



**Memorandum**

To: Chairman Fontaine,  
Planning Board Members,  
and Town Consultants

Date: June 2, 2014  
*Revised August 26, 2014*

Project 29011.00  
No.:

From: DeCesare, Amanda

Re: Silo Ridge Project – TND

Edited by MAJ per request from  
Norm Fontaine on 8/14/14

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*§ 121-12.1. Traditional neighborhood development standards for HM, HR, MCO, and RDO Districts.*

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The primary goal of the TND standards set forth in § 121-12.1 of the Town Zoning Law is “to create a pedestrian-oriented environment in which residents and those who work in an area can walk comfortably between different land uses and minimize the use of automobiles.” The HM, HR, and MCO Districts are expressly intended “to implement” TND. The RDO District is intended to incorporate major design elements of TND.

Section 121-18.C(7) of the Town Zoning Law provides that in the RDO District, TND design elements and principles are to be applied only “to the extent practical”. The project complies with the elements of TND design that are noted in Section 121-12.1 as follows for the Village Green area:

- A. Open space requirement. The Modified Project complies with the 80% open space requirement of the RDO district.
- B. Multi-family dwellings. The Modified Project provides 52 attached condominiums and 13 town homes that have their front entrances on a new street. Additionally, there are 21 hotel-condominiums provided in three buildings; one that is a mixed use building (Clubhouse).
- C. Apartments in mixed use buildings. The Modified Project does not comply with this element of TND.
- D. Design Guidelines. The Hamlet Design Guidelines are intended to encourage development which follows the existing pattern of development, where the hamlet is compact, buildings are close together and there is a variety of activities.

- a. Pattern of New Development: *The preferred location for new growth is in the hamlets. New development should extend the existing close-knit pattern of small lots, mixed-uses, interconnected streets and walkable neighborhoods.*
- Although development of a range of housing types and price levels is a general goal of “new urbanism,” it is not an objective of the RDO District, the purpose of which is instead “to provide use and design flexibility to encourage resort development on appropriate large properties, where such development fits into the rural character of the Town and protects its scenic, historic, and environmental resources” (see Section 121-18.A of the Town Zoning Law). We also note that the Applicant will comply with the Town’s Workforce Housing Law by paying a fee-in-lieu (for 16 homes, in Phase 1 of the Modified Project) into a dedicated Town workforce housing trust fund, thereby significantly contributing to the achievement of the Town’s goal of creating homes affordable to persons of moderate income who work in the Town and/or provide volunteer services to the Town.
  - The Modified Project is a mixed-use community, although it will have a smaller commercial component than the approved project. However, the essential character of the project as a recreation-oriented community will be the same: like the approved project, the Modified Project is intended to be, and will be heavily marketed as, a second-home club community, in which the vast majority of residential unit owners are expected to be part-time residents who occupy their homes on weekends or for short vacation stays. A large-scale commercial component would not be consistent with the rural/recreational character of the resort community, and would neither be financially feasible, nor meet the Applicant’s goals and objectives. A larger and broader retail commercial would also compete with, and have potential adverse economic impacts on, the Hamlet of Amenia. The Applicant submits that the proposed commercial component appropriately advances the desired character of the community by “*incorporating elements (a small general store, golf pro shop, restaurant, etc.) to fulfill the convenience needs of the part-time residents as it relates to the recreational and second home focus of the project*”(see Mary Ann Johnson comment memo dated May 14, 2014). These more modest, targeted commercial uses will complement existing uses in the Town, which will in turn be supported by approximately \$1.5 million of community resident spending on meals and food, \$700,000 on transportation and gas, and \$1.1 million on retail goods, annually. This revenue is vital to the economic growth of the Hamlet of Amenia and the region.
  - For the Modified Project, the majority of the residences (60%) are located in the core area within ¼ mile (often used as approximation of a 5-minute walk) of the Village Green. Given the character of the resort community, and the available pedestrian ways and trails, residents living

