

October 24, 2022

Re: Site Plan for Colts Neck Building Associates, LLC
Block 22, Lot 18
Colts Neck Road (County Route 537)

Via Email: jeannine.smith@co.monmouth.nj.us

To The Monmouth County Development Review Committee:

On behalf of the League of Women Voters of Monmouth County (the “League”) we wish to thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Colts Neck Manor application for County Road 537 in Colts Neck Township.

The League has long held positions in support of both affordable housing and the protection of drinking water resources. The proximity of this development to Yellow Brook, and the fact it can only be accessed from a section of county highway noted for accidents, makes this site of particular concern. In general, we discourage the extension of dense development in potable water supply watersheds with access adjacent to important stream corridors. Public health and safety are concerns of the League, a public interest organization.

We are concerned that aspects of this application have the potential to adversely impact County roads and drainage structures and their ability to function efficiently, with minimum danger to traffic safety and minimum pollution of the stormwater running off toward our Swimming River Reservoir.

Currently County Road 537 is one of, if not the most, heavily traveled roads in the entire County Road system. In front of the proposed building site, it serves as the connection between traffic coming north through Howell Township to not only Freehold Borough and the eastern part of the county, but also and most immediately, to Route 18.

Five Point/Howell Road is undoubtedly one of the most heavily traveled *municipal* roads, at least in the western part of the County. It serves as a link between Route 537 and State Highway Route 33 and County Road 524. Through those connections it provides not only a southern route across the county but also an effective bypass of Freehold Borough to the southwest, thereby reducing traffic volumes on the County road network. We want to emphasize the importance of ensuring the safest and most efficient operation of this particular road segment as possible. The need for such attention to safety is further increased by the presence of Colts Neck High School on the southeastern corner of this intersection and the traffic this generates with school buses and also with student drivers commuting to school and parents dropping children off and picking them up.

After reviewing the publicly available information, with particular attention to the proposed entrance/egress locations to Colts Neck Manor from along County Road 537, we strongly feel that public safety requires the proposed easterly access to the site be relocated to the existing signalized intersection with Five Point/Howell Road.

This will allow full turning motions to be conducted safely at all times of day. We further believe that, with proper design, this should eliminate the need for a second westerly access, though an emergency access one should be constructed to provide for first aid, fire and police access if needed. It should be limited to right turns out only.

In addition, this site is located directly across from two existing public facilities -- Colts Neck High School and Five Point Park, a municipal facility. With this large a population in such close proximity to these facilities and no room on site for any active outdoor recreation access, other than a swimming pool (at an activity center one must pay a monthly fee to use), some design for pedestrian safety along and across Route 537 should be required for this application.

As to stormwater management, this assumes additional importance as Colts Neck Manor is located on a site bounded by Yellow Brook --a NJDEP designated Category One stream subject to an anti-degradation standard. In fact, the stream actually runs through a section of the northeastern part of this tract near where the drainage channel on the east joins it.

It is clear that the proposed project will result in increased traffic volumes and the county has potential plans to widen the road by a lane for a short distance in this area. The added traffic to this roadway will result in an increase in the petrochemical residues and other auto related pollutants, including litter and road salts, that will run off to the stream corridor flowing to the Reservoir.

We strongly recommend that the access to the site be aligned with the Five Point Road controlled signal intersection and that consideration be given to any means, such as high tech catch basins designed for removing some of these pollutants, to further protect Yellow Brook from the polluted runoff that that will be generated.

We again thank you for this opportunity to address this important issue that will affect hundreds of thousands of Monmouth County residents.

Submitted by,

Co-Presidents of The League of Women Voters of Monmouth County

Barbara Chaudhery (she/her)

58 Dale Drive, Middletown, NJ 07748

Evelyn C Murphy, PhD (she/her)

1411 6th Avenue, Neptune, NJ 07753

Sharon Steinhorn (she/her)

23 Abbey Lane Marlboro NJ 07746