

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK

Z-2



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STAFF REPORT SECTIONS A14-14 THRU A14-25 OF THE SUFFOLK COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

- January 6, 2016 ADDENDUM TO (9/17/91) STAFF REPORT STORY BOOK MEADOWS -

Applicant: Story Book Meadows
Municipality: Smithtown
Location: N/s/o Smithtown Blvd. (CR 16) and Aprox, 470 feet e/o Mary's Lane

Received: 11/12/2015
File Number: SM-15-INC
T.P.I.N.: 0800 16800 0100 028003
Jurisdiction: adjacent to CR 16

ZONING DATA

- Zoning Classification: RC
- Minimum Lot Area: 400,000. Sq. Ft.
- Section 278: N/A
- Obtained Variance: N/A

ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

- Stormwater Drainage
 - Design of System: CB LP
 - Recharge Basins: yes
- Groundwater Management Zone: VIII
- Water Supply: public
- Sanitary Sewers: no - private STP

PROPOSAL DETAILS

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The current subject referral is for an amendment to a proposed 190 attached unit Age Restricted (Sr.) project located on the north side of Smithtown Blvd. (CR 16), approximately 470 feet east of

Mary's lane in the hamlet of Nesconset.

The 23.17 acre project site is bounded on the north by unimproved land of the applicant in the R-15 Zoning District; to the east by detached single family residences in the R-10 and R-15 Districts, school/ business property in the R-15 and NB Districts, and by an office building in the NB District; to the south across CR 16 by office/residence in the NB District; and to the west by single family residences in the R-15 District and commercial/business and single family residences in the NB District.

The Suffolk County Planning Commission has recently received a referral from the Town of Smithtown to consider a request of the applicant to amend a prior approval for a change of zone on the site by the Town to add an additional 38 "bonus units" for a total of 228 dwelling units. The unit breakdown would consist of 50 two bedroom units and 178 one bedroom units. Approximately 20 percent of the units are anticipated to be "affordable". A new private operated individual sewage treatment plant is proposed.

The regulatory history on the subject property related to the SCPC is as follows:

- SCPC Disapproved a referral from the Town of Smithtown on 9/5/91 for a COZ to Retirement Community (RC) from R-15 and NB for 240 garden apartment units (see attached).
- SCPC unable to carry a motion for either Approval/Disapproval on 1/8/92 for a referral from the Town of Smithtown for similar proposal on same site: No action (see attached).
- Town of Smithtown override of SCPC disapproval 12/10 /96 covenants filed 4/1/97
- Referral to SCPC 1/8/15 for mod of COZ and covenants to add 78 bonus units deemed incomplete
- 11/12/15 SCPC received a referral from the Town of Smithtown for a new site plan and application to amend to 38 bonus units for a total of 228 units.

See attached staff report (September 17, 1991) for additional information.

STAFF ANALYSIS

SUFFOLK COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION GUIDELINE CONSIDERATIONS:

The Suffolk County Planning Commissions has identified six general Critical County Wide Priorities and include:

1. Environmental Protection
2. Energy efficiency
3. Economic Development, Equity and Sustainability
4. Housing Diversity
5. Transportation and
6. Public Safety

These policies are reflected in the Suffolk County Planning Commission Guidebook (unanimously adopted July 11, 2012). Below are items for consideration regarding the Commission policies:

With respect to environmental protection, storm-water flooding in the area of Lake Ronkonkoma is a re-occurring problem. While the petitioners are proposing catch basins, leaching pools and two recharge basins, the applicant should review the Suffolk County Planning Commission publication entitled "Managing Stormwater-Natural Vegetation and Green Methodologies" to naturally accommodate on site storm water runoff generated from impervious surfaces proposed.

In addition, the applicant is proposing an individual private sewage treatment plant for the handling of sanitary waste from the proposed development. Several developments in the area may have the capacity to handle the flow of waste from the proposed development including: Nob Hill (489 condos) to the southwest, The Woods at Smithtown (56 condos) to the southeast and a proposed 66 unit apt complex to the north west called "Lancelot Gardens" by Story Book Homes (needs a change of zone from lower density residential and professional office districts). An analysis of the STP's in the area and the available capacity of them to accommodate flow from the proposed development is warranted. Moreover, discharge of treated wastewater to the ground on site and hence the ground water table has the potential to exacerbate problems with respect to absorption and retention of storm water on site and may impact storm water flooding in the vicinity. Geology in the vicinity of the site includes a clay deposit or lens below the ground surface that may impact the ability of the site for ground absorption and retention of injected treated water. Review by the Suffolk County Department of Health Services and the Suffolk County Department of Public Works is warranted and the petitioner should be directed to contact and begin dialogue with the Suffolk County Department of Health Services and the SCDPW as early as possible.

