

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
July 8, 2015

The Upper Merion Township Planning Commission met for their regularly-scheduled meeting on July 8, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Township Building, 175 W. Valley Forge Rd., King of Prussia, PA.

Present: Jaque Camp, Chairperson; M. Jonathan Garzillo, Vice-Chairperson; Mark McKee, Secretary; Matthew Popek, Member; William Jenaway, Liaison to the Board of Supervisors; Robert Loeper, Township Planner; Scott Greenly, Associate Township Planner

Absent: Steven Elgart, Member

Meeting Minutes: June 24, 2015

Mr. Garzillo motioned for the approval of the June 24th Minutes as presented. Mr. Popek seconded. A 3-0 vote, in favor, carried.

DP 2015-03: Quercus Properties, LP (JB Ward & Co) 400 W Church Rd

Mr. Loeper provided members with a brief overview of the proposed development plan to construct a 1,980 sf garage for JB Ward & Co. Landscaping. The stormwater generated from the proposed garage would be piped to a 720 sf rain garden. Mr. Loeper mentioned that this would have previously been classified as a minor plan and that the applicant would be seeking a waiver from the formal land development process at the July 9th Board of Supervisors Workshop Meeting. Mr. Loeper continued that staff sees no concerns with the plan or zoning.

Mr. Popek questioned if there was any potential to handle any of the stormwater from the remainder of the site through the proposed rain garden. Mr. Loeper stated the applicant is well below the maximum impervious limitations for the district.

Mr. McKee questioned how many parking spaces would be affected. Mr. Loeper replied that the proposed garage is going on an existing grass area, but there would be some additional parking spaces added.

Mr. Garzillo made a motion that the Upper Merion Township Planning Commission recommends that the Board of Supervisors approve this plan as designed. Ms. Camp seconded. A 4-0 vote, in favor, carried.

DP 2015-05: Hanover Properties

Mr. Loeper presented that Hanover Properties is a multifamily developer based out of Houston, Texas. They have developments in the Philadelphia market, specifically

Domus in University City, most of which are high-end multifamily residential projects. The applicant is proposing 339 apartment units wrapped around a parking deck. Mr. Maloomian, of Realen Properties, walked the commission members through what has already been completed or is under construction at the Village at Valley Forge development. Mr. Maloomian presented that each residential floor will be connected to a level within the parking garage. He continued that the parking garage is wrapped by the residential building on 2 sides, and by a portion of the retail development on the third side. The final side will have a different articulation than the rest of the structure. Mr. Maloomian stated that this development is bringing many new types of residential buildings that are unique to the Philadelphia suburban market. Mr. Maloomian mentioned that the first floor of the building would be where all the amenities area, including a fitness center, movie room etc. Mr. Fry, also from Realen Properties, continued that there would also be exterior amenities available in the courtyards.

Mr. Garzillo asked if there was a rough idea of what rent would be for these units. Mr. Maloomian stated that there was no final number at this time. A discussion followed regarding a trend towards renting over home ownership. Mr. Maloomian mentioned that a large range of residential opportunities from renting to full ownership would eventually be available at this site.

Mr. McKee asked what the mix would be of 1,2 and 3 bedroom units. Mr. Maloomian stated it would be a mix of 1 and 2 bedroom units, no 3 bedroom.

Mr. Popek questioned about site parking circulation, Mr. Fry pointed out that all traffic would come off of Somerset Place.

Ms. Camp questioned the articulation of the parking garage on the side the faces Somerset Place, noting there is no attempt to screen the visible side of the parking garage. Mr. McKee seconded the concern, questioning if there was a way to make it more attractive. Mr. Maloomian replied that the side of the garage not wrapped by structures would have a different articulation.

Mr. Popek questioned if the parking in the garage would be permit parking. Mr. Maloomian stated that it would not be permit parking, that the parking in this specific garage was solely for the residents of the development. Mr. Fry mentioned that once approved, construction is expected to begin this fall with potential opening in Fall of 2017. **Ms. Camp reiterated that anything that can be done to screen or add a façade to the open side of the parking garage would be greatly appreciated.**

Multi-Family Parking Standards

Mr. Loeper presented to the commission that the current code has a requirements of 1 space for studio units and up to 50% of 1 bedroom units, and then jumps to 2 parking spaces per unit and 1 visitor space for every 3 units. Mr. Loeper compared the current code to the proposed Vandenberg multifamily development, which would require 548 parking spaces, plus an additional of 104 visitor parking spaces for a total of 652 parking spaces for 311 units. Mirabella Properties, the developer of 751 Vandenberg, is

proposing 1 parking space per bedroom, which for the same development would only require 490 spaces, and no requirement for visitor parking. Mr. Loeper explained this would be a parking ratio of 1.58 compared to what would currently be required by the code of 1.76.

Mr. Loeper explained that the TOD portion of the code requires a parking ratio of 1.2. Mr. Loeper explained that the "1 parking space per bedroom" might make better sense for all of our multifamily developments. Discussion followed regarding occupancy of units primarily being either single or couples. Mr. Popek asked where these standards would apply. Mr. Loeper reiterated that this type of parking calculation would be appropriate for all of our multifamily developments. Discussion followed as to what defines a bedroom.

Mr. Jenaway mentioned that the state of Pennsylvania is still bound by the 2009 Building Code, even though the 2015 Building Code is about to be passed. Because of this, new buildings may be designed for the 2015 Building Code, but are only regulated by the 2009 Building Code. Ms. Camp noted a lot of the differences between the 2009 and 2015 codes would be in energy regulations. Mr. Jenaway also noted that because of the new apartment developments moving through the township, there could potentially be a 10% increase in the township's population. Discussion ensued regarding emergency responders and the impact this could also have on the Public Works Department. It was also noted that the positive impact this could have economically for the Township.

Discussion switched to the potential SEPTA High-Speed line extension project and the potential impacts each proposed route and station locations could have on the township. Mr. Loeper noted that SEPTA would be presenting an update at the July 9th Board of Supervisors workshop meeting.

There being no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Sincerely yours,

MARK MCKEE, SECRETARY

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

July 8, 2015

TO: UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

FM: UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

REF: DP 2015-03: Quercus Properties, LP (JB Ward & Co)
Proposed construction of 1,980 sf parking garage and rain garden at 400 W. Church Road.

PRESENT: Chairman Camp; Vice-Chairman Garzillo; Secretary McKee and Member Popek; Township Planner Loeper; Associate Planner Greenly

The members of the Commission reviewed the above referenced application.

Mr. Garzillo made a motion on Development Plan 2015-03 at 400 W. Church Road, the Upper Merion Township Planning Commission recommends that the Board of Supervisors approve this plan as designed. Ms. Camp seconded. A 4-0 vote, in favor, carried.

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

Sincerely yours,

MARK MCKEE, SECRETARY