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DIRECTOR

March 7, 2025

Mr. J. Michael Riemann, P.E.  
Principal  
Becker Morgan Group, Inc.  
309 S. Governors Avenue  
Dover, DE 19904

By email to: [mriemann@beckermorgan.com](mailto:mriemann@beckermorgan.com)

RE: Staff Review of the Preliminary Site Plan for Belmead Farm, LLC (C/Z 2001) for the establishment of 166 apartments to be housed in 45,940 square feet of mixed commercial structures and seven (7), three-story, 24-unit apartment buildings containing 168 apartment units total (for a combined total of 334 multifamily units), a clubhouse amenity, private garages and storage units, five (5) commercial structures containing a total of 26,065 square feet of commercial uses (to potentially include two (2) drive-thru facilities), related parking and associated site improvements to be located on a 39.22 acre parcel of land the east side of John J. Williams Highway (Route 24), approximately 0.31-mile southwest of Mulberry Knoll Road (S.C.R. 284) in Lewes, Delaware  
Tax Parcels: 334-18.00-40.01 & 40.06

Dear Mr. Riemann,

Further to your submission of February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025, Staff have reviewed the Preliminary Site Plan for Belmead Farm, LLC (C/Z 2001) for the establishment of 166 apartments to be housed within 45,940 square feet of structures of mixed commercial and residential use and seven (7) three-story, 24-unit apartment buildings containing 168 apartment units total (for a combined total of 334 multifamily units), a clubhouse amenity, private garages and storage units, five (5) commercial structures containing a total of 26,065 square feet of commercial uses (to potentially include two (2) drive-thru facilities), related parking and associated site improvements to be located on a 39.22 acre parcel of land. The parcel is zoned Agricultural Residential (AR-1) District, and the related Change of Zone Application is to facilitate a Change of Zone to a Planned Commercial (C-4) District.

The property is lying on the east side of John J. Williams Highway (Route 24), approximately 0.-31 mile southwest of Mulberry Knoll Road (S.C.R. 284) in Lewes, Delaware. The majority of the parcels have a Growth Area Future Land Use Designation of "Commercial Area" with a small portion on the southeastern corner of Parcel 40.01 being located in the "Coastal Area" per Sussex County's 2018 Comprehensive Plan Update. The subject property is located within the Henlopen Transportation Improvement District (TID). However, the Applicant has completed a Traffic Impact Study (TIS) at the request of the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) as it was noted that the proposed development is not consistent with the Land Use and Transportation Plan (LUTP).



COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES  
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Staff engaged in a series of Pre-Application Meetings with the Applicant. The first meeting took place on Wednesday, June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022, where Staff met with the Applicant provided high-level commentary regarding the proposal. The second meeting took place on Thursday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025, in which Staff reviewed the design of the project and provided more detailed feedback regarding the Site design and the status of required document submittals.

Staff have reviewed the submitted Preliminary Site Plan for compliance with Chapter 115 (the Zoning Ordinance) and the Planned Commercial (C-4) District Site Plan specific criteria outlined in §115-83.25(F)(2)(a-h) and §115-83.25(F)(4)(a-d) and the provisions and goals outlined within Sussex County's 2018 Comprehensive Plan. Staff have the following comments for your consideration with regard to the Revised Preliminary Site Plan:

### Overall Site Plan Comments

- 1. Staff recommend that the Applicant consider an applying a Master Planning approach when incorporating the various design elements of the Plan to ensure an appropriate juxtaposition and harmony of the various uses proposed. Doing so will ensure that the intent of the C-4 District to “provide an integrated Master Plan setting for uses in the Planned Commercial Development District” is fully achieved (§115-83.25(f)(4)).**
- 2. Staff note that the purpose of the Planned Commercial District is to encourage carefully planned large-scale commercial, retail, and mixed-use developments as a means of creating a superior shopping, working and living environment through unified developments, and to provide for the application of design ingenuity while protecting existing and future developments. Please ensure that these elements are fully demonstrated and addressed in the Plans and any supporting statements (§115-83.24).**
3. Please show the location and design details of all refuse areas on the Plans (ie: dumpster facilities) and include the nature of any proposed screening to be provided.
4. Staff note that for a proposal of 308 individual parking spaces (301 to 400 parking spaces total) for the multifamily units that 8 ADA Accessible Spaces are required. It appears that 7 spaces have been provided. Please include one (1) further ADA Accessible Space in order to comply with the 2012 International Building Code Requirements (2012 International Building Code, 11-14 - Table 1106.1 “Accessible Parking Spaces”).
5. Staff do note that a small portion of the subject property on the southwest side contains a Future Land Use Map designation of “Coastal Area.” Therefore, Staff ask that the Applicant please ensure that design consideration is given by the Applicant toward the establishment of a greenways which utilizes schools, parks, wildlife habitat areas, river and stream corridors, wetlands, floodplains, historic sites, business parks, urban sidewalks, abandoned rail lines, roads, beach areas and vacant land. Greenways should provide benefits like safe pedestrian, bicycling and equestrian routes for recreationists and commuters; and natural wildlife corridors and biological reserves (§115-194.3(E)).

6. Staff request that the nature, character and location of all transit facilities be shown on the Plans. Please note that the location of any transit facilities will have to be coordinated with the Delaware Transit Corporation (DTC), a Division of the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) in accordance with their siting requirements.

Staff Review Comments Regarding Application of Sussex County Comprehensive Plan Elements

1. **Please ensure that any open space or public spaces provided serve a valuable public purpose and is inter-connected. Wherever feasible, open space should be provided in locations that can connect to existing public or semi-public open spaces or preserve land along a waterway (Sussex County Comprehensive Plan, 12-10).**
2. **Please ensure that the new development complements the character of the existing surrounding communities by providing an appropriate distribution and intensity of uses to include buffers and downlighting where appropriate (Sussex County Comprehensive Plan, 4-9).**
3. Staff request that the character of all proposed lighting be shown on the Plans. The Comprehensive Plan states, “screening of outdoor lights on residential and commercial properties should be provided whenever feasible to prevent intrusions into adjoining residential areas” (Sussex County Comprehensive Plan, 12-4).
4. Please consider placement of parking to the rear or side of buildings, where practicable, so that the front yard can be landscaped. Doing so provides for a less intense and more aesthetically pleasing corridor sightline (Sussex County Comprehensive Plan 12-4).
5. Street trees and shade trees within existing parking lots are encouraged to lessen the intensity of large parking areas (Sussex County Comprehensive Plan, 12-12). Staff recommend a robust street tree design along the primary lateral corridors of internal vehicle and pedestrian circulation in order to enhance the pedestrian design on the site.
6. Staff recommend sidewalks wider than 5 feet along the major pedestrian corridors throughout the site to more fully meet the intent of (Sussex County Comprehensive Plan, 12-7).

Planned Commercial District (C-4) - Site Plan Review Requirements

1. **Staff request that a tabular summary of the percentage of the Site devoted to buildings, open space, streets and parking areas and total floor area of all residential and non-residential structures (§115-83.25(F)(2)(c)).**
2. **Please provide Architectural Sketches or typical proposed structures and typical landscaping and screening areas (§115-83.25(F)(2)(e)).**
3. Staff request that the required setback lines (BRLs) be clearly delineated on the Plans to ensure compliance with minimum District requirements and that measurements be provided of the various development structures to the property lines (§115-83.25(F)(2)(a)).
4. Staff request that further details be provided on the Landscape Plan and that the Landscape Plan show the proposed height and type of trees to be provided within the development project. For example, please clarify that the “interior parking lot canopy trees” to be included are deciduous trees (§115-83.25(F)(2)(b)).

