

**UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**April 27, 2011**

The Upper Merion Township Planning Commission met for their regularly scheduled meeting on April 27, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. in the Township Building, 175 W. Valley Forge Rd., King of Prussia, PA.

**PRESENT:** Robert Krutsick, Chairman; Mark McKee, Secretary; Francis Schultz; Jaquelin Camp; Robert Loeper, Township Planner; Scott Greenly, Associate Planner, and Maudy Hedlund, Recording Secretary.  
Absent: Steve Elgart, Vice-Chairman; William Jenaway, Liaison for the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Krutsick called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. A pledge of allegiance and member introductions followed.

**Approval of the Meeting Minutes of April 13, 2011:**

Mr. Schultz made a motion to approve the Minutes. Ms. Camp seconded. A 3-0 vote in favor carried.

**Workshop**

**Old Business: Cluster Development Overlay; R-55 Districts; Personal Care Facilities; and Residential Office District.**

Cluster Development Overlay

- Discussion of the Cluster Development Overlay was tabled.

R-55 Districts:

- The R-55a and R-55b districts are the only non-mapped districts in the Township.
- While there has been public and leadership support for age-restricted housing, issues have prevented their development.

Personal Care Facilities:

- Changes in the industry, facility over-development and difficulty in selling one's existing residence attributed to the decline in the construction of assisted living facilities.

Residential Office District:

The following dimensional standards were proposed:

- Reduce the square footage requirement for a by-right-use from 14,000 to 7,500.
- Remove the "working front door" requirement.
- Make changes to sections of the Code dealing with signs and light bulbs.

Mr. Loeper announced his plans to discuss the South Gulph Corridor with the members of the BID's Land Use Committee. Mr. Krutsick favored getting their input. Mr. McKee requested that the area west of Brooks Road be excluded from the South Gulph Corridor.

Modifications to the Upper Merion Sign Code are indicated in red.  
Minutes were approved on May 11, 2011.

**New Business: Digital Signs and Billboards; Alternative Energy Ordinances.**

Mr. Loeper recommended drafting a strict amendment for regulating digital signs. Group discussion addressed the following definitions:

**DIGITAL SIGN- A sign or portion of a sign that can be electronically changed or computer programmed without altering the physical surface of the sign. Digital signs can include, but are not limited to, signs that use light emitting diodes (LED), plasma displays, fiber optics, or any other use of technology which creates a bright, high-resolution text, image or graphic.**

**DIGITAL BILLBOARD- Any billboard which incorporates, in whole or in part, a digital sign.**

Mr. Greenly incorporated recommendations and comments from the Planning Commission, definitions gathered from local and nationwide ordinances and the APA's guidelines to digital ordinances into the existing Code.

Mr. Loeper recommended regulating and limiting digital signs by restricting their placement to pylon signs at shopping center entrances.

**Additional Signs in SC Shopping Center Districts.**

In addition to the signs mentioned above, in SC Shopping Center Districts the following additional signs may be erected.

- 1) One (1) entrance sign identifying the shopping center at each vehicular entrance from a public street, provided that:
  - a). The overall height of all such entrance signs shall not be more than thirty-five (35) feet in height.
  - b). Total area of such signs shall not exceed one hundred (100) square feet.
  - c). The spacing of such signs with reference to each other shall not be less than four hundred (400) feet, measured in a single straight line.
  - d). The location of such signs shall be as shown on the approved development plan, as required; however, there may not be more than three (3) such signs for anyone (1)-shopping center.

**2) Digital Signs and Electric Message Signs or Center shall be permitted subject to compliance with the following regulations:**

- a). **Digital signs must comply with all other regulations outlined by §165-168 Section 1 of M for entrance signs in SC Shopping Center Districts.**

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- b). Animated signs shall be prohibited. No portion of any digital sign shall utilize motion, video, flashing lights or graphics displayed in progression of frames which give the illusion of motion.**
- c). The leading edge of the sign must be a minimum distance of 100 feet from an abutting residential property. If located within one hundred and fifty (150) feet of residential property, all parts of a digital sign must be oriented so that no portion is visible from an existing or permitted structure on that lot.**

**Deleted d).: A digital sign must be located at least thirty (35) feet from any other digital sign.**

- e). A digital sign must be located on the site identified or advertised on the sign.**

**Deleted f).: The maximum area of a digital sign shall not exceed twenty (20) square feet.**

- g). A digital sign image must remain static for at least sixty (60) seconds before transitioning to the next image. The change of image must be instantaneous (no flashing, animation of fading in or out of any kind).**
- h). During Daylight hours between sunrise and sunset, luminance shall be no greater than 5,000 nits. At all other times, luminance shall be no greater than 500 nits. An automatic ambient light monitor shall be installed on the sign that adjusts brightness levels based on ambient light conditions.**
- i). The light intensity of a digital sign must be controlled to not cause distraction, glare and other hazards.**
- j). Audio speakers or any form of pyrotechnics associated with a digital sign are prohibited.**
- k). Digital signs may only be operated only between 7AM and 11 PM.**
- l). The attachment of a digital sign to a ground or facial sign shall not result in a sign that excess or violates any applicable dimension criteria of the Zoning Ordinance governing signs.**
- m). Municipal and community service messages shall be permitted, as directed by the Upper Merion Township Board of Supervisors, up to fifteen percent (15%) of the time period the digital sign is in use.**

Mr. Loeper recommended using PECO's message board sign as a model for digital signs.

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The following regulations are proposed for billboards:

**Digital Display. Digital off-site outdoor advertising shall be permitted subject to compliance with the following operational standards.**

- a). Digital Billboards must comply with all other regulations for such signs outlined by §165-168.1.**
- b). Animated signs shall be prohibited. No portion of any digital sign shall utilize motion, video, flashing lights or graphics displayed in progression of frames which give the illusion of motion.**
- c). A digital image must remain static for at least sixty (60) seconds before transitioning to the next image. The change of image must be instantaneous (no flashing, animation of fading in or out of any kind).**
- d). During Daylight hours between sunrise and sunset, luminance shall be no greater than 2,000 nits. At all other times, luminance shall be no greater than 250 nits.**
- e). The light intensity of a digital sign must be controlled to not cause distraction, glare and other hazards.**

Mr. Loeper noted that Scott Greenly's work on the Alternative Energy Ordinance incorporated some of Collegeville's Model Ordinance.

Ms. Camp expressed her interest in encouraging sustainability and informed members that she would be in New Orleans on May 11 and unable to attend the Planning Commission meeting.

Mr. Loeper informed members of the upcoming meeting with Brian O'Leary.

**Adjournment:** There being no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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MARK MCKEE, SECRETARY

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