

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

November 9, 2016

The Upper Merion Township Planning Commission met for their regularly-scheduled meeting on November 9, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in the Township Building, 175 W. Valley Forge Rd., King of Prussia, PA.

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

The pledge of allegiance to the flag was followed by self-introductions.

**Meeting Minutes: October 12, 2016
 October 26, 2016**

In response to Ms. Camp's question to members of the Planning Commission, Matt Popek made a motion that the Minutes of October 12 and October 26 be approved, as presented. Todd Brown seconded. A 3-0 vote, in favor, carried. Mr. McKee arrived shortly afterwards.

Plans:

DP 2016-05: Upper Merion Area School District. Caley Elementary School, 725 Caley Road. Demolition of existing school and construction of replacement school with associate site features, amenities and storm-water facilities. 19.62-acres, R-2A.

Present: Ken Bissinger, Renew Design Group, Inc., Souderton, PA, 18964.
David Schrader, AIA, Managing Partner, SCHRADERGROUP architecture LLC, Philadelphia, PA. 19127.
Alice Hope, Vice-President, Upper Merion School Board.
Michael P. Keeley, Business Administrator, Upper Merion Area School District.

From Mr. Loeper's overview of key issues:

The public's concerns pertained to stormwater and activities that take place outside of school hours.

The Board of Supervisors did not raise any outstanding issues at their Workshop last week.

The Montgomery County Review Letter provided comments on perimeter plantings, sidewalk connections and lighting. It suggested reducing the number of parking spaces provided on the plan; greening the parking area; changing the islands so they act more as bio-retention facilities. Mr. Bissinger commented that the applicant intends to address concerns contained in the County's Review letter.

From Mr. Bissinger's presentation:

Parking:

Caley Elementary currently provides 65-70 parking spaces. The current plan calls for 170 parking spaces. Reducing that number to 128 spaces will cancel the original plan to install a stormwater facility underneath the parking lot.

In response to a question pertaining to insufficient parking spaces during a school event and sufficient parking for the safety of children, Mr. Bissinger commented that the 30-foot-wide bus loop and the hard play areas provide parking for up to 70 additional vehicles, an amount he considered sufficient for the safety of children.

Stormwater management:

Stormwater management will be created in several areas, including in a more open, grassed and landscaped facility. Where grading allows, two landscaped islands will be converted into bio-infiltration basins designed to collect water. The school district will look into the stormwater pipe that's suspected of being cracked.

Landscaping:

Buffers around the residential areas will be beefed up. An additional row of street trees and additional landscaping will be added along the side of the bus entrance drive and at the parent drop off area.

Suggestions:

A suggestion to install sidewalks on both sides of the entry drive met with approval. The applicant was willing to consider the request to provide a raised or painted walkway in the middle of the parking area if it was made with a strong recommendation

Lighting:

The plan will meet the requirement of the Township's full-cut off lighting plan.

Motion for approval:

Jaque Camp asked if members were ready to make a recommendation for approval. Todd Brown motioned. Mark McKee seconded. A 4-0 vote, in favor, carried.

DP 2016-06: Bright Light Design Center. 485 S. Henderson Rd. Demolition of existing building and construction of new 8,304 SF Design Center. 1.4-acres, LI.

Present: David Bellwoar, Owner, Colonial Electric, King of Prussia, PA.
Fran Greene, P.E., Yerkes Associates, Rosemont, PA.

From Mr. Loeper's overview:

Bright Light Design, which is owned by Colonial Electric, would like to locate to this area. The plan is to demolish the existing, non-conforming building and replace it with one that is roughly the same size. An extensive amount of macadam will be removed from the rear of the property. The new site will have positive stormwater management. The applicant is asking for a stormwater management waiver for a watershed that drains to the front of the property and cannot be captured.

Mr. Loeper considered this a straight-forward plan, without many issues.

From Mr. Greene's presentation:

Stormwater management:

The storm water management plan will reduce the post-development level of the entire building to below the two-year pre-development level. The building's roof drains will flow towards a swale and rain garden in the back of the property.

Access:

There is no plan to gain access from Henderson Rd. The entrance/exit on Shoemaker Road will serve Fairmount Athletics and Bright Light Designs. Access to Fairmount Athletics will share access with Bright Light Design's showroom. A suggestion was made to create an access easement.

Parking:

The current parking configuration will remain the same. Thirty-nine parking spaces are proposed. Seventeen are required.

Landscaping:

There is no detailed landscaping plan. The applicant plans to retain the existing trees, unless issues come up during the construction period.

Construction Plans:

The applicant plans to demolish the building before Christmas and begin construction in the spring.

Motion:

In response to Jaque Camp's question, members indicated a willingness to make a motion. Mark McKee thanked the applicant for installing a stormwater management system where it didn't exist. Mark made a motion to approve the plan with the request that the applicant verify whether there's a cross-easement for parking. Matt Popek seconded. A 4-0 vote, in favor, carried.

DP 2016-07: Realen Valley Forge Greenes/Hanover. Somerset & S. Goddard Blvd., 6-story residential building (339 units), 6-level parking garage.

Present: Paul A. Fry, P.E., Project Manager, REALEN Properties, Berwyn, PA.

From Rob Loeper's overview:

Mr. Loeper provided an overview of the master plan as it is currently developed and envisioned for the proposed Hanover VR5 apartment rental complex and its adjacent, sold and unsold parcels.

From Mr. Fry's presentation:

Mr. Fry showed concept drawings of the proposed Hanover Village Residential 5 building, which will provide its residents with a courtyard and kitchen amenities for outside dining. Construction is expected to begin in the spring of 2017 with occupancy in the fall of 2018.

Access:

Access to the garage will be from South Goddard Boulevard. The levels of this parking garage will feed each floor of the apartment building.

Stormwater easement:

To date, 275 thousand gallons of water have been piped from all areas of the property to a lined mid-pond before being piped to a gravity drain field. A park will be formed around the mid-pond.

Bike Trails and Walking Path:

A twelve-foot-wide connecting bike trail and separate walking path that run west to east towards the mid-pond before going onto the street as two bike lanes have been installed.

Fire lanes:

Fire lanes will be installed to the north and west.

From group discussion:

Plans for an access route are, at this time, on paper. Fire lanes will be constructed on land owned by Realen. The township, Realen, Simon, and the BID are working on an application to safely direct motorists to the Mall.

There being no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Sincerely yours,

MARK MCKEE, SECRETARY