

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
December 10, 2014

The Upper Merion Township Planning Commission met for their regularly-scheduled meeting on December 10, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. in the Township Building, 175 W. Valley Forge Rd., King of Prussia, PA.

Present: Jacque Camp, Chairperson; M. Jonathan Garzillo, Vice-Chairperson; Mark McKee, Secretary; Steve Elgart, Member; Matthew Popek, Member; Robert Loeper, Township Planner; Member; Scott Greenly, Associate Township Planner; Maudy Hedlund, Recording Secretary.

Absent: William Jenaway, Liaison to the Board of Supervisors.

Meeting Minutes: October 8, 2014

Mr. Garzillo made a motion to accept the amended October 8 minutes. Mr. Elgart seconded. A 5-0 vote, in favor, carried.

PLAN

SD 2014-04
724 Fraley Street
3-lot subdivision with two new attached dwellings
0.312 acres, R-3
Plan expiration 03/01/2015

Present: Joseph M. Estock, P.E., P.L.S., Joseph M. Estock Consulting Engineers & Land Surveyors, King of Prussia, PA.
Joseph Galleo, Joe's Tri-County Builders, 955 Bush Street, Bridgeport, PA.
Joseph Galleo, Jr., Joe's Tri-County Builders.
Walter Ozorowski, 368 Jefferson Street, Swedesburg, PA.
Fran Toth, 736 Fraley Street, Swedesburg, PA.

From Mr. Loeper's overview:

The Zoning Hearing Board denied the applicant's previous submittal. This plan meets the Code's requirements.

The proposed plan calls for a three-lot subdivision. Proposed for Lots 2 and 3 are two single-family semi-detached units with built-in, street-fronting garages that come equipped with surface parking spaces. They will share a common wall and adjoin the existing single family dwelling on Lot 1.

The plan allocated 25 percent for building coverage, 42 percent for impervious and 6 percent for required parking. Stormwater management will be directed to two seepage pits located in the back and front of lot 3.

The Planner's office is awaiting the reviews of the Township's Engineer and the County's Planning Commission.

Ms. Camp opened the meeting to comments from the audience.

Area resident, Mr. Walter Ozorowski described the parking demands imposed by the Irish Club, the firehouse's social club and the undertaker and asked the Planning Commission to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that the Township acquire land needed for public parking.

Mr. Fran Toth, resident of Fraley St., objected to adding two more houses with street-front garages. Coming home from work only to find a lack of available on-street parking prompted Mr. Toth to install a garage in the back of his house. He asked if the applicant would install the garages in back of the units.

Ms. Camp identified a possible setback issue and opened the meeting to comments from the applicant's Project Engineer, Joseph Estock, who confirmed that the Zoning Hearing Board denied the applicant's original application to build a twin residence in the side yard of Lot 1 and provided the following information:

- While parking is not permitted on the side of the proposed dwellings it is available on the other side of Fraley Street.
- This plan proposes parking spaces for two vehicles on the back of Lot 1.
- The landscaping plan is fully compliant with the Landscaping Ordinance.
- The applicant is willing to provide street trees and shrubbery for Fraley St. and Roosevelt Avenue even though it is not required.
- This application is below the R-3 District's permitted maximum density of twelve units per acre.
- The square footages of lots 1, 2, and 3 are as follows: (1) 3601; (2) 4085; (3) 5850.
- The proposed houses will each have a 24-foot width.
- Lots 2 and 3 will each have a street-fronting garage and two on-site parking spaces. Parking for two vehicles is proposed for the back of Lot 1.
- In response to Mr. Toth, Mr. Estock does not want to pave the back of the houses to install garages and driveways.
- Responding to Mr. McKee's request, the garages can be deed restricted.
- Per Mr. Toth's request Mr. Galleo is willing to install a fence on the property line.

In response to a request to not cover the beautiful brick house with stucco, Mr. Galleo offered to leave as much brick as possible.

A group discussion identified the pros and cons on alternative parking designs. Ms. Camp stated that the homeowners of the for-sale units have the same rights for the way they use their property and share in the street parking; that the plan shows the least adverse impact on the neighborhood; and that there's a limit to how much we can ask from the by-right plan.

In response to Mr. McKee's inquiry about Lot 3's legal access to the Roosevelt alley, Ms. Camp did not think the Planning Commission could solve the alley issue.

Ms. Camp asked for questions from the audience. None were offered.

Ms. Camp asked if members were ready to make a recommendation.

Mr. Elgart motioned that the Planning Commission has reviewed SD 2014-03 at 724 Fraley Street for a three-lot subdivision. The plan as proposed is a by-right plan and meets the existing Zoning Ordinance. The developer proposed alternatives, which while more attractive, required zoning variances which were not granted and has returned this plan which complies in all respects with the Zoning Ordinance and provides additional parking for the existing dwelling; therefore the Planning Commission must recommend that the Board of Supervisors approves the plan as a by-right plan. We would encourage the neighbors to work together to find ways of controlling the use of open space by children who are unsupervised and which might possibly require fencing and we request that, if possible, there be deed restrictions that the garages be available solely for the parking of a car. Mr. Garzillo seconded. A 5-0 vote in favor, carried.

Commercial Districts

Proposed replacement to CO District

Present: Hector R. Vinas, ONECORP, Davie, FL, 33024.
John A. Diemer, PE, Wilkinson & Associates, Inc., Valley Forge, PA, 19482.
Nicholas Vinas, ONECORP.

Mr. Loeper identified the Board of Supervisors' appreciation of Hector Vinas, a Florida-based developer who, by constructing The Container Store and Chipotle, created a unified type of development that provides sidewalks and reduces the number of curb cuts along the northern side of Route 202.

The Zoning Hearing Board denied two of three of Mr. Vinas' proposals that pertained to the southern side of Route 202. On instruction from the Board of Supervisors Mr. Loeper has facilitated zoning changes for the Limited Commercial District.

The Limited Commercial District, which bases redevelopment on a lot's depth, would replace the CO District, located between Chili's Restaurant and the original McDonalds. In response to Ms. Camp's question, Mr. Loeper confirmed that it could be applied to other areas within the township.

Group discussion addressed permitted and non-permitted uses; right-of-way standards; standards for 90-degree parking in the back of the property; and linkages between parking areas and buildings.

Group discussion also addressed ADA-compliant sidewalks and a four-foot wide verge. Ms. Camp noted that adding street furniture, benches, and trash and recycling containers would require a much wider sidewalk.

A discussion on design standards prompted a recommendation from Ms. Camp to be very explicit about what you don't want to have happen and to let the designers figure out the

best way to meet that requirement. Mr. Elgart agreed. Mr. Camp later stated that due to space limitations we want to find a way to handle design sensitivity without trying to limit design options.

Ms. Camp expressed the group's disinterest in cheap façades and blank-box street façades, preferring designs that tie into the community.

Group discussion identified an interest in the use of a landscaped, 30"-36"-high street wall to provide a break between a parking area and street frontage. Ms. Camp noted that, in the case of a commercial corner lot, the street wall would screen the parking lot from a neighboring residence. She also noted that, as part of a storm water management strategy, street walls have been used to direct parking lot water into a rain garden.

Group discussion identified the desirability and importance of parking your car and being able to walk in an environment that utilizes crosswalks and textured paving to enhance safety.

Members were asked to submit creative uses to Mr. Loeper.

There being no additional business the meeting adjourned at 9:15.

Sincerely yours,

MARK MCKEE, SECRETARY

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