



MONTGOMERY

TOWNSHIP, NEW JERSEY

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

To: Montgomery Township Development Review Committee
From: Montgomery Township Environmental Commission
Re: BA-08-23 Reilly
Date: January 3, 2024

The Environmental Commission has reviewed the plans and application for the proposed covered porch addition for Michael and Jennifer Reilly.

A. Variance

1. The applicant is applying for a variance for building coverage for the proposed porch. Removal of a brick patio is proposed. Because this patio is not building coverage, and didn't exceed the allowable lot coverage, it didn't require a variance. Because it is larger than the proposed porch, this construction will actually reduce lot coverage, and presumably reduce stormwater runoff from the site.
2. We suggest that as mitigation for the building coverage variance the applicant plant a few native trees or shrubs or a combination, to increase greenery, if not green space, on the lot, and possibly provide screening for the neighbors.
3. We suggest that, if the floor of the proposed porch has spaces between flooring boards, the ground under the porch be covered with landscaping fabric instead of impervious plastic, to facilitate infiltration, when rain blows onto the porch.

B. Lighting

1. Should exterior lighting be planned, the Environmental Commission recommends that lights should be pointed downwards, shielded from the sides, and as low in elevation and intensity as possible, in keeping with Montgomery's Dark Skies policy.
2. Yellow light bulbs, which are the least disorienting to wildlife, should be used. Please be aware that overly bright lights can cause glare and temporarily blind people, reducing visibility; and any lighting may interfere with nocturnal pollinators, fireflies, bats, and migrating birds.
3. Security lights should be on a motion detector.
4. Exterior lights should be turned off as early as possible in the evening, and the applicant might consider special protocols, such as brief shut-offs during spring and fall migration.

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(908) 359-8211
montgomerynj.gov

5. There is a Model Lighting Ordinance jointly developed by the Illuminating Engineering Society and the International Dark Sky Association that provides guidance on developing a lighting plan that will meet the applicant's needs and protect the wildlife that provides us with so many vital ecosystem services, including pollination and pest control. The Environmental Commission requests that your design follow those guidelines. The International Dark Sky Association provides a lot of information on the least harmful yellow lights and on other issues in their website.

C. Other

1. We recommend that the proposed project be designed and built to LEED standards.
2. We suggest that solar panels be installed on the roof, or a green roof.
3. We recommend that, while the lawn and soil are disturbed for construction, the applicant consider installing a geothermal heat exchange HVAC system. This would save a lot of money and carbon emissions.