No mention of the consideration of energy efficiency is provided in the referral material to the Suffolk County Planning Commission. The petitioners should be encouraged to review the Suffolk County Planning Commission Guidebook particularly with respect to energy efficiency and incorporate where practical, elements contained therein for the residential and clubhouse components of the proposal.

The proposed project does address the need for a diversity of housing stock in Suffolk County and addresses special need housing by providing a form off Senior or age restricted housing for the vicinity. According to the American Association of Retired People (AARP), 1 in 3 Americans are 50 or older and by 2030 one out of every five people in the U.S. will be 65+. To address this growing demographic in 2012, AARP published "Aging In Place: A Toolkit for Local Governments"([1]) containing several recommendations that are pertinent to this proposed project.

While the majority of older adults are living now where they will live as they age, new construction is an important part of aging in place as we look to the future. Communities can implement changes now to insure that they have a housing stock to meet the needs of the rapidly growing older adult population.

Recommendations of the "Aging in Place: A Toolkit for Local Governments" include:

- **Create a Variety of Housing Types:** Allow the construction of a variety of housing types to fit the needs and desires of the full spectrum of citizens: single-family detached homes, row houses, walk-up apartments, apartments above retail, granny flats above garages. All types of housing should be integrated into the community to preclude the de facto segregation that characterizes most cities today.
- **Incorporating Accessibility Standards in New Construction:** Encourage homebuilders and contractors to construct new homes according to accessibility standards and avoid the construction of "Peter Pan Housing"-- housing for those who never grow old.
- **Walkability:** In a healthy, socially vibrant community, residents must be able to walk. As people age, they may lose the ability to drive safely long before they lose the ability to walk. Walking is the favored mode transportation for seniors who are either uncomfortable driving or unable to do so. Walking helps maintain health and important social interactions. Providing safe sidewalks and dependable public transit for older adults can reduce the overall cost of personal services. Guidelines are provided in the report.

- Enhancing Transportation Services: A comprehensive, consumer-friendly transportation program addresses: driver safety efforts, improved public transit services, integrated taxi/paratransit services, enhanced pedestrian facilities, volunteer services, escort ("hand-to-hand") services and emergency transportation services.

[1] Accessed at: <http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/plan/planning/aging-in-place-a-toolkit-for-local-governments-aarp.pdf>

The subject property has a WalkScore of 58 out of 100 possible points, and is rated as "somewhat walkable". Currently, no Suffolk County Transit bus traverses east to west along Smithtown Blvd. (CR 16) in front of the project site. The closest route is the S-57 to the east of the property line of the subject site approx. 1,050 feet at the intersection of Rosevale Ave and Smithtown Blvd. To the west the closest route is the S-3D along north-south Terry Road. The distance to this route is approximately 1600 feet from the frontage of the project site along Smithtown Blvd. The County of Suffolk has investigated (2009) a new bus route that will travel along the CR 16 corridor in this area that could provide access for many transit-dependent individuals to the Ronkonkoma railroad station, downtown Smithtown and Kings Park and St. Catherine's hospital. This service is still pending. The applicant and the Town of Smithtown should coordinate with the County to facilitate the development of this route there is no full service supermarket that is walkable in the area though a "Handy Pantry" is adjacent to the subject property. Many small shops and offices and various strip shopping centers are found along the CR 16 corridor but the ability for Senior Citizens to safely walk to these locations is questionable. In terms of other locational criteria, the subject site is not situated close to a central business district or hamlet area that provides a concentration of community facilities, shopping or public recreational open space.

Traffic impact analysis for the proposed project was not provided to the offices of the Suffolk County Planning Commission in the current referral. However, this office did locate a traffic study that was conducted in November 1991 for the proposed 240 unit senior citizens project. The results of that analysis concluded that "the proposed development will not have an adverse effect on the traffic flow in the immediate vicinity of the site." This conclusion was based on the relatively lower trip generation characteristics of age restricted (Sr.) developments, comparison to the potential trip generation if the project had been developed as-of-right (at the time) as 47 homes and 21,000 SF of stores, limited site access and adequate sight distances in the vicinity of the proposed access road, intersection capacity analysis performed at the adjacent signalized intersections and the use of the existing Suffolk County bus routes by residents and visitors of the proposed development. In so much as bus routes have not developed in front of the subject property and twenty five years has passed since this office has received a traffic impact study for the development proposed, it is the belief of the staff that a current traffic study to determine if congestion mitigation measures as proposed are adequate or if additional mitigations are warranted.

