

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

April 13, 2016 - 7:00 P.M.

The Upper Merion Township Planning Commission met for their regularly-scheduled meeting on April 13, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in the Township Building, 175 W. Valley Forge Rd., King of Prussia, PA.

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

Absent: Matthew Popek, Vice-Chairperson.

Ms. Camp and members pledged allegiance to the flag. Introductions followed.

Meeting Minutes: March 23, 2016.

Mr. Loeper announced that the March 23, 2016 Minutes were not available due to problems with the tape. Members were asked to submit their minutes or notes.

Maudy Hedlund received a warm welcome back from Mr. Loeper and members of the Planning Commission. Members of the audience were thanked for their continued attendance.

DP 2015-15 O'Neill Properties: 2901 Renaissance.

Conditional Use application for the development of 300 multi-family units in the SM-1 District. The property at 2901 Renaissance Boulevard is identified on the Tax Map as Parcels #58-00-15946-01-5 and #58-00-15946-00-6, consisting of 10.98 acres of vacant land.

Mr. Loeper commented that the Planning Commission is being asked to make a recommendation tonight on the Conditional Use portion of a Land Development application that proposes to build multi-family residential within 1250 feet of the Hughes Park rail station. The plan has changed somewhat and has not been submitted formally for review.

Mr. Loeper stated that the applicant will meet with the Board of Supervisors at 7:30 p.m. on April 21 at 7:30 p.m. The Board of Supervisors has 45 days from the date of the last public hearing to render a decision on the Conditional Use. All aspects of the Land Development Plan cannot be approved until the Conditional Use is in place.

Mr. Jenaway informed the audience that this application is scheduled for the first item of business at the Board's next meeting.

From Mr. Campbell's presentation:

Mr. Campbell stated that in response to one of the comments of the Township Engineer, the applicant agreed to move the building 24 feet further back from Hughes Park and to remove 25-30 feet from the building's corner. The change will enhance landscaping and storm water management. The revised plan will be submitted to the Township by Monday, April 18.

Mr. Campbell stated that the Planning Commission is asked to review the Conditional Use tonight and that the applicant will not ask for a vote on the Conditional Use and the Preliminary Land Development at the Board of Supervisors' meeting the following week. Loeper will receive an Extension Letter.

Mr. Campbell commented that the property has to be within 1250 feet of a train station. The development must be on a minimum number of acres and is limited to 30 units per acre. The application consists of two lots that, combined, exceed 10 acres. The applicant, who is permitted to build more than 300 units, is proposing a total of 300 units.

Mr. Campbell stated that general standards have to be met with a Conditional Use. The applicant must produce evidence which supports that the Conditional Use will not have a detrimental effect on air or light pollution. He added that this development, without opening the road, will not have an adverse effect or place an undue burden on traffic in the community.

Mr. Campbell introduced the applicant's representatives before asking the Commission, "How can we help you?"

Mr. McKee informed the audience that this Conditional Use application for a multi-family, 300-unit apartment building is permitted in the SM-1 District under the Text Amendment adopted by the Board of Supervisors in the fall of 2014. Certain conditions, which the applicant must meet to qualify, were placed on the developer to make improvements that benefit the public. Mr. McKee referred to the County's Review Letter noting the applicant shall provide parking for the general public to access the Hughes Park train station. He also referenced the request for adequate walkways and sidewalks within the transit-oriented development.

Ms. Camp asked if a pedestrian connection would be provided for the Hughes Park train station. Mr. Campbell replied that the walkway is subject to PADOT approval.

The applicant is required to meet the three following conditions to qualify under the Conditional Use: the development must be a distance of 1,250 feet from the train station; provide walkways; and provide accessible parking for the Hughes Park station. Mr. Campbell commented that the distance to the train from the proposed parking lot is approximately 800 feet.

Comments from individual members of the audience included:

- The fact that Hughes Park station is not handicapped accessible.
- Approval of a public parking lot within the development.
- Approval of a public parking lot outside of the proposed development.
- Anticipation of many motorists and pedestrians utilizing the proposed public parking lot.
- Disapproval of the proposed development.
- Disapproval of an access road.
- An area resident wanted to make sure that the construction equipment will not use Crooked Lane. Mr. Campbell replied that the construction equipment would not be entering off Crooked Lane. Arrangements could be made that they can come off of Church or Gulph Roads.

