



Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association

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Whitemarsh Township Board of Supervisors
Whitemarsh Township Planning Commission
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Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association has reviewed the proposed zoning change and the land development plan submitted in December 2001 for the continuing care residential community (CCRC), The Hill at Whitemarsh. It was gratifying to note a number of positive changes in the plan compared to a proposal submitted roughly a year ago. Relocating the bulk of construction to the back of the parcel is much more sensitive to the land and helps to protect important scenic views from Thomas and Flourtown Roads. In addition, the proposed project will protect twelve acres of woods with a conservation easement, a commendable aspect of the design.

Most noteworthy, from the WVWA's point of view, is that the process of designing the CCRC proposal created a consensus among the land owner, developer and community groups that recognizes the overarching importance of preserving major portions of Erdenheim Farm. The Farm is a premier piece of open space which, as a result of decades of sensitive stewardship by George Weidner and F. Eugene Dixon, has become a landscape regarded by area residents as an integral part of the fabric of the community. The agreements which accompany this project have created opportunities to preserve important sections of Erdenheim Farm, land which together with the Morris Arboretum and parkland along the Wissahickon Creek, make up an unparalleled natural asset for the area.

The proposal for the Hill at Whitemarsh has created opportunities to protect beautiful open space. In addition, it has set up mechanisms, such as the Whitemarsh Foundation, with the potential to take advantage of these opportunities. However, The Hill at Whitemarsh also presents the community with new challenges. WVWA looks forward to working with the Township, the Whitemarsh Foundation, other conservation organizations and area residents in meeting these challenges and realizing the potential to permanently protect the Erdenheim Farm landscape as a unique community treasure.

Sincerely,

David S. Froehlich
Executive Director

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