- outside the ¼ mile radius of the Village Green would also be expected to walk or use bicycles or carts more often than automobiles for most of their daily on-site travel.
- b. Landmarks: *Wherever possible, public buildings, monuments and parks should be located at important intersections at end of streets. In new developments prominent sites should be reserved for the civic buildings.*
- The Artisan's Park Overlook is proposed along Route 44 and is intended to serve as a tourist destination and afford an opportunity for visitors of the region to enjoy the views from a safe location on DeLavernge Hill.
- c. Street Pattern: *New streets should be interconnected in clear, direct and understandable patterns. New streets should connect to existing streets wherever possible. Dead end streets and curved streets are appropriate only in response to topography.*
- The Modified Project utilizes small spur roads to minimize the overall length of roads and impervious surface coverage. Preservation of the wetlands, watercourses and steep slopes throughout the site (which is the primary objective of the RDO District) makes street interconnections impractical. Preservation of 80% of the site as open space and maintenance of the natural environment also makes the small spur roads the preferred design.
- d. Street Width: *Streets with a hamlet should be as narrow as possible while accommodating cars, service and emergency vehicles. An example would be an 18 – foot travel way with 8 foot shoulders for on street parking on both sides. Streets should be designed for slow speeds and pedestrians, with sidewalks along at least one side.*
- The roads have been designed to best fit the existing site grades. In order to minimize disturbances, the roads have been designed to allow up to a maximum grade of 14% with roadway widths narrowed at smaller spur roads (16' to 20') while maintaining an unobstructed width of 20 feet. The slopes and road design have been discussed with Fire Chief Chris Howard in two separate occasions and he has deemed the design acceptable for emergency vehicle access.
  - The Village Green provides sidewalks and connectivity to facilitate and encourage comfortable pedestrian travel between the various resort community components and amenities.
- e. Building Alignment: *Consistent setbacks from the street are strongly encouraged. New buildings on a street should conform to the dominant setback. Build-to-lines should be designated on new streets. Building faces should be parallel to the street with major roof ridges either parallel or perpendicular to the street where this is consistent with existing patterns.*
- The Bulk Design Standards Table has been developed to provide adequate front, rear and side building setbacks while maintaining sidewalks and internal paths to create the pedestrian-oriented environment intended by TND design.

- The proposed buildings within the Village Green are predominantly parallel to the street and designed to create a defined edge to the public space.
- f. Lot Size and Dimension: *Variations in lot sizes are encouraged. Lot frontage for detached houses in the hamlet centers should be between 40 and 80 feet. On longer frontages houses should be sited so as to allow future property subdivision in conformance with this guideline. Rear lots can be accessed with 15 feet of street frontage.*
- The Village Green lot sizes vary; there are no detached homes in the Village Green.
- g. On Street Parking: *Parallel parking at the street should be provided within the hamlets on all major streets. Minor streets should be built with gravel shoulders for parking. Major streets should include at least one lane of paved parking. On-street parking should count toward meeting non-residential parking requirements.*
- The Village Green is designed to allow on-street parking with parking barns to accommodate residential parking needs for the condominium and townhomes. The Modified Project accounts for both residential and non-residential parking requirements throughout the site.
- h. Garages and Driveway: *Detached garages to the rear of houses are encouraged. Garages should be located so that cars parked outside will not project beyond the front building line. Curb cuts for residential driveways should be no wider than 12 feet.*
- This Guideline is not applicable for the Village Green.
  - The Modified Project utilizes detached garages for the majority of the proposed products; they are situated to allow access and minimize disturbance.
  - Residential driveway widths do not comply with this requirement.
- i. Alleys: *Alleys should be used for access to parking lots behind buildings with a mix of uses and for access to garages behind narrow lots and attached residences.*
- Internal sidewalks and pedestrian paths are provided throughout the Village Green connecting buildings with the underground parking and additional parking barns, as well as the other amenity buildings.
- j. Street Trees: *Streets within the hamlets should be lined with trees. Existing trees should be preserved. Dead trees that are within 20 feet of the pavement should be replaced with new trees. On new streets, indigenous species with broad canopies and 4" minimum caliper trunks should be planted at 20 to 30 foot intervals. Street trees can be planted within the first 10 feet of the front yard, in tree lawn between sidewalk and street, or in the shoulder when designed to break up on street parking areas. A variety of native species should be used.*
- An extensive landscape plan has been developed for the Modified Project providing new street trees and preserving those existing ones where practical. The project's planting list has been coordinated with

the Town's Environmental consultant to assure species are appropriately selected for the different habitats.

- k. Sidewalks: *Sidewalks are recommended within the hamlets. They should be 5 feet wide except on commercial streets where they should be 8 to 16 feet wide. On low traffic or one way streets, with one lane of parallel parking, sidewalks should be on the parking side. Their design should accommodate persons in wheelchairs as well as push carts and baby carriages.*
  - The Village Green provides sidewalks to create a pedestrian-oriented environment.
  - Accessible sidewalks are provided to accommodate the accessible parking spaces and its access.
- l. Porches: *Front porches are encouraged. They may encroach into the front setback.*
  - Porches are not applicable in the Village Green.
  - The Modified Project's residential neighborhoods do incorporate front porches into some of the built products.
- m. Fences, Walls and Landscape Screens: *Fences, low walls up to 4 feet high, and landscape screens are encouraged along the front property lines within the hamlets, especially where the continuity of buildings interrupted by a vacant lot, a parking lot, or a building set back farther than the build-to-line. Landscape screens should be set far enough back from the sidewalk to avoid encroachment when the screens grow to full size.*
  - The Village Green has low walls and landscape screening at distances far enough back to avoid encroachments.
- n. Parking Lots/Drive-throughs: *Small parking lots within a hamlet should be located to the rear of buildings or, if that is not possible, to the side with the lot screened from the street. Parking lots should contain no more than necessary to satisfy 85% of the peak demand. Wherever possible rear lots should be linked by alleys. Parking lots should have permeable surfaces wherever possible. Curb cuts and interruptions of the pedestrian space should be kept to a minimum.*
  - Parking garages are provided under the condominium buildings with additional parking barns in the Village Green to accommodate parking needs for the condominiums and townhomes.
  - Single access curb cuts are provided for each.
  - A permeable surface is proposed at the overflow parking lot proposed to accommodate the Modified Project's residential and non-residential parking needs; this overflow lot is located at the Golf Maintenance Facility.
- o. Parking on Corner Lots: *Corner parking lots are discouraged. If unavoidable, corner lots should use buildings, trees and sidewalks to define the street corner. Curb cuts should be minimized and kept away from the corner. Parking lots should be screened from the street by buildings and vegetation.*
  - No corner parking lots are proposed in the Village Green.

