



Meeting Summary October 27, 2021

Attendance

Panel Members:

Robert Gorman, Vice Chair
Dan Lovette
Ethan Marchant
Larry Quarrick

DPZ Staff:

Anthony Cataldo, Nick Haines and Melissa Maloney

Applicants and Presenters:

Benchmark Engineering: Chris Malagari and Chris Ogle
South Trotter, LLC: Brandon Boy, Brian Boy and Justin Boy
Enviro Collab, LLC: Katie Drummond and Heidi Thomas

1. **Call to Order** – DAP Vice Chair Robert Gorman opened the meeting at 7:04 p.m.

2. **Review of Plan No. 21-11, Scott Property, Clarksville, MD**

Owner/Developer: South Trotter, LLC

Engineer: Benchmark Engineering

Landscape Architect: Enviro Collab, LLC

Background

The Scott Property project is a proposed age restricted development in Clarksville MD. The project is located at the southeast corner of South Trotter Road and Swimmers Row Way. The proposed structures will be constructed on the two parcels whose combined area is 9.75-acres and the property which is Zoned R-20. Age Restricted housing is permitted in R-20 zoned properties with the approval through a conditional use hearing. The proposed use will be subject to the requirements established in the Howard County Zoning Ordinance for age restricted housing. The property is currently undeveloped and contains a pond, wetlands, and some vegetated areas. The surrounding neighboring properties are single family residential and the property borders the Clarksville Middle School property. The project was previously reviewed by DAP on July 21, 2021. Official motions and comments on the design were made and the applicant has revised the design and resubmitted for review.

Applicant Presentation

The applicants were asked by the DAP to revisit the design and make changes to the plan to address the previous motions. The site plan has been reimagined to address these comments. The owners hired a landscape architect to enhance and soften the site. There were concerns about the lots that fronted South Trotter Road with the number of driveway entrances and the proximity to the road. All the units have been pushed back an additional 50 feet and a private driveway was put in as a service road that runs parallel to South Trotter Road. The driveways will connect to the private drive that will be built to county standards. A berm has been introduced in between the private drive and South Trotter Road and will be heavily landscaped. This will improve the view from South Trotter Road for the neighbors across the street and people driving on the road.

The applicants were proposing storm water management with drywells and a micro bio near South Trotter Road, but this has been moved to the rear of the homes which is the lower portion of the site where it should be instead of at the top of the hill. This will allow water to drain to the back and down into the stream valley.

Previous DAP Motions/Responses:

- DAP Vice Chair Robert Gorman made the following motion:
That the units along South Trotter Rd be reduced and more reflect the condition of the community on the other side of Trotter Road.
 - The applicant feels that they have complied with all the recommendations from DAP except for the discussion about density. Most of the density issues were along South Trotter Road. The project is 35% under density than the zoning regulations allow for this property. This site has 25 units and could be zoned for around 36 units. The applicant feels that by placing the berm and creating a much better buffer between the residences on the west side of South Trotter Road it meets more of what the streetscape should look like and is more compatible with the surrounding communities in the Village of River Hill, Charter's Run and across the street. The driveways were significantly reduced along South Trotter Road by pushing all the units back. Looking at the aerial view of the proposed sub-division the spacing between the units are like the River Hill community with the units being 15-20 feet apart. Cul-de-sacs are also included in the other community. The units on Swimmer Row Way continue down to the existing sub-division which gives some consistency.

The applicant displayed renderings of views traveling north on South Trotter and entering the private drive with the berm on the right with street trees as required by the county. Looking south you can see how far the homes are off road and it looks very similar to the lots and houses on the other side of the road that are set back and with lots of green space. Other views were shown of the cul-de-sac and it was noted that the renderings do not include curb and gutter. The owner/developer will do what's necessary for storm water management for run off from the road.

- DAP Vice Chair Robert Gorman made the following motion:
That the pathway system be enhanced to create a full loop both north and south so the residents and community can enjoy the stream.
 - The applicants have made a connection to South Trotter Road as suggested. Sidewalk will be added along South Trotter Road down to the school property.
- DAP Vice Chair Robert Gorman made the following motion:
That the private street off Swimmer Row Way have less units, have more separation between units and have a real cul-de-sac at the end.
 - The applicant created a cul-de-sac bulb initially, but the planners elongated it to soften it up and enhance the area. Now 11 units surround the cul-de-sac and 5 units front Swimmer Row Way as suggested by Ms. Stone. This gives a bit more street presence and continuation down into the rest of the sub-division, but also loosens up the site.
- DAP Vice Chair Robert Gorman made the following motion:

That the applicant lobbies the zoning commission to not require a community building that is proposed on the site, but instead connect to the school and encourage that connection.

