding the completeness of the revised Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS) submitted on March 13, 2015 for the proposed “Westwood Neighborhood” mixed-use project.

General Comments:
1. When possible, a summary statement(s) describing the information found in the various appendices should be included in the DGEIS to accompany the references made.
2. The formatting of DGEIS sections should be consistent among chapters.
3. An electronic copy of the revised DGEIS should be submitted along with the paper copy.

Section 3. Alternatives
1. Include a less-intensive TND alternative.
2. Include an alternative with smaller golf course surrounded by single-family residential uses.
3. Include an alternative to north-south roadway.
4. Include economics of the alternatives.
5. Include sanitary sewer and drainage adverse effects of the alternatives presented.
6. Include an alternative of cleaning up the site prior to rezoning, trading, selling or donating the property.
8. No discussion of alternatives to a Sheridan Drive traffic signal.
9. Include an alternative of donating the site to a municipality in lieu of cleaning it up.
10. Include an alternative of cleaning and trading the site.
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11. If it is not economically feasible to deviate from the preferred alternative, there is no financial discussion, assumptions, comparisons, financial parameters, requirements, or rates of return.

Section 4. Existing Environmental Setting
4.9 Transportation - Previous comment on the age of data does not appear to be addressed (AADT counts – 2008; intersection counts – 2012/2013; accidents – 2013).

4.12 Utilities & Infrastructure
a. Sanitary Sewers: The section lacks objective (statistical) data on the capacities, current utilization and surplus capacities of each segment of the sanitary sewer system that serve the project site.

b. Stormwater: This section also lacks objective (statistical) information on the runoff characteristics of the site including any public infrastructure currently accepting and transporting those flows.

c. Private Utilities: No objective information and/or data on the capacity, current utilization, and surplus capacity is provided for natural gas, electricity or “communications”, nor is there any characterization of the location of these utilities.

Section 5. Adverse Environmental Impacts
Adverse effects on traffic, sanitary sewer and drainage are not included for the alternatives presented, including a less dense mixed-use alternative.

5.2 Water Resources - Include a threshold for flooding of Ellicott Creek.

5.4 Land Use & Zoning - This section is essentially unchanged from the previous draft. Chapter is devoted to evaluating the proposed project for consistency with applicable sections of the Comprehensive Plan. Rather than discussing adverse impacts of the project, it stresses positive impacts.

a. Discuss suitability of mixed-use neighborhood in the midst of an existing residential neighborhood.

b. Pg. 5-61 (Sect. 3.3): The Westwood project as proposed does not meet criteria for a “Neighborhood Center”. Also, no mention of Figure 6 (Conceptual Land Use Plan) or discussion of how proposal can be accommodated on a “recreation & open space” parcel.
5.6 Socioeconomics –
   a. Discuss impact of new development on existing home prices (temporary impact during construction, creating a glut of new housing; effect that speculative housing would have on existing neighborhoods which have been appreciating).
   b. Include economics of cleaning up the contaminated site (effect of fenced, contaminated site during rezoning, litigation and site plan process).
   c. Discuss the legal responsibility of a purchaser of a contaminated site.
   d. Economic projections do not have basis and are not realistic (i.e. An $8.5 million sales tax provides $90,000 to Amherst without sales tax incentives. All tax incentives start with sales tax waived. The projected $490,000 for Amherst does not account for waived sales tax.)
   e. The DGEIS compares regional benefits with Amherst’s costs.
   f. Include financial analysis for the alternatives presented, including a less dense mixed-use alternative.
   g. Condos and patio homes are not assessed at full market value but on the basis of income. This is not acknowledged in the assumptions.

5.8 Transportation (pg. 5-72): No mention of adverse traffic impacts on existing neighborhoods (N. Forest, Frankhauser).

5.11 Lighting: Section lacks objective information or data.

5.12 Utilities & Infrastructure: More data needed on impact of additional flows and impacts to existing system (i.e. 36” collector on Sheridan, 54” West Side Interceptor, 8” water line on Maple, 16” water line on Sheridan).

Section 6. Mitigation Measures -
   a. Discuss sanitary sewer mitigation.
   b. Discuss mitigation of effect of a contaminated site on neighborhood.