

**Upper Merion Township Planning Commission  
Regularly Scheduled Meeting for March 11, 2020**

The Upper Merion Township Planning Commission met for its regularly scheduled meeting on March 11, 2020 in the Upper Merion Township Building. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Matt Popek, Chair  
Mark McKee, Vice-Chair  
Martin Trumpler, Secretary  
Jacquelin Camp  
Kenneth Brown  
Kyle Brown, Associate Planner  
Victoria Kenny, PWD Admin Assistant

**ABSENT:**

Robert Loeper, Staff Liaison  
William Jenaway, Board Liaison

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:**

Prior meeting minute approval pending completion of minutes.

**DP 2020-02: 900 River Road LLC:** *900 River Road; demolish existing structure and construct new, 331,428 sqft warehouse/distribution center. 29.84 acres, HI. Expiration 4/12/2020*

The plan for the site has not yet been presented to the commission but has already undergone several engineering reviews as well as a traffic impact assessment, where under Act 209 it is eligible for an impact fee. The Montgomery County Planning Commission has reviewed the plan and recommended approval.

The existing pharmaceutical facility located on the site will be redeveloped into a warehouse and distribution center which will include associated parking, truck ports, trailer storage, stormwater management, landscaping, and lighting. The facility will be oriented at the center of the property with docking positions on both sides and parking situated against the building and on either end, with additional overflow parking to potentially be added to the far ends of the site at the request of the tenant(s). The facility design plan allows for the possibility of either a single tenant or two tenants.

Stormwater management for the area is handled primarily by bioretention for quality and treatment with the inclusion of a traditional retention basin on the north side of the property. A stormwater waiver is being requested in relation to the hydrology of the existing wetland. The developers would be removing a small portion of lower-quality wetlands and constructing a new higher quality wetland mitigation area to the right of the existing wetlands. The proposed level of bioretention is equal to the requirements of stormwater management for that site. When asked directly by the board, the township engineer said he had no objections and was generally supportive of this waiver.

A second waiver is being requested to allow for grading within 5 feet of the property line. This waiver is a technicality for the area where they may be crossing the property line while making improvements to the access entrance at the intersection. It has been stressed that the development of the site will not disturb other properties around the property line.

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Due to grading, existing vegetation, utility access, the existing guardrail, and required coordination from PennDOT, two additional waivers are being requested to forego new curb and sidewalk along River Road. The elevation from the road down to the site is very steep and would require significant vegetation removal and filling in order to support a sidewalk and curb, and the developers are looking to maintain vegetation along the road to shield the facility from view from the road. Mr. McKee asked if it were possible to create a trail access to the rear of the property in lieu of the curb and sidewalk waivers, but because that would require a pedestrian crossing over a train track owned by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party it is not feasible.

Using prior land-use data for truck traffic and parking, it was determined that the proposed site as developed would generate less traffic than previous users with a majority of trucks traveling to/from the site outside of peak morning and evening hours. The main access point will be at the intersection of Swedeland and River Road with a second access point on the south side of the property. The plans have been reviewed by the traffic engineer and they have not received any feedback outside of the provided traffic study, and developers are currently waiting on PennDOT's recommendations regarding the configuration of the intersection (should they have any). Mr. McKee noted that the trucks moving through the historical area of the township off of 320 has a significant impact on residents, to which the developers assured that they would require language in their agreements with tenants that certain truck routes be utilized.

In order to make the site more accessible by public transportation, the commission would like PennDOT to address the addition of signage to indicate pedestrian crossing and a possible crosswalk since there is no clear area of crossing from the bus stop.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

*Larry Persofsky, Resident*

Mr. Persofsky of 991 Trinity Lane stated that he felt that allowing the development of the site as a warehouse and distribution facility undermines the entire historic value of the community, will further destroy the integrity of the township, and will destroy his life and way of living due to unenforceable truck routes. He claims that trucks currently traveling from warehouses near the site towards 76 drive through a historically relevant neighborhood and exceed township noise level ordinances (which he has reported to the police) as well as causing vibrations which can be felt in resident homes, which ultimately disturbs the peace.

He cited FedEx specifically as they have an agreement which states that their trucks will not travel through the neighborhood but often do anyway, and when the resident reached out to FedEx directly they stated that they could not control the direction of individual drivers as they follow GPS. In addition, he reached out to PennDOT who stated that because the route in question was a state road, truck drivers have a right to use it.

Mr. Popek stated that the commission and the township cannot place rules on a state road without support of PennDOT. To ensure as little impact as possible, the developer reiterated that they planned to include language in their agreements to tenants that restricted the roads that trucks associated with their site can operate on.

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Mr. Persofsky stated that he does not believe that the future tenants will adhere to that provision and would like to make it known that he plans to monitor the noise levels associated with trucks leaving the site and intends to hold the developers responsible should there be any increase that further disturbs him.

*Richard Dougert, Resident*

Mr. Dougert of 990 Trinity Lane reiterated that his and Mr. Persofsky's homes are located in a historically relevant area both in the township and state and would like to see the commission take the area into more consideration when approving plans. Additionally, he would like the township to partner with PennDOT and other relevant entities to form a partnership which specifically addresses the trucks and other major traffic issues associated with that intersection.


He asked about the quality of water being discharged into the river, which the developer stated would meet DEP requirements due to the bioretention.

Finally, he would like to have more meetings for residents with the planning commission in regards to the traffic throughout the historic area of the township.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

With no other business to discuss, Ms. Camp moved to adjourn the meeting with Mr. Trumpler seconding and all in favor at 8:54 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

  
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Martin Trumpler, Secretary