



# MONTGOMERY

TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY

## ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

To: Montgomery Township Planning Board  
From: Montgomery Township Environmental Commission  
Re: The Malvern School PB-07-23  
Date: October 12, 2023

### A Site Grading & Design

- 1 This design will require quite a lot of regrading. The retaining wall on the east side is unfortunate. If the buildings could be built into the slope, a lot of ground disturbance and grading could be avoided.
- 2 We are concerned about the lack of an off-street loading spot. Route 518 and Brecknell Way will be very busy at rush hour, just the time when children are being dropped off and picked up. Will the parents all park and walk the children in to the building?
- 3 We see no reason given to grant the building height variance. Shouldn't there be an elevator in the building, for accessibility and for equipment and supplies?

### A Energy Management / Efficiency

- 1 The Environmental Commission recommends that LEED standards of design and construction be used for this project.
- 2 Energy-efficient and water-conserving fixtures and appliances should be used.
- 3 The roof of the building should have solar panels, or a green roof. Failing this, the roof should be a light color, to reflect light and reduce the heat island effect. It will also have the added advantage of making the roof last longer.
- 4 We recommend a geothermal heat exchange HVAC system.

### B Tree Planting / Landscaping

- 1 We expect the tree survey to include the species of each tree located, or at least the genus, and to provide a table of the trees with species and diameter at breast height (DBH), indicating which trees are to be removed. The largest trees shown on the table provided have diameters of 38, 40, and 42", very impressive sizes for any tree.

- 2 Please find a replacement for *Miscanthus sinensis*, which is invasive.
- 3 The native species proposed for street trees are excellent choices.
- 4 The Environmental Impact Statement states that the vegetation and wildlife on the site will relocate itself during construction. Leaving out the unlikelihood of vegetation relocating itself, wildlife is also unlikely to survive if forced out, due to existing habitat elsewhere already being used to its maximum extent by other wildlife. In addition, most of the nearby wooded area has already been cleared.
  - a. Disease-resistant American elm trees or ball-less sweet gum trees could be used as shade structures in the playground. In the past the Board has required applicants to plant trees in play areas. If there are no trees or shrubs in the playground, what are you teaching the children about nature? You are teaching them that they must not interact with nature, and they do not need nature, and nothing could be farther from the truth.

#### C Stormwater Management

- 1 Is the applicant using the 2023 New Jersey State stormwater regulations?
- 2 We recommend porous pavement, rain barrels, and rain gardens.
- 3 The parking lots could be sloped toward the islands, which could be rain gardens, with underground storm drains leading to the bioretention basin.

#### E. Lighting

- 1 All outdoor lighting should be pointed downwards, shielded from the sides, and be as low in elevation and intensity as possible, in keeping with Montgomery's Dark Skies policy. Please be aware that overly bright lights can cause glare and temporarily blind drivers and pedestrians, reducing visibility, and will interfere with nocturnal pollinators, fireflies, bats, and migrating birds. Yellow light bulbs, which are the least disorienting to wildlife, should be used.
- 2 There is a Model Lighting Ordinance jointly developed by the Illuminating Engineering Society and the International Dark Sky Association that provides guidance on developing a lighting plan that will meet the applicant's needs and protect the wildlife that provides us with so vital many ecosystem services, including pollination and pest control. The Environmental Commission requests that your design follow those guidelines. The

International Dark Sky Association provides a lot of information on the least harmful yellow lights and on other issues in their website.

F      Site Amenities

- 1    We recommend bike racks.
- 2    Electric charging stations should be provided for employees as well as clients.
- 3    No idling signs should be posted in the parking area and in front of the buildings explaining the state laws against idling engines. Children should have clean air to breathe, and idling engines produce much more air pollution than cars that are driving.
- 4    Park benches in front of the school would be a useful addition.