D.R. Horton, Inc., is proposing to build a 587-unit (282 single family and 305 multi-family town house) retirement community in Pemberton Township, Burlington County. The application states the property is 678 acres in size and is located to the south of Lakehurst Road (Route 530) with the westerly border being Wissahickon Trail. To the east of the project site is Country Lake Estates.

The Pemberton Township Planning Board deemed the application complete for review at its January 12, 2006 meeting and is scheduled to begin hearing the application on March 9, 2006 at 7:30 pm. The applicant indicated that it will take at least three meetings to present the entire development proposal.

Residents of Pemberton Township need to get involved with the project at this early stage! Attend the Planning Board meetings to hear the details of this very large project. After hearing the presentation there will be an opportunity to ask questions or voice any concerns about the project.

This is a very large project. If it goes forward it will encompass forested uplands, wetlands and wetlands buffers, large amounts of stormwater to be managed, threatened and endangered species habitats to be protected, township land that has to be sold and Green Acres Open Space that has to be diverted (which requires a public process), extension of sewer lines, a new public water well drilled, and roadways that need to be built or improved.

Applicants building in the Pinelands Protection area are required to submit their application to the Pinelands Commission prior to the local planning board review. D.R. Horton, Inc received an Inconsistent Certificate of Filing from the Pinelands Commission. This means that the application, as submitted to the Pinelands Commission, does not meet Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) regulations. An applicant can proceed to the local planning board after receiv-

continued on page 2
ing their certificate of filing to see if the inconsistен-
cies can be resolved.

Some of the items that the developer has to
address to meet both Pinelands Commission CMP
regulations and Pemberton Township Land Use reg-
ulations are:

- The development standards require a 200-foot
  perimeter fuel break, which is a permanent buffer
  area where trees are selectively removed, mowed or
  pruned on an annual basis, between all proposed
  structures and the forest. In the application none
  has been provided.

- The development standards require that no
development shall be carried out unless it is
designed to avoid irreversible adverse impacts to
habitat that is critical to the survival of any local pop-
ulations of threatened or endangered animal
species. The developers Threatened and Endangered Species surveys and habitat deline-
ations have not accepted by the Pinelands
Commission. The species of concern are the barred
owl and the northern pine snake.

- The development standards require all stormwa-
ter generated as a result of the development must
be retained and infiltrated onsite. Larger stormwater
basins may need to be provided.

The developer also needs to purchase
Pemberton Township (public) owned land. One parcel
that is on the developers site location map is
Block 854, Lot 16.05. On the tax records this lot is
listed as 450 acres in size and owned by Pemberton
Township Municipal Utilities Authority.

The second parcel is Block 874, Lots 1, 2 & 3,
which is the site of Pole Bridge Park. The develop-
er needs these lots for an entrance roadway. This
parksite is listed on Pemberton Township’s Green
Acres Recreation and Open Space Inventory
(ROSI). In order for the Township to sell this prop-
erty it will have to go through a public diversion
process. (see article on page 3)

All of these items and more will be discussed
before the planning board in the months ahead.
Pemberton Township residents need to get involved
in the process early!

What you can do:

- Attend the Pemberton Township Planning Board
meetings. The first is scheduled for March 9, 2006
and additional meeting dates will be announced at
that meeting.

- Read the newspaper and watch for other public
hearings involving the sale of Township-owned land.
Also, write letters to the newspapers which will edu-
cate others about this development.

- Attend the Pemberton Township Council meet-
ings and let them know how you feel about “the sell-
ing of your public property.” Meetings held 1st and
3rd Wednesdays of the month at 6:30 pm.

- For further information, you can contact PPA at
609-859-8860 x22, or e-mail Theresa at
theresa@pinelandsalliance.org.

Pole Branch Park at the intersection of Drexel
and Pole Branch Road.
How Can You Help Protect Threatened & Endangered Species Habitat?

Our state government has an official process whereby citizens may report the presence of Threatened and Endangered species. The process begins when a citizen recognizes a protected plant or animal by sight or, in the case of birds or frogs, by hearing a call distinctive of the species. It’s also possible, in many cases, to recognize the presence of an animal species by finding clear evidence in the way of “sign,” such as tracks.

The NJ Pinelands Comprehensive Management Plan protects a specific list of 54 plants, and in addition, all state-listed endangered plants that occur within the Pinelands National Reserve. The number of state-listed endangered plants that occur within the PNR is approximately 150. Perhaps a third of them are easily recognizable. The rest can be recognized after a little study and with the help of some reference material.

Approximately thirty-six Threatened or Endangered animal species may be encountered in the Pinelands: at least twenty-one birds, three snakes, two frogs, two turtles, two salamanders, one fish, one mammal, and four butterflies. Most of these creatures are either immediately recognizable or can be learned with a little study and field experience.

Once a citizen has recognized a protected species, he or she may fill out a Rare Species Reporting form and send it to the NJ Natural Heritage Program (NHP), or a Threatened and Endangered Species Report form, and send it to the NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife Endangered and Nongame Species Program (ENSP). All reports of plants should go to the NHP, where Heritage staff review each report and determine its validity. Reports of animals may go to either agency, but in this case ENSP biologists make determinations.

The report forms are available from the websites of the two agencies. For the NHP form, call 609-292-9400 or go to: www.natureserve.org/nhp-us/nj/nhprptg.htm. For the ENSP report form, call 609-984-0097 or go to: www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/ensp/rprtform.htm.

Within the Pinelands Protection area a copy of the completed form can be sent to the NJ Pinelands Commission, P.O. Box 7, New Lisbon, NJ 08064.

A citizen report of a protected species should be supported by plenty of detail, photographs, if possible, and a map showing exactly where to find the site. State biologists may need to visit the site to verify the report.

Not all reports of protected species are accepted. In the case of most birds, for example, state biologists are primarily concerned with nesting habitat. But, in any case, citizen participation in documenting protected species sightings can often make the difference between new inappropriate development and a protected wildlife community.

Illustration by Mary Pat Finelli, courtesy Plexus Publishing, from a Field Guide to the Pine Barrens of New Jersey by Howard P. Boyd
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