

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

January 25, 2017

The Upper Merion Township Planning Commission met for their regularly-scheduled meeting on January 25, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the Township Building, 175 W. Valley Forge Rd., King of Prussia, PA.

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

Matt Popek opened the meeting with a pledge of allegiance to the flag, followed by self-introductions and a request for a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes for January 11, 2017.

Meeting Minutes: January 11, 2017.

Mark McKee made a motion to approve the Minutes of January 11, 2017. Vivian Peikin seconded. Jaque Camp and Todd Brown, who were not at the January 11 meeting, abstained. A 3-0 vote, in favor, carried.

Plan:

DP 2016-08: Upper Merion Area School District. Gulph School, 650 S. Henderson Road. Demolish existing building, construct new 91,305 SF school with associated site features, amenities and stormwater facilities. 22.61 acres, R-2 Residential District. Plan expiration: 03/13/17.

Present: John A. Toleno, Ed.D. Superintendent, Upper Merion Area School District, 435 Crossfield Road, King of Prussia, PA.
Kenneth A. Bissinger, Renew Design Group, Souderton, PA.
Devin W. Bradbury, AIA, LEED AP BD+C, SCHRADERGROUP architecture LLC, Philadelphia, PA.
Nick Groch, AIA, LEED AP, EIT, SCHRADERGROUP architecture LLC, Philadelphia, PA.

Mr. Loeper gave a short overview and turned the meeting over to the applicant.

Dr. Toleno's meeting with residents:

Dr. Toleno announced that residents attending his January 24 meeting were very receptive to his plans of replacing the fence that runs along the school's property and installing a requested sidewalk. A second meeting is scheduled for January 31.

Retaining wall and fence:

The small retaining wall on the main driveway will be two-to-three feet wide. The fence will meander on or close to the property line.

New school building's location and lighting:

The new school building will be moved back twenty feet. Its footprint will be surrounded by green space and landscaping. The LED lighting system will not spill over onto neighboring properties.

Sidewalks:

A sidewalk will run throughout the site to Crooked Lane. Per the County Engineers' request a sidewalk that meanders and connects will be installed along Henderson Rd.

Handicapped Ramps:

Some of the handicapped ramps will be improved to make them more efficient and accessible.

Circulation and Stacking:

Meetings with the Traffic Engineer about circulation have addressed and resolved stacking problems for approximately 50 cars. An additional stacking line for 20 cars can be created.

Buses:

The onsite bus depot will be fenced in and significantly improved.

Crossing Henderson Rd.:

The Township Engineers made a recommendation for a crosswalk, which the District and traffic consultants were not in favor of. Dr. Toleno will do everything in his power to have transportation available rather than have children cross Henderson Rd.

Access and egress from Henderson Road:

The applicant satisfied PADOT's recommendation to create the new main entrance and exit as far away from the Gulph and Henderson roads intersection. Access from northbound Henderson will be via a right-turn lane "in." A left-turn stacking lane will serve southbound traffic.

Deceleration lane on Henderson:

Jaque Camp voiced concern that the proposed deceleration lane would not increase, and might actually decrease, motorists' safety.

Mr. Bissinger relayed PADOT's request for additional widening in the deceleration lane and room for a left- turn lane on south-bound Henderson.

Crosswalk:

The County Engineers also requested a cross-walk. It was not a mandate. Mr. Loeper stated that the District and the traffic consultants are not in favor of a crosswalk. Dr. Toleno, who wants students to stay on the school property, felt that a crosswalk will encourage children to go there. For that reason he would rather provide transportation.

Mr. McKee referred to the applicant's access driveway and the two stop signs on Yerkes that are 45 feet from one another and recommended eliminating one stop sign if a crosswalk is going to be installed there.

Motion:

Matt Popek asked if members were ready to entertain a motion. Todd Brown motioned approval of the plan by the Board of Supervisors. Jaque Camp seconded. A 5-0 vote in favor, carried.

Plan:

DP 2016-10: GlaxoSmithKline, 709 Swedeland Rd. Construction of a new Central Utility Plant (CUP), 258 acres, HI-District. Plan expiration: 4/11/17.

Present: Peter Andersen, Andersen Engineering, Perkasie, PA.
John Loeper, GlaxoSmithKline, King of Prussia, PA.
John DaCosta, GlaxoSmithKline, King of Prussia, PA.
Randy Mindo, GlaxoSmithKline, King of Prussia, PA.

Reason for the new plant:

A lot of the existing utilities that support GSK's facilities are over twenty years old and have reached their useful life. The new Central Utility Plant will replace all of those systems and provide a reliable service for those utilities. It will be located 400 feet off River Road and 400 feet off Swedeland Road -- in the location where Building 2 used to be. Although GSK had other buildings on the site removed, there are no immediate plans to demolish the current building. It will remain occupied for business but its mechanical space won't be used. Members were shown renderings of the new Central Utility Plant.

Stormwater Facility:

Since the limestone requirement makes it impossible to have a detention basin, a lined raingarden will be created to serve the entire site. It will be located where Building 16 used to be. Removing the loading dock for what used to be Building 16 will reduce the impervious.

Permit:

An NPDES permit from the Conservation District will be obtained for disturbing more than one acre.

Safety Features:

In response to Jaque Camp's question regarding plans for emergency access and fire equipment, Mr. Andersen replied that GSK emphasizes safety; that the internals were designed with many safety features and that there is a plan to deal with emergencies.

Comments from the Supervisor:

Mr. Jenaway stated that the applicant has significantly reduced impervious and changed a couple more buildings around and asked if it resulted in a reduction of employees on the east campus. Mr. DaCarlo replied that the number of seeded and unseeded employees has remained at 2500.

Engineering Letter:

Mr. Loeper noted that the engineering letter came in today. It contained nothing that would alter the plan.

Motion:

Mark McKee made a motion that the Planning Commission recommends that the Board of Supervisors approve the new utility building on the East Campus. He thanked GlaxoSmithKline for the improvements to the stormwater management plan and for their continued good work on getting the employees to and from the transit stations. Vivian Peikin seconded. A 5-0 vote in favor carried.

Other:

Mr. Loeper provided members with an overview of a very busy upcoming season.

There being no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 8:07 pm.

Sincerely yours,

VIVIAN PEIKIN, SECRETARY

M.H.