5. Staff note that a Plan showing proposed generalized parking arrangements has been included in the Applicant's submittal (§115-83.25(F)(2)(d)). Staff request the Plan include a breakdown of the number of bedrooms in the proposed multifamily units in both the apartment and mixed-use buildings to ensure a design compliant with the parking provisioning requirements in (§115-162(B)(1)). Please note any parking reductions based on (§115-162(B)(2)) will require the Plan to show that "the land area saved shall be used only for open space, landscaping or pedestrian walkways."
6. **Staff reviewed the Plan in terms of the requirements of (§115-83.25(F)(2)) which requires the Plan display the requirements of (§115-220 – Preliminary Site Plan Requirements) and have the following comments:**
  - a) Please include Zoning District boundaries (§115-220(B)(2)).
  - b) Please include the location and nature of all proposed construction, excavation or grading, including but not limited to buildings, streets and utilities (§115-220(B)(5)).
  - c) Please include the Net Development Area (§115-220(B)(6)).
  - d) Please include approximate location and size of nonresidential areas, if any (parking areas, loading areas or other) (§115-220(B)(9)).
  - e) Please include approximate location and size of recreational areas, if any (§115-220(B)(10)).
  - f) Please include the number of construction phases proposed, if any, with the plot showing the approximate boundaries of each phase and the proposed completion date of each phase (§115-220(B)(12)).
  - g) Please show location of all wetlands (both state and federal) shall be indicated, in order to facilitate compliance with state and federal wetlands requirements (§115-220(B)(13)).
  - h) Please include the designation of all areas proposed as open space on the Plan (§115-220(B)(15)).
  - i) Please provide interconnectivity (Stub/Easement) to all parcels adjacent to Parcels 40.01 & 40.06 on the Plan (§115-220(B)(16)).
  - j) Please provide all items listed in (§115-220(B)(17)(a-h)) related to wetland resources on the site on the Plan:
    - Boundary and wetland type
    - All existing forest by type as indicated in (§115-220(B)(17)(b)).
    - Proposed access easement layout (§115-220B(17)(f)).
    - A reference by title, author and date, to the DAR (§115-220(B)(17)(g)).
    - Any walking trails, including the method of construction and the materials used to establish the trails (§115-220B(17)(h)).
7. Please include all proposed setbacks for both Parcels on the Plan (§115-83.25F(2)(a)).
8. Please include the required Tabular Summary (§115-83.25F(2)(c)).
9. Please include architectural sketches of typical proposed structures and typical landscaping and screening areas (§115-83.25(F)(2)(e)). Staff request that the architectural plans clearly show the active frontages and orientation of the buildings and how these buildings relate to public realm.
10. Please include plan or report indicating the extent, timing and estimate costs of all off-site improvements such as roads, sewer and drainage facilities necessary to the construction of the

planned development. Such plan or report shall relate to the sequence of development (§115-83.25F(2)(f)).

11. Please provide a Report or Plan showing the adequacy of public facilities and services such as water, sewer drainage, streets and roads to serve the proposed development (§115-83.25F(2)(g)).
12. Please include a general plan for sedimentation and erosion control and stormwater management (§115-83.25F(2)(h)).
13. Staff request the Applicant consider more landscape buffering between the exclusively residential use (Apartments) and the mixed-use structures as well as around the proposed Clubhouse (§115-83.25F(4)(c)).

Prior to approval of the Final Site Plan, approval letters or letters of no objection from the following agencies shall be submitted to the Sussex County Planning and Zoning Office (All items in which a check mark appears have been received by the Department. Any items in bold have not been received and still require submittal to the Department):

- **Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT)**
- **Sussex Conservation District**
- **Office of the State Fire Marshal**

Once all of the above matters have been addressed, please provide **one (1) full-size copy and one (1) electronic copy of a Revised Preliminary Site Plan**. This Application has been scheduled for a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025**. Therefore, please submit all required materials no later than the close of business on **Tuesday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025**.

Please feel free to contact the Department with any questions during business hours, 8:30 A.M. – 4:30 P.M., Monday through Friday at 302-855-7878.

Sincerely,



Mr. Jamie Whitehouse, AICP MRTPI  
Director, Department of Planning and Zoning

CC: Mr. Jonathan S. Falkowski, P.E., Associate Principal – Becker Morgan Group, Inc.  
Mr. Chad D. Carter, P.E., Senior Associate – Becker Morgan Group, Inc.  
Change of Zone No. 2001 Belmead Farm, LLC file