

RE: Comments on P56-2019; S58-2019; S59-2019; S60-2019 Abingdon Business Park, Preliminary Site Plans.

March 5, 2019

Dear Harford County Development Advisory Committee,

The Gunpowder RIVERKEEPER® (Riverkeeper) thanks the Development Advisory Committee (DAC) for the opportunity to provide the following comments on the above stated applications.

Riverkeeper is a grassroots, advocacy based membership organization and a recognized 501(C)(3) non-profit that champions enforcement and compliance of environmental laws to protect and conserve the Gunpowder River watershed and the sensitive species that inhabit the watershed for future generations. The organization represents members who have environmental interests in Harford, Baltimore and Carroll Counties, Maryland, who work, live, recreate (including fishing, swimming and boating), and benefit from aesthetic uses of waterways in the Gunpowder River watershed and adjacent Bush River watershed including Ha Ha Branch and the downstream Tier II designated Otter Point Creek. GRK and its members are concerned that the currently proposed plan will result in detrimental water quality impacts and impacts to the downstream tidal largemouth bass fishery.

Riverkeeper respectfully asks that members of the DAC do not recommend the approval of these plans and application until the required wetlands delineation is made available for public and DAC review. The public and DAC must be given an opportunity to review information related to the potential water quality impacts of this project.

The application packet made available for public review¹ does not include a wetlands delineation of the subject property. This omission severely hinders Riverkeeper's and the public's ability to participate and provide meaningful comments in the permitting process for this project. The public should be given an opportunity to review the wetlands delineation to allow individuals and organizations to be fully informed of the cumulative impacts of the project on waters of the U.S.

The Application documents provided to the public for review are incomplete and provide insufficient information to allow for fully informed public comment and participation.

Below is a list of concerns regarding the Abingdon Business Park Project:

1. The publicly available documents do not contain the wetlands delineation and associated documents. The public and the DAC cannot properly review, comment, and give a position on a plan that does not include information regarding an analysis of impacts to non-tidal wetlands and associated waters. This document is especially important in this situation because the current site is completed wooded and removing and filling wetlands will likely have detrimental impacts on ecosystem health and water quality downstream of the

¹<http://hcgweb01.harfordcountymd.gov/weblink/0/fol/320279/Row1.aspx?dbid=0&dbid=0&startid=320279&startid=320279&row=1&row=1>

development. Numerous comments at the January 15, 2019 Community Input Meeting (CIM) reiterate the point that the public are very concerned about impacts to wetlands and water resources and are seeking more information.

2. The public notice and the application documents do not mention or discuss how the project could affect Otter Point Creek, a Tier II waterway immediately downstream of the project area. State and federal antidegradation policy dictate that these high quality waters be maintained. The application is not clear about whether a tier II anti-degradation study must be performed on resource impacts from the regulated activities upstream of the designated tier II High Quality Waterways of Otter Point Creek. The application documents should make clear whether this review is required.
3. The application documents do not adequately consider or address a number of ecological, environmental, and public health issues associated with this project brought up during the CIM including; Drainage concerns at adjacent and downstream residential properties (pg. 38); The presence of intermittent and ephemeral streams. (pg. 40) and Stormwater retention ponds. (pg. 74).
4. The application documents do not adequately consider how climate change may impact the development and its construction, including impacts caused by increased storms and precipitation that will have negative impacts on stormwater and wastewater management.
5. The current siting of the project may be inconsistent with Harford County Zoning Chapter 131, Floodplain Management Regulations.

Riverkeeper respectfully requests that DAC recommend to the Director of Planning to not approve the proposed plan until the wetlands delineation and report is available for review by DAC and the public and after action is taken to address the other issues listed in this comment.

Riverkeeper also respectfully requests that DAC clarify the stated concerns within this comment letter, provide for additional public notice and hearing and extend the public comment period on the Abingdon Business Park once the wetlands delineation is made available.

Sincerely,



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