- The applicants tried to eliminate the community building as recommended by DAP, but DPZ advised that it is required. The community building is now more centrally located. 7 parking spaces, including 1 handicapped, are available at the end of the cul-de-sac for use at the community building.
- DAP Member Larry Quarrick made the following motion:
That the applicant takes a closer look at the internal green space area, particularly where the stream is shown to determine if a stream is feasible on the site.
 - The overall approach to the landscape was evaluated and redesigned. The overarching goal for the landscape is to create a neighborhood identity that relates to the surrounding community, but also softens the hardscape and provides additional ecological benefits to the site in the form of stream restoration, increased biodiversity, added pollinator plants and the creation of additional wildlife habitat. The site has a loop trail amenity that is continuous throughout the site and connects to the roadway in several locations. Several benches will provide seating opportunities along the trail network that will be available for both the residents and the community. Landscaping will include colorful accent plants for the trail, driveway entrances and homes and will provide year-round interest. The foundation plantings will connect the homes in both the front and between the homes. The applicants are exceeding the minimum planting requirements, both for the perimeter plants from a screening perspective but also in the interior of the site. A considerable number of trees throughout the interior will create a wooded atmosphere along the trail and the stream bed. This will meet the applicant's afforestation requirements while providing a buffer between the homes and trail. The landscapers are focusing on native species that will have a variety of height and texture to provide year-round interest and provide visual appeal.
- DAP Member Vivian Stone made the following motion:
That the applicant investigates a more organic street network.
 - See response above.
- DAP Vice Chair Robert Gorman made the following motion:
That the applicant responds to the DAP comments and has a second review with the panel.
 - Satisfied with this meeting.

Staff Presentation

This is a revision of the design that the panel saw on July 21, 2021. The previous motions have been included in the staff report for the DAP's review. DPZ would like the panel to please make recommendations on this current proposed layout and configuration and determine if it better meets the needs of the age restricted development. DAP should advise if the previous motions and comments were addressed adequately in the new design and comment if the edge treatments and transitions in and out of the neighborhood fit the community better and if the proposed amenity space, trail system and landscaping fall in line with the panels comments.

DAP Questions and Comments

Site Design

Overall

DAP advised that this plan is a vast improvement over the initial plan and thanked the applicants for their changes. The DAP member concurred and thanked the entire applicant team for putting in the effort to develop an engineered and site-specific solution that took the intent of most of the DAP comments and treated this site in an elegant way.

DAP appreciated how the applicants addressed the community building and created a meaningful place and not just an afterthought. One DAP member disagreed and felt that the location of the community building is still isolated and should be changed; that these buildings are more successful if they are paired with a swimming pool for instance or swapped out for an outdoor pavilion or a pickle ball court. DAP would like the team to consider the benefits of potentially moving the building up in the green space by the parking area.

The applicant advised they proposed an open-air pavilion, but they were advised by DPZ that per the regulations it must be a community building. This was verified by DPZ staff and it was noted as a requirement per the Zoning Regulations.

DAP likes the green area and walking trail loop that has been created and that children going to school can cut through the property and still feel safe going to middle school. DAP inquired if there was a sidewalk along Swimmer Row Way.

The applicant advised there is existing sidewalk there already and this completes the loop. There will be new sidewalk along South Trotter Road to the school.

House size

DAP inquired if the renderings accurately reflected what the units will look like with two car garages and porches.

The applicant responded that yes, these renderings were pulled from some of the product that was shown in the 1st design and the product does fit on the house boxes that Benchmark has shown on the aerial view. All the houses will sit on a 40'x70' boxes that are shown on the plan. The generic boxes don't show the real footprint with the changes in architecture and bump ins and outs.

Density

DAP feels that the units along South Trotter Road are still too dense for the context of the neighborhood and doesn't respond to the development patterns that occur along South Trotter adjacent to the site. The units to the east respond better to the settlement patterns around it. There are 1-2 too many houses on the South Trotter Road frontage. This can be seen when analyzing the space between the buildings and it is a lot tighter than the buildings on the east side of the site. A reduction of 1 or 2 units will loosen up space along South Trotter Road and make it feel more like it belongs in this context of the existing neighborhood.

Parking/Intersections

DAP advised that they liked the private road with the berm and landscaping and felt it would make the surrounding community happier and is a better solution. DAP inquired if the private drive was wide

enough to accommodate guest parallel parking on the berm side and if it should possibly be a little wider. If drivers can park along South Trotter Road the applicant could provide some pass throughs the berm to get to the houses. There may be parking issues with the cul-de-sac as well since it is only 16' wide for some of the length there. If residents have parties, it could get crowded.

The applicant advised they did look at turning movement for both fire trucks and trash trucks. DPZ will make sure that they accommodate all requirements. Each unit will have a 2-car garage and have the ability to park 2 cars in the 24' driveways.

DAP inquired if the applicant could create some linear parking along the service road in 3 different areas with the use of cobble or permeable pavers. Each area could accommodate 3 parking places. This could accentuate the lane type of environment and provide parking when needed and when the cars are not there it would fit into the landscape.

DAP is concerned that the northern point of the lane is so close to the intersection of Swimmer Row Way. The county would need to advise if this is permitted since there will be multiple vehicles coming out and turning there and then Swimmer Row Way will be in proximity. The DAP agrees that the applicant should lose 1 of the units along South Trotter Road and shorten the road so the houses are not so close to the intersection.