- E. Street and blocks. This provision states “streets shall generally be interconnected and permanent cul-de-sacs shall only be permitted where wetlands, watercourses or steep slopes make street interconnections impractical.” The previously approved MDP contained some interconnected streets in the Village Green however, the Applicant notes that the layout and design of the proposed road network in the Modified Project is the result of more thorough and detailed engineering and site planning analysis than performed for the approved MDP, because the proposed amended MDP is accompanied for the first time by an application for site plan approval. Based on this analysis, roads have been designed to best fit the existing site grades, both along the roads and in the development areas, while minimizing impacts to steep slopes. In compliance with the Hamlet Design Guidelines, the current design utilizes small spur roads to minimize the overall length of roads and impervious surface coverage.

The Village Green area does contain pedestrian paths connecting the homes to clubhouse area, general store and the family activity barn. There are golf cart paths throughout the property as well. Given the nature of the resort community, and the available pedestrian ways and trails, residents living outside the ¼ mile radius of the Village Green would also be expected to walk or use bicycles or carts more often than automobiles for most of their daily on-site travel.

The Zoning Law also states that all streets shall be offered for dedication to the Town, and that no street in a TND shall be gated. As permitted under the approved MDP, in the Modified Project, streets will not be offered for dedication to the Town, and will instead be privately owned and maintained by the Master HOA. The Applicant also seeks permission to install gates at all four entrances to the Modified Project (i.e., the main entrance to the resort on Route 22, a second emergency-only entrance to the site located further south on Route 22, the access road to the Vineyard Cottages that is accessible from the Winery Restaurant driveway at the top of Delavergne Hill, and the entrance to the Vineyard Cottages from a point on Route 44 below the Hairpin Turn on Route 44). The Applicant has advised the Town that gate control is a required element of all of Discovery Land Company’s communities, and is a condition of its participation in the Modified Project.

The Applicant acknowledges that, like the current approved project, the Modified Project does not fully comply with TND principles as applied to the single family homes, Vineyard Cottages, private streets and gated entrances. The single family homes located along the western boundary of the golf course and the bottom of the wooded hillside are within comfortable walking distance of the Village Green core area, but do not fully comply with TND principles. The Vineyard Cottages are physically separate and distinct from the Village Green area, and maintain a recreational area separate and distinct from the recreational facilities located in the Village Green area. As such, the Vineyard Cottages are not fully consistent with TND principles.

The essential character of the project as a recreation-oriented community will be the same: like the approved project, the Modified Project is intended to be, and will be heavily marketed

as, a second-home club community, in which the vast majority of residential unit owners are expected to be part-time residents who occupy their homes on weekends or for short vacation stays. A large-scale commercial component would not be consistent with the rural/recreational character of the resort community, and would neither be financially feasible, nor meet the Applicant's goals and objectives. A larger and broader retail commercial program would also compete with, and have potential adverse economic impacts on, the Hamlet of Amenia. The Applicant submits that the proposed commercial component appropriately advances the desired character of the community by *"incorporating elements (a small general store, golf pro shop, restaurant, etc.) to fulfill the convenience needs of the part-time residents as it relates to the recreational and second home focus of the project"* (see Mary Ann Johnson comment memo dated May 14, 2014). The proposed reduction in on-site commercial space from the previously approved MDP will limit potential competitive impacts to the Hamlet and encourage additional patronage of hamlet businesses, creating the type of synergy between the new residents and existing hamlet businesses described in the Comprehensive Plan. These more modest, targeted commercial uses will complement existing uses in the Town, which will in turn be supported by approximately \$1.5 million of community resident spending on meals and food, \$700,000 on transportation and gas, and \$1.1 million on retail goods, annually. This revenue is vital to the economic growth of the Hamlet of Amenia and the region.

Due to the nature of the Modified Project as a second-home, resort community, it does not fully comply with the principles of TND. However, for the reasons set forth above, the Applicant submits that the Modified Project complies with TND principles to the extent reasonably practical and appropriate given the overriding objective of the RDO District to preserve natural resources, and the essential rural/recreational character of the resort community.