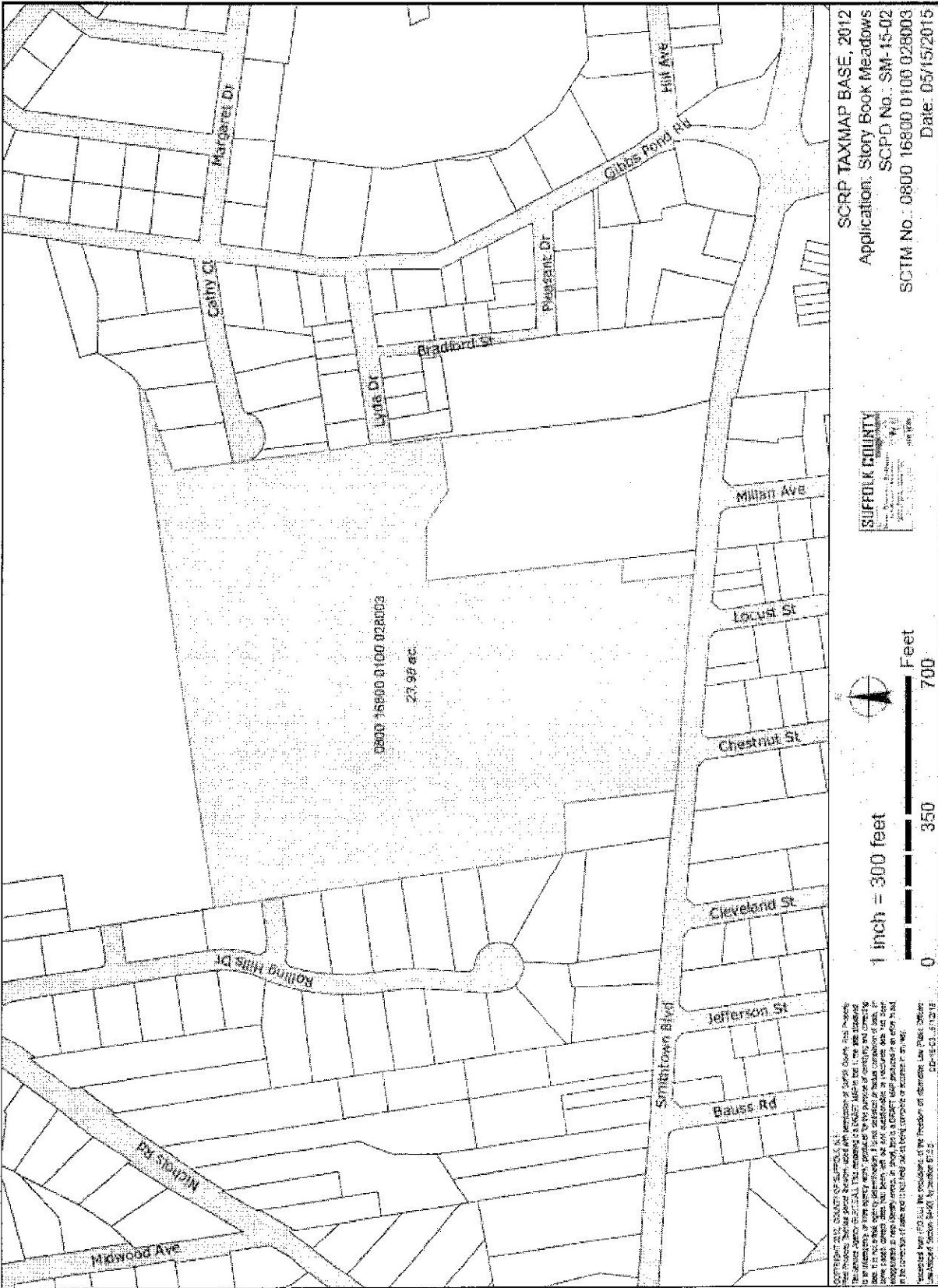
Little discussion is made in the petition to the Town and referred to the Commission on public safety and universal design. The applicant should review the Planning Commission guidelines particularly related to public safety and universal design and incorporate into the proposal, where practical, design elements contained therein.

