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Dublin Planning Commission
c/o Sarah Holt, Senior Planner
5200 Emerald Parkway
Dublin, Ohio 43017

Re: Amlin Crossing Preliminary Development Plan

Members of the Planning and Zoning Commission:

Schottenstein Homes was disappointed to learn that Planning is recommending disapproval of the above-referenced application. Perhaps no applicant in recent memory has had to deal with more moving parts for a project. In addition to the numerous development constraints resulting from existing City plans, there have been at least a few City-initiated policy changes in the midst of the applicant's planning process. It is the applicant's view that it has made earnest and good faith efforts to directly address the Planning and Zoning Commission's comments and also to react to the ever-changing regulatory landscape. Yet, it sits here with over \$450,000 invested in a proposal that may be dead on arrival, if the staff report is to be followed.

This application for Amlin Crossing is the third opportunity for you to review this development proposal. An informal review was undertaken by the Planning and Zoning Commission on December 8, 2021. A Concept Plan application hearing was held by the Commission on August 18, 2022. Over one year later, a rezoning/preliminary development plan application is now before you. The fact that it took this long to file the latest application reflects the complexities that are involved.

While in previous meetings the Commission has expressed general support for the direction of the project, the applicant is cognizant that many details remain to be worked out. This is the nature of the process, especially in its early stages. Furthermore, there has never been an expectation on the applicant's part that the current application would be voted upon in a single meeting, even though the plan is further along. We anticipate consideration of your additional feedback so that we can return at a later date with more refinements. We hope that you will reciprocate the desire to achieve an incremental advance of the plans for this community at an upcoming meeting.

Certainly, the property has numerous significant influences that have made site planning particularly difficult. First and foremost, the future extension of Tuttle Crossing through the site.

While an applicant is nearly always held to the recommendations of City planning documents as a starting point, that was not the case here. Early in the process of engaging with City staff, Schottenstein Homes learned that the adopted thoroughfare plan relating to the extension of Tuttle Crossing through this property was no longer supported by the City's engineering department. Therefore, the baseline starting point for site planning had changed. Recommendations for large setbacks from the new right-of-way, when combined with the new preferred location for this major public street, have played a major part in substantially whittling away at developable areas on the site.

According to an analysis undertaken by the applicant's land planner, Greg Chillog of Edge, by accommodating all of the City's requirements for rights-of-way, setbacks, protection of environmentally sensitive areas, and other items, only +/-34.0 acres are buildable on a +/-105-acre site, or 32.3%. The Southwest Area Plan (as it exists today) recommends up to 5.0 units per acre on this property, or up to 525 units. The only ways in which this density could be achieved while accommodating the requirements and desires of the City are as follows:

Yield 1: 525 apartments in two and three-story walkup apartment buildings located within the buildable areas.

Yield 2: 75 small lot single-family homes, plus 450 apartments in three or four-story center hall buildings located within the buildable areas.

Yield 3: 155 two-story, front garage townhomes, along with 370 apartment units in three-story walkup buildings located within the buildable areas.

*Note that 525 units on +/-34.0 acres of buildable area yields a net density of 15.4 units per acre.

The proposal before you contains 371 units, or 3.5+ units per gross acre. If the property is required to adhere to all of the recommendations of the Southwest Area Plan (other than its recommendation for the location of Tuttle Crossing), all of the provisions of the City's newly adopted Neighborhood Design Guidelines, and other expressed desires from City staff, here is what the site will yield with this number of units:

Yield 1: 371 two-story, front-loaded garage townhomes.

Yield 2: 75 small lot single-family homes, and 450 apartments in three or four-story center hall apartment buildings.

*Note that 371 units on +/-34.0 acres of buildable area yields a net density of 10.9 units per acre.

It would be very surprising for this Commission or City Council to support this amount of clustered density anywhere outside of the Bridge Street Area. The practical reality is that compromises on both sides of the application need to be made in order to meet the lion's share of the City's goals and provide flexibility to allow a developer to create a superior plan. At the

Concept Plan stage, the Commission expressed a willingness to allow for deviations from some of the recommendations in City planning documents. This was the impetus for the applicant to continue to pursue this project. It received guidance from the Commission and staff to provide “unique” residential product types. While generalities such as this one are difficult to interpret, Schottenstein Homes has, in fact, designed products that have never been built anywhere in Dublin (nor by the applicant anywhere else), and which meet the high level of quality expected in the city.

On top of these other factors that have impacted site planning and architectural design, a flurry of changes to the underlying regulatory scheme for new residential development in the City have all occurred since Amlin Crossing was first proposed. The City adopted an expansive set of standards called the Neighborhood Design Guidelines. While the term “guidelines” would indicate that they constitute a set of attributes to which a development should strive to achieve, instead Planning is holding this development to the standard of being one hundred percent compliant in order for Amlin Crossing to gain support. In addition, it was announced earlier this year that the City will be updating its Community Plan (including the Southwest Area Plan). Therefore, “Interim Land Use Principles” were adopted by City Council to add another layer of review for development proposals while the Community Plan is being updated. The sequence of events has been as follows:

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>
PZC Informal Review	December 8, 2021
PZC Concept Plan Review	August 18, 2022
Neighborhood Design Standards Approved by PZC	January 19, 2023
Neighborhood Design Standards Approved by City Council	March 27, 2023
Community Plan Update – Process Introduction to PZC	March 16, 2023
City Council Adopts Interim Land Use Principles for Use While Community Plan is Being Updated	June 12, 2023
Applicant Files Rezoning/PDP Application	June 19, 2023

So, in the 13 months since the Commission last saw this project, new zoning guidelines/regulations have been adopted, additional scrutiny is being placed on development projects that are proposed during the pendency of what will likely be a 2-year process of updating the Community Plan, and a dozen new considerations are required to be reviewed for each project until such time as the update is completed. Not the least of which is the requirement that an applicant demonstrate that its development proposal will be “Distinctly Dublin” (see Interim Land Use Principle Number 12). This is a term that cannot be explained, other than to say that decision-makers will “know it when they see it.”

It is nearing the point of being impossible to predict what will be supported by the Planning and Zoning Commission. Frankly, not even City staff knows. That is why it is easiest to just recommend disapproval. There is a lot of subjectivity in the Interim Land Use Principles,

which were not even on the City's radar when this community was first imagined. The Neighborhood Design Guidelines were adopted well into the applicant's development planning effort. Schottenstein Homes respectfully requests that these considerations be taken into account when considering the merits of this project.

All of this is being said in an effort to provide context of what it is like for an applicant in Schottenstein Homes' position. Given the fluidity of all that has gone on over the past two years, the applicant simply requests that consideration be given to the evolving circumstances and actions that have been applied to this project since its inception. Rather than holding this application to a standard by which it must "check every box", we ask you not to evaluate it in a vacuum but in the context detailed above. The plan and architecture are the result of careful consideration of all viewpoints, and the applicant desires to collaborate with you on what has the potential to be a very unique project for the City.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Aaron L. Underhill". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Aaron L. Underhill
Attorney Representing Schottenstein Homes