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**MEMORANDUM**

To: Rocky Hill Planning Board                      From: Tamara L. Lee, PP, AICP, LLA, ASLA



Re: 38 Washington Avenue                      Date: August 8, 2017  
Preliminary and Final Subdivision  
Block 1, Lot 3

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This office has received the following information regarding the above referenced project:

- Completed Application
- Completed Checklist
- Preliminary and Final Major Subdivision Plan, prepared by Carroll Engineering, dated 6/29/2017

After reviewing this material I offer the following comments.

**1.0 Background**

This 7.6 acre site is located on the north side of Washington Avenue in the R-1A Planned Residential A Zoning District. The property, known locally as the Hayden Property, has local historic significance and originally it included two (2) single family homes, a garage, a barn and a pool with a small pool house. The barn has since been converted into a single family home. The applicant received Planning Board approval to subdivide the parcel in November, 2015. This subdivision was designed to create three new lots. Most of the existing buildings were maintained, although a demolition permit was approved for the selective disassembling of the existing barn so that it could be converted into a single family home with as much of the original material as possible. In accordance with the ordinance, the new house was designed to resemble the barn from which its materials came. A Preservation Plan Application for the reconstruction of the barn/house was approved at the same time as the subdivision.

The Planning Board's 2015 approval was conditioned, in part, on County approval. Since then, the County has required modifications to the plan and those modifications now require the applicant to return to the Borough Planning Board for an amended subdivision approval. That is the subject of this current application.

## **2.0 Zoning/Master Plan**

The R-1A Zoning District is designed to preserve the historic integrity of the Hayden Tract while permitting some level of development. Nominally the zoning district permits one acre single family development though the ordinance also stipulates that the existing buildings and the expansive front lawn must remain to preserve the site's historic value. Any proposed development must be located behind a line coincidental with the front line of the existing primary house.

The proposed subdivision still clusters the new lots at the rear of the property, more specifically in the northeast corner of the site. One of the new lots will include the existing one and a half story dwelling unit. Another lot will be the site of the relocated barn-turned-single family home. The third new lot will be located in the northeast corner of the property where no building currently exist.

As presently configured, the subdivision plan still meets the planning objectives of the R-1A Zoning District inasmuch as it preserves the expansive front lawn area, clusters new development behind the existing principal structure and maintains the existing buildings to the greatest extent possible. One note for the record, the demolition of the original barn was approved after it was determined that the building was structurally unsafe.

## **3.0 Variances and Waivers Requested/Required**

The amended design relies on an easement for the driveway and a homeowners' agreement. The specifics of these agreements should be discussed with the Planning Board. If the Board is inclined to approve the amended plans, the homeowners' documents and the easement should be reviewed by the Board's professionals to insure that they accurately reflect the Board's expectations. It is not practical to draft these documents before they have been discussed with the Board, so a submission waiver would be appropriate for proposed easements and homeowners documents.

No new variances are required with the amended plans.

## **4.0 Subdivision and Historic Preservation Plan**

The subdivision and historic preservation plans are essentially the same as previously submitted, except for the proposed circulation. The approved plan included a separate driveway to the new lots and a turnaround. The current plan utilizes the existing driveway, which serves the 'main house' and creates a loop through the new lots.

The applicant should show the Board a copy of the approved plan and compare and contrast it with the amended plan, with the understanding that some current Board members were not on the Board when the original application was reviewed. The application indicates that there are two dwellings on Lot 3.01. The applicant should clarify where the second dwelling is located on Lot 3.01.

## 5.0 General Comments

### 5.1 Driveway

The purpose of this zoning district is very specific.

*“The purpose of this district is to provide that the existing dwellings be preserved in their setting and that new dwellings be located in (a) compact development node with access therefore **and circulation designed to that the undeveloped open field between Washington Street and the existing residences be preserved to maintain the historic envelope of the residences and integrity of the streetscape.**” (S. 80-87A, emphasis added)*

The configuration of the lots in this application still fulfills the purpose of the zoning district by preserving the existing buildings to the greatest extent possible and clustering new lots at the rear of the site. However, the expansive front lawn is somewhat lost with the driveway that is proposed across the front of the property. This also affects the public sidewalk experience, insomuch as the sidewalk will be flanked by a busy road on one side and a driveway, not expansive lawn, on the other. It would be preferable, and more consistent with the Master Plan, to connect the new driveway to the existing driveway closer to the southern edge of proposed lot 3.04.

### 5.2 Utilities

The applicant should tell the Board if the proposed utility lines have been installed yet. With the new driveway configuration, is it still most advantageous to run the new utilities up the east side of the property, or would it be better to bring them up the existing driveway?

Cc: Jolanta Maziarz, Esq. via email  
Bill Tanner, PE via email  
Antoine and Gaud Yver, Applicant via Applicant's attorney  
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