

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

SEPTEMBER 13, 2017

Present: Matt Popek, Chair; Mark McKee, Vice-Chair; Vivian Peikin, Secretary; Jaque Camp; Member.

Absent: Todd Brown, Member; Dr. William Jenaway, Liaison to the Board of Supervisors.

Minutes of August 23, 2017

Ms. Pekin motioned to approve the amended minutes. Mark McKee seconded. Mr. Popek abstained. A 3-0 vote, in favor, carried.

Plan:

DP 2017-12: First Quality

601 Allendale Road. Site modifications to parking and driveways, construction of an internal connector between disconnected lots along First Avenue, construction of a 104-count tractor trailer lot and stormwater management facilities.

Present: Richard Weston, Project Manager, First Quality, King of Prussia, PA.
Chad Stafford, Penn Terra Engineering, State College, PA.

First Quality is located at the corner of 601 Allendale Rd. and First Avenue. The project calls for parking and driveway modifications internal to the site. No significant changes are proposed for the structure. The site, which currently has no stormwater management, will receive an updated system.

From the applicant's presentation:

Plan:

First Quality's principal plan is to enhance employee safety and getting tractor trailers off First Avenue will require further improvements to the internal parking lot. A gated truck entrance and temporary gate for emergency vehicles will be provided along First Avenue.

Access:

Tractor trailers will access through a slightly widened lower-level entrance and head to a check-in gate where a Jockey truck that only operates on-site picks the trailer-portion up and sets it down on the internal parking lot.

Circulation:

Under very controlled conditions a tractor trailer enters at the First Avenue entrance and exits on the opposite end, but same side of the street.

Trailer Parking:

The parking lot will be milled, topped, repaved and re-stripped to construct a 104-count tractor trailer lot. The Code requires 855 parking spaces. The applicant has 378 and is willing to add 40 spaces to an area that's treated with a water quality system, if needed.

Visitor Parking:

Adding 18 additional parking spaces will not change the circulation. Visitors will enter on a lower and exit on an upper end.

ADA access:

ADA access will be provided at two doors. Steps will be replaced with ramps.

Sidewalks and Landscaping:

Proposed are a 10-foot sidewalk on First Avenue and a 5-foot wide sidewalk on Allendale Road. The applicant is working with the King of Prussia Business Industrial District. The BID will provide greenspace between the sidewalk and the curb.

Bus Stops:

The applicant wants to eliminate the middle of three bus stops. Bus stops will be replaced with more attractive ones during Phase II.

Green Space:

Four acres are being preserved on the backside of the 45-acre, well-maintained property.

Storm water:

Storm water that currently goes out to the stream will be collected by a new stormwater management system. Three open-infiltration basins will be added. A stone-perforated pipe will be installed to clean the water before it enters the middle basin, a raingarden equipped with hydro-tech vegetation. Best Management Practices will be applied.

Fence:

The company will install a decorative, black aluminum fence along First Avenue, two to three feet away from the sidewalk.

Traffic patterns:

Peak traffic patterns pertaining to the plant's production and manufacturing shifts were addressed. Anticipated road striping and patterns that curb speed on First Avenue were shown. Two gates will be installed to handle left and right turns.

Member's comments:

The applicant and his engineer were commended for adding stormwater management at the site where there was none; for working with the BID to get the 10-foot sidewalk on First Avenue and the 5-foot sidewalk on Allendale; for eliminating the former Con-Fab tractor parking lot along First Avenue and for moving the tractor trailer parking to the new parking site.

Motion:

Mr. McKee made a motion to recommend that the Board of Supervisors approve the plan, as presented, for the improvement of 601 Allendale Road; for working with the BID in the township; for improving the visibility along First Avenue; and for installing the sidewalks and stormwater management. Ms. Camp seconded and a 4-0 vote, in favor, carried.

Zoning Ordinance:**Neighborhood Mixed Use (NMU) Ordinance**

Establishing a new zoning district along South Gulph Road for small-scale neighborhood-appropriate mixed-use development.

From Mr. Brown's presentation:

Legislative intent:

The Legislative intent is to encourage walkable/bike-able development; alleviate impact on nearby residential areas; decrease environmental impact through denser mixed uses; and encourage small-scale commercial and institutional uses in the area between Henderson and Croton, on the south side of Gulph.

From group discussion on uses:

A description for a non-permitted use prompted a request for clarification. Members were informed that, with the consensus of the Planning Commission, a change could be made.

Members asked whether assisted living, as a discreet function, should be on the list as an appropriate use under special exceptions. Mr. Brown offered to provide a definition.

A member questioned why a drinking place or bar that stays open late doesn't require a special exception whereas a grandfathered day school would.

Dimensional regulations:

With a minimum lot size requirement of 10,000 SF, non-conforming lots would need relief or consolidate. The front yard setback is 20 feet. The building height of 45 feet allows for three stories, with some more height for retail. Maximum building coverage is 35%. Maximum impervious coverage is 80% with 10% for sidewalks. The stormwater code must be met.

Design controls:

Any frontage along a street shall contain a planting verge with a minimum width of five feet and an eight-foot wide paved sidewalk for walking and bikes.

Buildings shall have a minimum of two floors and a maximum of three floors.

Windows are required on each floor which faces a street or parking area.

Façade articulation is required for each building frontage that faces a non-local road.

Between the ground level and a height of 25 feet, a minimum of 30% of the wall area must include one or more of the following features: ornamental and structural detail; transparent windows.

Shared Parking:

To decrease impervious coverage and the footprint of surface parking, required spaces may be shared between different uses within the same development.

Residential to Office: For every one parking space provided towards the requirements of a residential use, one space can be subtracted from the number of required parking spaces for an office use.

Residential to Commercial/Retail: For every two parking spaces provided towards the requirements of a residential use, one parking space can be subtracted from the parking spaces required for a commercial or retail use.

Office to Commercial/Retail: For every two parking spaces provided towards the requirements of an office use, one parking space may be subtracted from the parking spaces required for a non-office, non-residential use.

Mr. Popek announced that the members would have to discuss the matter one more time and requested a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjournment:

Ms. Peikin motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Camp seconded. There being no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Sincerely yours,

VIVIAN PEIKIN, SECRETARY