

Dutchess County Planning Federation "How to Read a Site Plan"

June 14, 2016 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM

Farm and Home Center, Millbrook, NY

Presented by Delaware Engineering, D.P.C.

Introduction

- ▶ Dutchess County Planning Federation sponsored Short Course
- ▶ Mary Beth Bianconi
 - Partner, Delaware Engineering, D.P.C., Albany
 - Masters Degree in Regional Planning
 - Professional focus for over 20 years on Infrastructure and Economic Development

Why are Site Plans Important?

- ▶ Site plans play a central role in:
 - Look and Feel of a Community
 - Zoning Code Variances, Comprehensive Plans
 - Planned Development Districts (PDD)
 - Demands for Services Such As:
 - ▶ Utilities – water, sewer, power, communications
 - ▶ Emergency and fire protection services
 - ▶ Recreation
 - Environmental Review, Permits and Approvals

Who Uses Site Plans?

- ▶ Site plans are read by:
 - Municipal Planning and ZBA Board Members
 - Town/Village/City Board Members
 - County Planning Boards
 - Regulatory Agencies:
 - ▶ NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
 - ▶ Departments of Health (State and County)
 - ▶ US Army Corps of Engineers
 - The Public

Format for this Short Course

- ▶ Example site plans from a current project:
 - Suburban Albany Location on State Highway
 - Planned Development District (PDD) Proposed
 - Independent Living, Assisted Living, Memory Care
 - Approximately 216 beds with related services
 - Initiated Planning Board Review in 2014
 - ▶ Sporadic progress based on applicant submissions
- ▶ Highlighters/Markers - make notes on the plans
- ▶ Ask questions along the way

Site Plan Topics

- ▶ Grading and Drainage
- ▶ Stormwater
- ▶ Setbacks and Buffers
- ▶ Utilities
- ▶ Parking
- ▶ Landscaping
- ▶ Lighting
- ▶ Things to Consider

What to look for on a Site Plan

- ▶ North Arrow
- ▶ Scale/Scale Bar
- ▶ Legend/Tables
- ▶ Property Lines
- ▶ Contours
 - Existing and Proposed
- ▶ Utilities
 - Existing and Proposed
- ▶ Streams & Wetlands
- ▶ Landscaping & Lighting
- ▶ Special Districts
- ▶ Water Lines/hydrants
- ▶ Sewer Lines/pump stations
- ▶ Borings (water/rock)
- ▶ Grading/stormwater
- ▶ Roads with labels
- ▶ Parking Areas
- ▶ Sidewalks
- ▶ Structures
 - Existing and Proposed

Grading and Drainage

- ▶ Topographic lines
- ▶ Grading
 - How will runoff move on the site?
 - Catch Basin Invert & Outlet Elevations
- ▶ Slope – Note Retaining Walls, Cut & Fill
- ▶ Soil Conditions – Test Pits/Local Knowledge
- ▶ Consider requesting additional “zoomed in” drawings for hard to interpret areas

Stormwater

- ▶ Topography and Soil Conditions
 - Grades – steep or flat presents challenges
 - Soils – drainage characteristics
- ▶ Treatment
 - Treat runoff as close to the source as possible
 - ▶ Permeable/porous pavement
 - ▶ Bioretention (bioswales, raingardens, etc.)
 - ▶ Street trees, landscaped islands, etc.
 - Green infrastructure relies on infiltration – soil type
 - Incorporate maintenance requirements
- ▶ Redevelopment Sites – Best Fit

Setbacks and Buffers

► Setbacks

- Per zoning or local land use code
- Relative to property lines

► Buffers

- Wetlands – NYS or Local
- Watercourses
- Sensitive Areas (e.g. habitat or cultural resources)
- Relative to protection element

Utilities

- ▶ Gas, Electric, Communications
 - Applicant coordination with service providers
- ▶ Water and Sewer
 - Private on-site – wells and septic systems
 - ▶ Coordinate with DOH
 - Public – connect to municipal system
 - ▶ Dedicated or privately operated (PSC and/or Trans. Corp.)
 - Private community system
 - ▶ Water – Public Service Commission (PSC)
 - ▶ Sewer – Transportation Corporation (Trans. Corp.)

Parking

- ▶ Single Family – per code
- ▶ Commercial, Mixed Use, PDD
 - How much is enough? Consider land use
 - Avoid expanses of un-used asphalt
 - Sharing for compatible uses
 - “Bank” parking
 - ▶ Set aside as grassed or landscaped on site plan
 - ▶ Calculate as though impervious for stormwater
 - ▶ Trigger in future – complaints, parking tickets, etc.

Landscaping

- ▶ Aesthetics and Energy Conservation
 - Avoid root conflicts – bulk versus height
 - Heating/cooling benefits – mix deciduous & evergreen
 - Stagger grouped plantings to obtain best visual presence
 - Screening – landscaping including berms & vegetation are more effective when located closer to viewer than screened feature

Lighting

► Aesthetics and Safety

- Purpose and intent based on site land use, adjacent land uses, etc.
- Down lighting
- Lower pole heights
- Light density/spacing
- Light spillage/escape
- Controls – timed, light sensors, motion detectors

Things to consider...

- ▶ Do your homework
 - Know your code, SEQR basics, state and regional regs
 - Review application materials before meetings
- ▶ Ask Questions and Request Information
 - An applicant may have a lot more information that is easily accessible and can be provided upon request
- ▶ Coordinate with other agencies when possible
 - Encourage contact between agencies and applicants during project planning
 - Engage agencies at the conclusion of SEQR before issuing site plan approval to avoid future amendments