

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

SEPTEMBER 27, 2017

The Upper Merion Township Planning Commission met for their regularly-scheduled meeting on September 27, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the Township Building, 175 W. Valley Forge Rd., King of Prussia, PA.

Present: Matt Popek, Chair; Mark McKee, Vice-Chair; Vivian Peikin, Secretary; Todd Brown, Member; Kyle Brown, Associate Planner; Maudy Hedlund, Recording Secretary.
Absent: Jaque Camp, Member; Rob Loeper, Township Planner; Dr. William Jenaway, Liaison to the Board of Supervisors.

Matt Popek opened the meeting with a pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Meeting Minutes: September 13, 2017

Vivian Peikin motioned approval of the minutes. Mark McKee seconded. Todd Brown abstained. A 3-0 vote, in favor, carried.

Plan:

DP 2017-13: Francis Schultz

541 Flint Hill Road. Construction of a 40,000 SF one-story building for recreational use and warehousing, and paved parking area for 116 parking spaces and a loading area.

Present: Francis Schultz, 529 Flint Hill Rd.
David J. Zepp, 521 Hertzog Boulevard.
David Evasew, area resident and proprietor of the Upper Merion Dance and Gymnastics Center.
J. Battisto, area resident.
T. Birster, area resident.
G. Evasew, area resident.
K. Evasew, area resident.
A. McAteer, area resident.
R. Yarnall, area resident.

Intent:

The applicant's plan is to construct a building for three tenants, allocating 15,000 SF for field hockey instruction; 17,500 SF for cheerleading, and 7,500 SF for warehouse storage.

Access:

Access to Shorty's Used Auto Parts store will be from Flint Hill Road. Access to Dave's Cheerleading and Main Line Field Hockey will be from Hertzog Boulevard, which is considered wide enough to accommodate two-way traffic. There won't be a specific place for drop-offs. Vehicles can circulate the building.

Traffic:

Connor's Field Hockey anticipates a minimal increase of eighty cars per week during the off/peak hours. Shorty's Used Auto Parts store and Salvage Yard anticipates a significant decrease in weekly traffic -- from 750 to 250 weekly. The traffic counts for the Upper Merion Dance and Gymnastics Center will not change. Their weekly count of 2000 patrons represents 1400 to 1500 patrons at their gymnastic location, and 600 in their cheerleading program, who will transfer to the proposed building.

Parking:

Mr. Schultz assured members that parking for the warehouse and field hockey will be accessible. The applicant will comply with the Township Engineer's requests.

Stormwater improvements:

An underground storm sewer system will be located in the front parking lot of the proposed building on Hertzog Boulevard. Inlets and piping will gather the runoff into a manhole before the water dissipates to a large detention basin.

Engineer's Review:

The Township Engineer's letter recognized a decrease in impervious and addressed some water quality issues. The applicant will comply.

Waivers:

The Planning Commission discussed the applicant's six requested waivers from:

1. §145-24.1.B.(1) - The landscape plan shall be prepared by a qualified design professional such as landscape architect, horticulturist, urban forester, nurseryman or landscape designer.
2. §145-27.A. (13) & (14) - The location and dimensions of all existing significant features within the property and within 200 feet of its boundary.
3. §145-27B. & §145-29B. - The applicant shall submit a study and analysis of traffic impact as required by Article XXXIV of Chapter 165, Zoning.
4. §145-29.A. (18) & (21) - The location and dimensions of all existing significant features within the property and within 200 feet of its boundary.
5. §145-41.B. - The requirement for park land or fees in lieu of park land for all nonresidential developments.
6. §145-41.A. - The requirement for fees in lieu of park land for fees in lieu of park land for all nonresidential developments.

The applicant is not asking for a reduction in the fee in lieu and will comply with the Township's Engineer's requests.

Additional improvements along Hertzog to Flint Hill:

Mr. Schultz commented that the metal fence on Hertzog Boulevard will come down; that the stone wall may come down; that any sidewalk that's there now will probably be replaced; and that the area in front of the new building will be cleaned up.

Crosswalk:

Messrs. Schultz and Evasew were receptive to a request to install a crosswalk or striping from the Dance Academy to the new sidewalk. Members identified the ADA ramp at Glennie and Hertzog.

Bus Stops:

The County's initiative to make the bus stops a more pleasant experience prompted a member to ask if the applicant could, while doing work in that area, leave a little more space for the bus stops. Mr. Schultz acknowledged the request.

Comments from the Public:

Mr. Schultz provided a package of letters submitted by area residents. Audience members provided the following comments:

"It's an improvement over what there's now."

"I'm excited about the field hockey for my grandchildren. It is a win/win situation for residents and the township."

"I had to take my daughter to a location outside of Upper Merion to get special athletic training. It's a huge thing for the younger generation athletes to have a local facility available."

Two other audience members expressed agreement with what the other audience members said.

County's Approval Letter:

The Township is awaiting receipt of the County's approval letter.

Church Road Closure:

Members discussed the upcoming closure of Church Road for bridge repair and its effect on the site's anticipated opening in early spring.

Underlying zoning:

Mr. McKee wanted to clarify that the underlying zoning is L/I. The applicant previously went to the Zoning Hearing Board, requested relief for this use in the LI district, and was granted a special exception.

Motion:

Mr. McKee suggested that the Planning Commission recommends approval of DP 2017-13, for 541 Flint Hill Rd. for the construction of a 40,000 SF one-story building for recreational use. The Planning Commission appreciates the applicant's improvement of the area and the addition of recreational facilities and also supports the waivers requested. Mr. Brown seconded. A 4-0 vote, in favor, carried.

Zoning Ordinance:

Session Three of the Neighborhood Mixed Use (NMU) Ordinance: Establishing a new zoning district along South Gulph Road for small-scale neighborhood-appropriate mixed-use development.

The following are highlights from Mr. Kyle Brown's presentation:

Intent:

The intent is to create a flexible ordinance to promote re-development with as many controls on access, providing pedestrian safety, and providing an attractive façade to the building.

Maximum impervious coverage:

After a lengthy discussion that addressed the nature of the existing parcels, stormwater, traffic, signalization and lighting concerns, the Planning Commission agreed to decrease impervious coverage in the Ordinance from eighty to seventy-five percent. Mr. Brown noted that knocking down the impervious coverage much further would impact the developability of a property. Members asked whether a sidewalk can be considered part of the impervious coverage. Mr. Brown offered to research the matter.

Deletion:

The category Social Sciences and Humanities was removed from Professional, Scientific and Technical Services.

Changes to Permitted Uses:

Continuing Care Retirement Communities was changed to a permitted use.
Pharmacy is permitted on the first floor.

Cross Access Easements:

Mr. Brown gave an overview of cross access easements and showed examples of how model vehicular access standards might work when properties redevelop. Members agreed that they would have to revisit the subject again.

Request:

Mr. Brown asked members to send him their concerns in advance of the October 11th meeting.

Mr. Popek informed the group that the NHSL Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be coming out in mid-October.

Meeting adjournment:

Ms. Peikin motioned to adjourn the meeting. Todd Brown seconded. There being no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Sincerely yours,

VIVIAN PEIKIN, SECRETARY