



March 8, 2021

The Honorable Casey Anderson
Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reedie Drive, 14th Floor
Wheaton, Maryland 20902
Email: MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

**Re: Takoma Junction Project, Takoma Park, Maryland
Preliminary Plan No. 120190150; Site Plan No. 820190090**

Dear Chairman Anderson:

Neighborhood Development Company (“NDC”), the developer of the Takoma Junction project in the City of Takoma Park (the “Project”), requests that the Montgomery County Planning Board (the “Planning Board”) set April 15, 2021 as the public hearing date for its consideration of the Project’s applications for preliminary plan and site plan approval.

The initial draft of the Project’s Site Plan was approved by the City of Takoma Park (the “City”) on July 25, 2018, and was filed with the Planning Board on December 18, 2018. Since then, NDC has worked diligently to address multiple rounds of agency and Staff comments, and while we believe the constructive input received through this review has produced a better, more exciting Site Plan, it has now been over two years of review for what is a straightforward, small two-story commercial building. NDC’s last re-submission was on January 15, 2021, and the Planning Board has now received final letters and approvals from all relevant agencies except the State Highway Administration (“SHA”). The plan before you now, except for the minor technical changes recommended by agency and Staff, is in all material respects the same plan approved by the City.

We understand that the sole outstanding issue for SHA is its comments on a 140-foot-long lay-by area in front of the Project, but that it does not intend to comment on the lay-by until some unspecified date in the future. The use of a lay-by was approved by the City in July 2018 and has been included in all of NDC’s filings to date. The lay-by is of particular importance because it will serve as a delivery point for the Project’s neighbor, the Takoma Park-Silver Spring Food Co-op, a landmark of the community.



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Section 59.7.3.4.D.1.c of the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance requires that “State and County agencies and utilities must submit a final recommendation on the application [for site plan approval] a minimum of 45 days before the date of the hearing.” In this instance, March 2, 2021 was 45 days prior to April 15, 2021, and March 15, 2021 is 45 days prior to April 29, 2021, the expiration date of the current Regulatory Review Extension for the Project.

Clearly, SHA has failed or has no intention of meeting its statutory obligation to comment on the Takoma Junction Site Plan. There is nothing in the Zoning Ordinance or relevant guidelines to suggest that if an agency or department fails to meet its statutorily required deadlines for comment that a site plan’s hearing must be deferred. To the contrary, the Board has the authority to act without the input from that agency or department in order to stay on its statutorily-prescribed schedule.

This Project has experienced extraordinarily long delays in the review process to date, and any further delays caused by not being included on the Planning Board’s April agenda will adversely affect its viability. We feel strongly that no further extension of the review process should be required. NDC, therefore, requests that the Planning Board move forward with its consideration of the Project’s Site and Preliminary Plans on April 15th.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Adrian Washington', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Adrian Washington
CEO

cc: Elza Hisel-McCoy (elza.hisel-mccoy@montgomeryplanning.org)
Suzanne Ludlow, City Manager,
City of Takoma Park, MD (suzannel@takomaparkmd.gov)