



# MONTGOMERY

TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY

## ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

To: Montgomery Township Site Plan/Subdivision Committee  
From: Montgomery Township Environmental Commission  
Re: Sharbell Building Company, LLC (PB-06-23)  
Date: September 5, 2023

### A. LEED

1. We recommend that the applicant use LEED standards in design and construction of this development.

### B. Lighting

1. The Environmental Commission recommends that the proposed lights should be pointed downwards, shielded from the sides, and 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 people, reducing visibility; and any lighting may interfere with nocturnal pollinators, fireflies, bats, and migrating birds.
2. Yellow light bulbs, which are the least disorienting to wildlife, should be used.
3. The lights should be turned off as early as possible in the evening, and the applicant might consider special protocols, including lights on a motion sensor, or brief shut-offs during spring and fall migration.
4. 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 many vital 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.

### C. Zoning and Density

1. We would like to thank the applicant for providing larger setbacks and lower density than allowed under the zoning ordinance for this location, and for the green

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spaces that are included. The benefits of dense development include getting to know one's neighbors, going for walks together, and making friends along the walk to stop and chat with. However, we are concerned that this neighborhood will have a heat island effect that will make it very uncomfortable to be outdoors during the summer months, discouraging walking and other outdoor activities.

2. We also recommend solar panels on the roofs of the buildings or green roofs, both of which would mitigate the heat island effect. Green roofs also save energy by adding insulation, and reduce noise pollution, especially for airplane noise.

#### **D. Landscaping**

1. We would like to see street trees along the lanes, and shrubs and more trees in spaces between the buildings and in the indented areas between the units.
2. Residents will keep bikes and other play and exercise equipment in their garages and take them out to the lanes behind their homes, which are presently treeless and uninviting. Also, driving on roads shaded by trees reduces blood pressure and road rage for drivers, and the same would apply to lanes shaded by trees. Trees also reduce air pollution.
3. We visited the existing parts of the development, which looks like a neighborly place, and we saw a few shrubs planted around some of the homes, and lots of flower gardens. We recommend that the applicant provide more landscaping around the homes.
4. Experts have determined that trees that shade buildings and pavement do even more to prevent heat islands, improve stormwater quality, save energy, improve health and happiness, and reduce climate change than trees in forests or parks or anywhere else.
5. More native trees also provide habitat for more birds, butterflies, and other pollinators, which make a neighborhood a more pleasant place.
6. Any more trees that might be planted would be a very small number compared with the many trees that were removed to build this development.

#### **E. Stormwater**

1. More trees and shrubs would help clean and reduce stormwater runoff and erosion. Trees and shrubs can also reduce noise pollution.

2. We also suggest green roofs and rain gardens.
3. We recommend retrofitting the existing detention basins as bio-retention basins.
4. We would also like to see porous pavement, and rain barrels provided to wash it, as well as to water landscaping.

**F. Recreation**

1. We appreciate the proposed two tot lots, but do they need to be both on the same end of the development? We don't believe that either one of them should be on the north side of Village Road, which will be a busy road when it is connected to Route 206, and hard to cross for children and even parents who want to take their children to use it.

**G. Miscellaneous**

1. It is not clear from the plans whether there will be lighting on the fountains, but we recommend against it for safety reasons. It could be an attractive nuisance.
2. Thank you for providing benches and bicycle racks.

**H. Energy**

1. As previously mentioned, we would like to see solar panels on the roofs.
2. We would also strongly suggest geothermal heat exchange HVAC systems.
3. All fixtures and appliances should save water and energy.