

April 30, 2018

Southbridge Zoning Board of Appeals  
Town of Southbridge  
41 Elm Street  
Southbridge, MA 01550

RE: Nitsch Project #12334  
Southbridge Mills  
Responses to Peer Review  
Southbridge, MA

Dear Board Members,

The Southbridge Mills project team is in receipt of preliminary site plan review comments from Graves Engineering, Inc. The comments were provided in a letter dated April 16, 2018. We offer the following responses to the comments. Comments are shown as regular text and responses are shown as italic text.

### **Southbridge Zoning By-Law**

1. Snow storage areas must be shown on the plans. (§701A.15.B)

*Snow storage areas will be added to the site plans.*

2. Calculations for the number of required and proposed parking spaces, including handicap spaces, should be included on the plans. (§703.3)

*The plans will be updated to include calculations for the number of required and proposed parking spaces, including handicap parking spaces.*

3. The waiver requests included with this application state that the loading space for this building will be at the building entrance. The proposed loading area must be shown on the plans. (§703.4.A.2)

*The proposed loading area will be added to the site plan.*

4. On Sheet L-202, the lighting information shows that the playground and rear entrance, including a portion of the handicap ramp, will not be illuminated. These areas should be illuminated for the safety of residents. (§705.4)

*The lighting design and site lighting plan will be updated to provide a minimum illuminance of 0.5 foot-candles at the playground, rear building entrance, and handicap ramp.*

### **Hydrology and MassDEP Stormwater Management**

5. GEI reviewed the hydrology calculations and found them to be in order.

*Comment received, no response required*

6. GEI has no issue with the preliminary information contained in the Stormwater Report relative to compliance with the MassDEP Stormwater Management Standards. However, more detailed information needs to be submitted prior to construction. Therefore, GEI recommends that the Zoning Board of Appeals reserve the right to review said documentation once it is submitted.

*A full stormwater management report will be prepared for the Notice of Intent filing with the Southbridge Conservation Commission. A copy of the report can be provided to the Zoning Board of Appeals for their review.*

### General Engineering Comments

7. GEI concurs with the concept of replacing the damaged section of retaining wall along the canal. Likewise, any displaced or damaged concrete curbing or capstone along the wall also needs to be replaced.

*Capstone will be repaired and/or replaced as required along with the retaining wall.*

8. There are several existing retaining walls between the proposed sidewalk and existing canal. The existing conditions plan (Sheet EX-101 and EX-102) shows that the tops of the retaining walls are mostly level with the ground on the uphill side, and thus provide little to no protection against falling into the canal, which is ten feet deep in areas. The existing conditions also show a "[metal] railing on 1' wide concrete" north of the sheet match-line. The existing railing is present only along a portion of the canal. The existing railing consists of a horizontal steel member with vertical steel posts — the openings below the railing do not offer any impediment to the canal. A pedestrian barrier needs to be provided along the entire length of the canal.

*A pedestrian/guard rail barrier will be provided along the length of the canal where it is adjacent to the proposed walkways.*

9. Sheet C-301 shows that the existing guard rail between the parking lot and the canal will be removed, but no guard rail is proposed to replace it. The elevations on Sheet C-501 show that the parking area will be surrounded by granite curbing with a height of six inches. Given the proximity of the parking to the canal and the canal's depth, the installation of guard rail between the parking area and the canal is warranted.

*A vehicular guard rail will be provided between the parking area and the canal.*

10. On Sheet G-002, the Proposed First Floor — Egress Plan shows the handicap parking space on the southwest side of the building in a different configuration than is shown on Sheet C-400. In general, this area is problematic for use as a parking space — the area is adjacent to the intersection of Case Street and East Main Street (conflicts with entering and exiting vehicles is a concern) and the area has limited sight lines to observe vehicles on Case Street approaching the intersection. In GEI's opinion, this area is not conducive for use as a parking area.

*The handicap parking space at the southwest building entrance is designed to be a parallel parking space, as shown on Sheet C-400, which facilitates easier access into and out of the space. As a handicap parking space, it is anticipated it will be utilized less than a standard parking space, which would minimize conflicts with other vehicles. By use of a vehicle's side mirror, a driver would have good sight lines down Case Street to help with pulling out of the space.*

*As an alternate design, this handicap parking space could be moved to the lower parking lot. However, this would require eliminating two standard parking spaces to provide room for the handicap parking space and access aisle.*

11. On Sheet L-101, there is an asphalt sidewalk proposed on the north end of the building, crossing the "1 story brick building" that is proposed to be demolished on Sheet C-300. The existing topography shows a nine-foot change in elevation across this building. The plans need to clarify if a ramp or stairs is proposed, as no proposed grading is shown in this area.