Questions from members of the audience pertained to:

- The train station's capacity: Ms. Camp replied that we have not assessed the capacity of the train station.
- The quarry's boundary: Mr. Campbell showed the boundary, a dotted line, that includes a 10-15 foot extension of the edge of the cap.
- The status of the EPA: Mr. Campbell replied that the applicant, who is not one of the responsible parties, is working on an individual agreement with the EPA. The resident stated that O'Neill developed the Corsair Building which is also built on a superfund site and questioned how Mr. O'Neill was able to develop that building, even though he was not a party. Mr. Campbell replied that applications went through the PRP's, "who are responsible for storm water."
- EPA's Review Period: Mr. Campbell anticipates approval by July of 2016.
- The length of the construction period: Mr. Kyle of O'Neill answered that construction would take a total of 20 months. Mr. Campbell stated that the removal and excavation of contaminated material to the area where the train station's parking lot will be located is under EPA protocol.
- The proposed building's height: The building's 75'- height consists of five stories of wood framing.
- The types of apartment units: How many Studio, 1-Bedroom, 2-Bedroom, and 3-Bedroom apartments are planned? The applicant's representatives did not have the exact number available. Mr. McKee commented that the new ordinance requires one parking space per bedroom. The applicant did meet the requirements. He asked, "How many people are we going to see in nearly 500 bedrooms? Six hundred or seven hundred?" Referring to other O'Neill developments, Mr. Campbell stated that pre- and post-development studies indicate that these developments do not put an extraordinary burden on the school districts and, due to their size and cost, don't seem to attract families.
- The site's history: An audience member asked if the tenants of the rental units will be made aware that this is a former superfund site. Mr. Campbell replied that he believes that this will

be an element of the lease; that, if the EPA doesn't clarify this, the Township's Board of Supervisors will.

- The Lighting Plan: How will the lighting plan impact the neighborhood? Mr. Campbell answered that Joe Orsatti, the applicant's Landscape Architect, will coordinate a Lighting Plan that will be less obtrusive and meet Township standards. Mr. Orsatti explained that there will be no street lighting. Street lighting will be accomplished by up-lighting of trees with the source of the LED lighting buried within the fixture.

Ms. Peikin asked how many parking spots the commuter lot will have. Mr. Campbell replied "87" and added that the applicant will maintain the parking lot and provide snow removal. Mr. McKee stated that the applicant is offering the lot's 87 parking spaces for the public's use of the Hughes Park train station.

Ms. Camp stated that the Planning Commission's recommendation is based on a number of concerns. The application, which is by the book, is meeting the conditions for Conditional Use for this project. The residents, who have been coming out to these meetings, have been a part of that. The County's Review, the parking for the Septa station, the lack of a proximal vehicular connection between the train station, and the parking lot being provided, makes it a little weak. It is the concern of this Board and the Montgomery Planning Commission that this does not have the number of vehicular accesses as originally required. This is going to become a problem if the property owner does not come up with a solution. Beyond the Board's concern regarding the proximal access to parking, the applicant is meeting the conditional use and we have reached a 3-0 vote in favor and recommend approval.

Mr. Loeper announced that the next Joint Meeting is scheduled for May 12.

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

Sincerely yours,

MARK MCKEE, SECRETARY

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UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

APRIL 13, 2016

TO: UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

FM: UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

REF: DP 2015-15 O'Neill Properties: 2901 Renaissance.
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PRESENT: Chairperson Camp, Secretary McKee, Member Peikin; Liaison to the Board of Supervisors Jenaway; Township Planner Loeper; Associate Planner Brown; Recording Secretary Hedlund.

ABSENT: Vice-Chairperson Popek.

The members of the Commission reviewed the above referenced plan.

Ms. Camp stated that the Planning Commission's recommendation is based on a number of concerns. The application, which is by the book, is meeting the conditions for Conditional Use for this project. The residents, who have been coming out to these meetings, have been a part of that. The County's Review, the parking for the Septa station, the lack of a proximal vehicular connection between the train station, and the parking lot being provided, makes it a little weak. It is the concern of this Board and the Montgomery Planning Commission that this does not have the number of vehicular accesses as originally required. This is going to become a problem if the property owner does not come up with a solution. Beyond the Board's concern regarding the proximal access to parking, the applicant is meeting the conditional use and we have reached a 3-0 vote in favor and recommend approval.

I do believe the opinions expressed herein, do properly define the position of the Commission.

Sincerely yours,

MARK MCKEE, SECRETARY

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