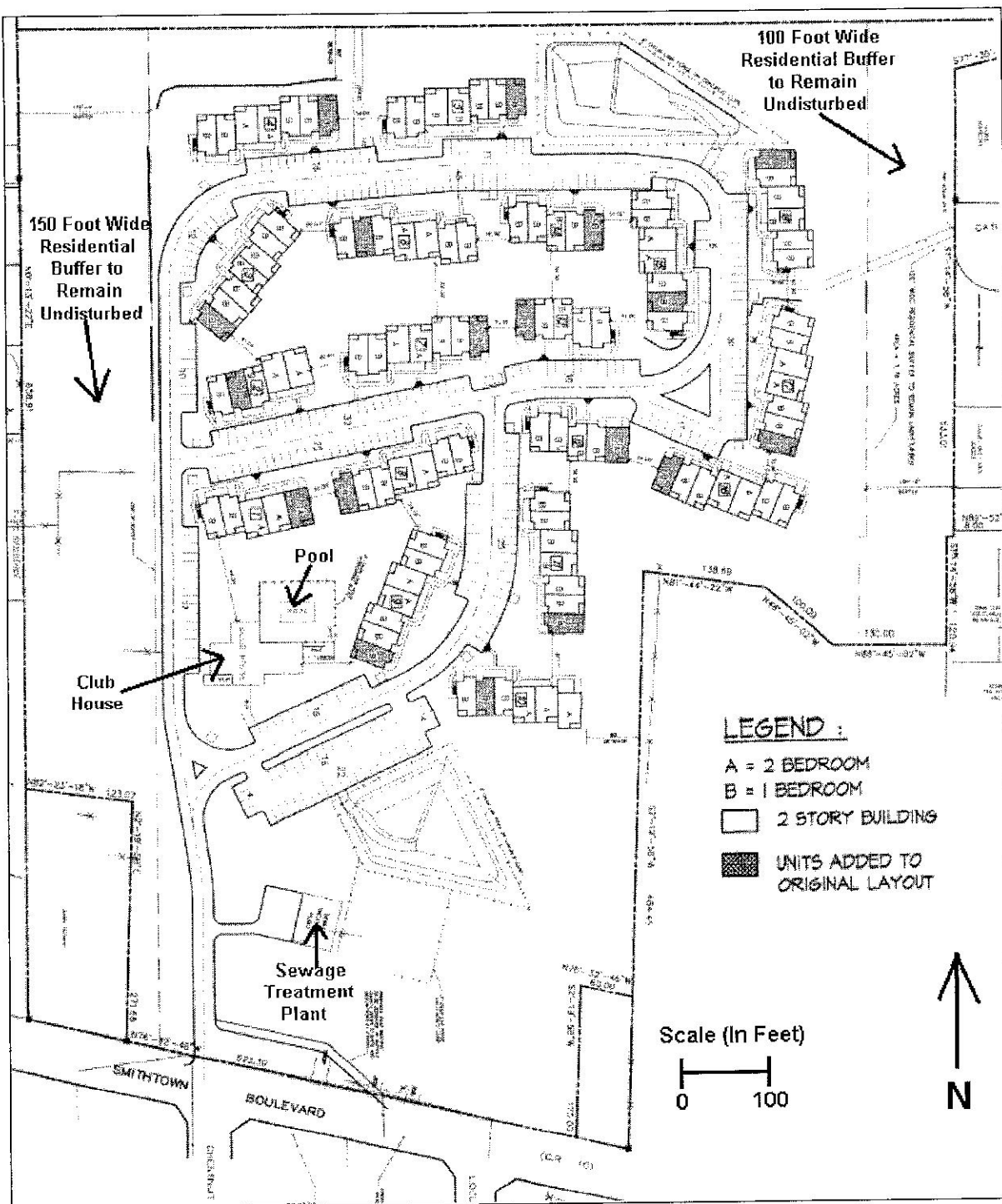
It is the belief of the staff that in light of the level of environmental review on prior iterations of the proposed Sr. Citizen project on this site that the 1991 DEIS on the project is in need of a supplemental update to investigate the issues outlined above.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Approval to amend the prior approval to Story Book Meadows for a change of zone on the site by the Town of Smithtown to add an additional 38 “bonus units” for a total of 228 dwelling units, subject to the following comments:

1. Continued review by the Suffolk County Department of Health Services and the Suffolk County Department of Public Works is warranted and the petitioner should be directed to continue dialogue with the Suffolk County Department of Health Services and the SCDPW.
2. The petitioner should be encouraged to review the Suffolk County Planning Commission publication on the Creation of Man-Made Ponds in Suffolk County and incorporate into the proposal, where practical, design elements contained therein.
3. The petitioner should be encouraged to review the Suffolk County Planning Commission publication on Managing Stormwater-Natural Vegetation and Green Methodologies and incorporate into the proposal, where practical, design elements contained therein.
4. The petitioner should be encouraged to review the Suffolk County Planning Commission Guidebook particularly with respect to energy efficiency and incorporate where practical, applicable elements contained therein.
5. The petitioner should review the Planning Commission guidelines particularly related to public safety and incorporate into the proposal, where practical, design elements contained therein.
6. The petitioner should review the Planning Commission guidelines particularly related to universal design and incorporate into the proposal, where practical, design elements contained therein.
7. A supplement to the 1994 DEIS should be prepared to examine hydro-geologic issues related to stormwater runoff and flooding, degree and technology of sewage treatment and discharge to the groundwater, traffic and other related issues.





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 SCPD: SM-15-Inc
 SCTM No: 0800-168.00-01.00-028.003