*The landing outside this egress door will be at elevation 415+/- . The proposed walkway will be sloped down at <5% to meet and match grade at the east edge of the one-story brick building to be demolished, which is at elevation 409+/- . The grading plans will be updated to reflect this design intent.*

12. On Sheet C-600, the pipe between clean out CO#2 and structure AB#200 has a negative slope based on the invert elevations provided. The elevations need to be re-evaluated.

*The invert elevations will be adjusted to provide positive slope to AB#200.*

13. GEI did not review the plans relative to the water and sewer utilities, but we do understand that the project will be served by Town water and sewer. We understand that the Southbridge Water Department will review the existing water connection and the Southbridge Wastewater Department will review the existing sewer connection.

*The project will be served by town water and sewer. The project proposes to maintain the existing water and sewer services to the building.*

14. GEI is concerned about the condition of the steel fence along the East Main Street sidewalk; the fence is leaning in some locations. Its integrity should be evaluated by the applicant. At a minimum, the fence needs repainting.

*The applicant is amenable to evaluating the integrity of the fence and, at a minimum, scraping and repainting it.*

#### **General Comments**

15. GEI understands that if a Comprehensive Permit is issued, then construction-level site plans will need to be prepared. GEI recommends that the Board require the review of the construction plans to confirm that said plans are consistent with the Comprehensive Permit, applicable Comprehensive Permit conditions, the preliminary site plans and good engineering practices.

*Once prepared, a copy of the Construction Documents can be provided to the Zoning Board of Appeals.*

16. If a Comprehensive Permit is issued, the Board should retain the right (through a condition in the Comprehensive Permit) to engage in construction monitoring, and the submittal and review of as-built plans.

*The applicant has no objections to this condition.*

17. Access to the adjacent Buildings 39L and 49 will essentially be blocked by the proposed parking. If not already done, the Zoning Board of Appeals may wish to inquire of the Fire Department if they have any concerns or issues with access to these buildings if the parking spaces are constructed and occupied as proposed.

*Comment received, no response required*

18. The proposed parking will provide 53 parking spaces for the proposed dwelling units. However, there are no parking spaces proposed for the adjacent Buildings 39L and 49. The plans and application materials offer no information on the current/future uses of Buildings 39L and 49 (other than that the current use is cold storage) and what parking is required or may be required in the future.

*Buildings 39L and 49 are intended to be used for cold storage for the foreseeable future, and no parking spaces are needed for these two buildings.*

19. The dumpster pad is proposed adjacent to the canal. Inherently, some trash will make its way onto the ground surface outside of the dumpster. GEI recommends that the dumpster be located away from the canal.

*In lieu of relocating the dumpsters, a taller and more robust fence enclosure can be provided to minimize or eliminate the migration of trash outside of the enclosure. Due to onsite space restrictions, relocation of the dumpsters would likely require the elimination of some parking spaces.*

20. The Board may wish to ask the applicant of their intentions relative to the structure located over the canal's sluice gate. The structure is in disrepair. For aesthetic purposes, consideration should be given to repairing the structure and repainting the visual components associated with the sluice's operating mechanism.

*The applicant is amendable to repairing the sluice gate structure and repainting the visual components associated with the sluice gate's operating mechanism.*

21. The plans should state what zoning district the project is located in, and zoning district boundaries must be included on the plans. Nearby zoning districts should also be shown on the locus on the cover sheet.

*The plans will be updated to note the project's zoning district, zoning district boundaries, and nearby zoning districts.*

22. The plans should include a table that shows the dimensional requirements of the project's zoning district (lot size, frontage, setbacks, etc.) and the existing and proposed dimensions.

*The plans will be updated to include a table showing the dimensional requirements of the project's zoning district and the existing and proposed dimensions.*

23. On Sheet A-211, the building icon in the bottom right side of the page incorrectly identifies the view as part B of the building. This icon should identify the view as part A.

*The building icon on Sheet A-211 will be updated to identify the view as part A.*

24. The Architectural Floor and Elevations Plans were not reviewed by GEI. Such a review is beyond the scope of this civil engineering preliminary site plan review.

*Comment received, no response required*

### **Waiver Requests**

25. GEI has no engineering-related issues associated with the waiver requests.

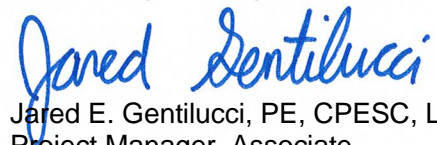
*Comment received, no response required*

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the preliminary site plan review comments. We trust that you find the above information helpful, and we look forward to discussing the comments and responses at the upcoming public hearing. If you have any questions or require additional information, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Southbridge Zoning Board of Appeals  
April 30, 2018  
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Very truly yours,

**Nitsch Engineering, Inc.**



Jared E. Gentilucci, PE, CPESC, LEED AP BD+C  
Project Manager, Associate

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