



The Preservation Collective, Inc.

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www.thepreservationcollective.com

September 30, 2015

Town of Chester
Planning Board
Kings Highway
Chester NY 10918

Re: Suresky & Sons Site Plan – public hearing

Dear Chairman Serotta and Planning Board members:

After attending the public hearing on the Suresky project, we have a few more comments regarding the landscaping and lighting plans that we wish to share with you before you finalize approval.

Landscaping

Are there standard notes you use for all projects that should reference the Town Code; specifically the timing of the planting guarantee? This is important since the general notes on the Suresky Landscaping plan differs from the requirements of the Town Code as follows: (*emphasis added*)

The Town Code 98-19 I. Buffer strips and landscaping states:

“Landscaping for all buffer areas shall be designed by a licensed landscape architect and shall be guaranteed for a period of three years. Thereafter it shall be maintained by the property owner as a condition of approval. A landscape bond for a period of three years shall be provided to the Town in the form of cash or confirmed and irrevocable letter of credit acceptable to the Town Attorney to insure the installation and maintenance of the landscaping. Release of said bond shall be on the recommendation of the Building Inspector or authorized landscape professional designated by the Town.”

While the Suresky Landscaping plan states: *“Plant material shall be guaranteed for one year after final acceptance of project planting. Dead, dying unhealthy and/or plants in poor condition shall be replaced....”*

At the public hearing, I questioned if the Board knew who from the Town will follow up to verify that the plantings are acceptable and if unhealthy trees need to be replaced. This is a concern because it takes place after the Planning Board approves the project and is no longer under your authority. Based on Town Code, the Town’s Building Inspector or the Board’s landscape architect would do so presumably via a site visit and signs off on the plantings before the guaranteed time period is about to expire. Should this procedure be noted on the plans or with the approval?

Lighting

It was unfortunate that the Board's landscape architect was not able to attend the public hearing because many of our questions or concerns probably could have been answered at that time. We are not sure if the light poles were considered in the visual assessment for landscaping. For example, at the intersection of Pond Road and Kings Highway, are new trees strategically placed in line with the poles from this vantage point? In addition, were lower poles considered in the paved parking lot area for better coverage by the planned vegetation buffer?

As stated at the public hearing, looking at the map has its disadvantages in accessing the impacts of the project particularly visual impacts. Were line of sight illustrations used combined with site visits to the surrounding area to determine how many lights will be seen and how to minimize impacts?

It is our understanding the proposed lights are to be certified by the International Dark Sky Association as "dark sky friendly"; however, the poles themselves and the light source will still be visible given their proposed height.

The latest plan in the file proposes nearly 20 light poles almost 30 feet high*, while the majority of tree buffer will not be more than 10 feet high. When passing by Town Hall, based on the elevation of the road and site, the project appears to be reasonably screened, except for the expansive view of the site from the Pond Road and Kings Highway intersection.

When looking at the lighting plan, the illumination from the light source appears to vary from the pole shown at the entrance compared to those poles in middle of site; are all poles of same height and intensity? In addition, the light poles along Kings Highway appear to be 100 feet away, except for one pole on or about the 60 foot front yard building setback (see our notes on attached map). As we stated on another project before the Board, we feel that light poles are not allowed in designated setbacks. Is this light pole necessary in this general location? Is this light pole at a lower height since it is closest to the road and is actually overlapping with the other light illuminations?

We understand the applicant's need for lights on site but the Planning Board minutes say that the applicant will have a state-of-the-art surveillance system. As per the June 3 minutes, Mr. Musumeci, general manager for Suresky & Sons stated "*...there would likely be someone on the property 24 hours a day, seven (7) days a week because deliveries come in all hours of the day and night...The infra-red cameras are all around the property and buildings and are motion sensitive. If any suspicious activity is identified, the security company notifies the local police*".

We believe this security information contributed to the Planning Board not requiring fencing around the entire site. Was this system incorporated into the final plan, and if so, is it necessary for the entire parking area to be illuminated all night long? What if the parking lot is not fully utilized at different times of the year (such as winter for storing snow on site); is there capability to have the lights associated with those areas be shut off or put on motion sensing?

Unfortunately the Board's minutes did not go into too much detail about visual impacts of the lighting. We hope the impacts were previously reviewed and minimized to the greatest practical extent. This may have been accomplished with the combination of incorporating motion controlled lights, reducing height of poles in certain areas and incorporating taller (possibly fast growing) trees in any line of sight locations of highest visibility e.g. the intersection of Pond Road and Kings Highway.

Most importantly, before approval of project, we hope that you will review the time frame of guaranteed plantings on the site plan (one year) compared to the Town Code (three years) and verify who signs off that plantings are healthy or new plantings are required before guarantee expires.

We hope the attention to these details (and having them noted on the final plans) results in the best outcome with long lasting and effective screening that meets with the applicant's goal to have his parking lot hidden behind a natural vegetative buffer as well as meets the vision of the Comprehensive Plan, which is "*enhancing the Town's rural character*" when accommodating new growth.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Tracy Schuh
President
TPC, Inc.

Attachment: Lighting Plan

*At the hearing, it was stated that there were 19 poles in total, but we were only able to identify 18 shown on site plan (not including floodlighting on building). The illustration on the plan shows a 25' pole; however, is there also a 2' base making lights taller at 27'?

cc: Town Clerk (distributed to Supervisor and Town Board)
Town Building Inspector
Karen Arent, Landscape Architect (emailed via KALA@hvc.rr.com)

References:

- Aug 5 & June 3, 2015 minutes, plans and reports posted on town website.
- Town E- code found at: <http://www.chester-ny.gov>

Suresky & Son Lighting Plan (snap shot with notes added)