The applicant advised that it does meet the county driveway requirements which is 25' from the intersection.

Storm Water Management

There is concern in the community that the school uses the pond for stormwater management and with the new plan the water is just passing through north of Swimmer Row Way.

The applicant advised that the school discharges storm water onto the property from the south. The pond is a farm pond and is not built to be a storm water management pond. The water goes in and out and is not stored or released at a predevelopment rate. The owners are concerned about liability with the pond and if they were to keep the pond the county would require that they bring it up to current state standards and specs. The applicant met with DNR and MDE out at the site and they agreed that the pond should be removed and recreated as a channel that used to be there that will handle the water coming off the school property. The applicant does not know if this will be an intermittent stream once the pond is removed and they know what kind of ground water is there. There are springs in the pond because there is always constant water surface elevation. The applicant believes it will be a flowing stream in the spring and may be dry in the heart of the summer with a small trickle from the natural springs.

DAP advised that all the streams in the county are being re-engineered and wanted to confirm that the stream will not just be a channel but will be allowed to overflow its banks as a natural stream.

The environmental consultant that is doing the stream restoration design will take into consideration the entire drainage area that drains to the head of the property and it will carry the adequate storm events and will have allowance for 100-year flooding that may occur. Right now, the drainage area to the pond is about 30 acres which is the threshold that the county uses to acknowledge there is a flood plain. Swimmer Row Way was designed to pass the 100-year storm requirement with 4 culvert pipes to handle the water.

DAP advised that they feel the applicants should try to mitigate the stormwater runoff even if it is above and beyond the requirements due to the types of storms we have seen in the past few years in the

area. With or without regulation the pond does address storm water in some sense so there is an opportunity to improve the issues that we see in the county through the creation of the stream bed.

The applicant responded that when the school was built in 1979 storm water management was not prevalent in Maryland and did not come into play until the early 1980's. The school does have some storage points in their parking lot to help with storm water management and are not dumping water off the parking lot without any delay. The applicant will take the DAP comments under advisement.

DAP inquired if there were any existing wetlands with the pond and if the stream will be considered an intermittent stream.

The applicant responded that there was a little bit of wet lands in one corner and MDE felt that it was disconnected and wasn't going to regulate it. The applicant advised the environmental company is classifying it as an intermittent stream at this time. There may always be a base flow because of the springs.

DAP commented that they were supportive of the stream restoration since the applicant is establishing a riparian buffer. There is a 5-state effort to restore buffers along streams and in these areas to help the Chesapeake Bay watershed. DAP inquired if the applicant had looked at lengthening the stream to make it a meandering stream. DAP recommended that the environmental consultant add natural rocks to the stream since this can create ripples and small pools that are 6-8" deep and it can make it very attractive. DAP advised that this could be a step pool system. Since this is new construction this would be the time to do it and make it a great amenity to the community.

The applicant advised there is an environmental company that will handle the stream and they can look at adding some curvature or rocks to slow down the velocity.

Landscape

DAP feels that the berm solution is effective and if high enough and planted it could really make it attractive from South Trotter as well as the houses lining the service road. This could be more of a lane than a street. DAP commended the landscape presentation and the use of mostly native plants. The list of plantings is exactly what the Conservation Landscape Council recommends and will create a very biodiverse area. The area will take time to mature (10-15 years) but will become very attractive and could also be a learning area for kids to study the stream or identify the native trees in Maryland.

DAP felt that storm water management was being addressed adequately and inquired if the island in the cul-de-sac will be a bio retention area with cattails, etc. It was recommended that it would be better if this was a low point with grass that can be used as open space and mowed and not require a lot of maintenance. According to the plan it looks like they will not need it since there are drywells and another little pond along the back. This could be left as an open space area or have a pavilion put on the island. DAP advised this is not that large of an area and if it is planted with winterberry and native grasses it should only need maintenance in the spring. Examples of these rain gardens are in Montgomery county and they are very attractive in terms of color and attracting wildlife and pollinators.

DAP Motions for Recommendations

1. DAP Vice Chair Robert Gorman made the following motion:
That the applicant considers removing two units along South Trotter Road.

DAP Member Larry Quarrick seconded.
Vote: 4-0

2. DAP Member Dan Lovette made the following motion:
That the applicant shortens the service road along South Trotter Road to move further away from the intersection at Swimmer Row Way.

DAP Member Robert Gorman seconded.
Vote: 4-0

3. DAP Member Dan Lovette made the following motion:
That the applicant creates a step pool in the stream that goes through the site.

DAP Member Robert Gorman seconded.
Vote: 4-0

3. Other Business

The next DAP meeting will be November 10, 2021 and there will be 3 items on the agenda. DAP inquired if these meetings will stay virtual. DPZ advised that the Planning Board will have their first hybrid meeting on November 4, 2021 and will test out the equipment. Permanent equipment would need to be installed in the meeting room for DAP. DAP commented that they like this format and it is probably better for the presenters as well.

4. Call to Adjourn

DAP Vice Chair Robert Gorman adjourned the meeting at 7:59 p.m.