

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
January 14, 2015

The Upper Merion Township Planning Commission met for their regularly-scheduled meeting on January 14, 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; 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.

Reorganization:

Election of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary
Establishment of Meetings

Ms. Camp appointed Mr. Loeper Temporary Chair with the request to ask for nominations for Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary.

Mr. Loeper asked Staff and members to introduce themselves before asking for a motion to elect the Chair.

On a motion by Steve Elgart, seconded by Mark McKee and all voting “aye,” Ms. Camp was re-elected Chairperson of the Planning Commission (4-0).

Ms. Camp asked if there was a nomination for Vice-Chair. On a motion by Steve Elgart, seconded by Mark McKee, and all voting “aye,” M. Jonathan Garzillo was re-elected Vice-Chair of the Planning Commission (4-0).

Ms. Camp asked for a nomination for Secretary. On a motion by M. Jonathan Garzillo, seconded by Matthew Popek and all voting “aye”, Mark McKee was re-elected Secretary of the Planning Commission (4-0).

Mr. Loeper established the meeting schedule for 2015 as the second and fourth Wednesday of each month, with the exception of the months of November and December when the Commission will not meet on the second Wednesday.

Mr. Jenaway will be the Board’s Liaison.

Meeting Minutes: December 10, 2014

Mr. Elgart made a motion to accept the amended December 10, 2014 Minutes. Mr. Garzillo seconded. A 5-0 vote, in favor, carried.

PLAN:

SunCap Property Group, LLC

DP 2014-15

600 River Road

Construction of a FedEx Ground Distribution Facility (315,897 SF) and subdivision of the property.

65.39 acres, HI/LI

Present:

Jonathan Greene, Vice President, SunCap, 6101 Carnegie Blvd, #180, Charlotte, NC 28209.

Matthew N. McClure, Esq., Ballard Spahr, LLP, 1735 Market St., Philadelphia, PA.

Christopher M. Hager, PE, LEEP AP, Senior Principal, Langan, 30 S. 17th St., Philadelphia, PA.

Kyle MacGeorge, PE, LEED AP, Project Engineer, Langan.

Daniel D. Disario, PE, PTOE, Senior Associate, Langan.

Joseph Galleo, area resident.

Howard Richardson, area resident.

Ken Forman, area resident.

In his overview, Mr. Loeper noted that the 65-acre site is surrounded by Glasgow's quarry, the sewer treatment plant, Philadelphia Newspapers, River Road, Swedeland and the Industrial Park. A fifty-seven acre subdivision would be designated for the proposed FedEx Ground distribution facility. An eight-acre portion of this subdivision would be retained by Drummond, the successor to Keystone Coke.

Matthew N. McClure, counsel for the applicant, introduced the applicant's engineers and provided a rendering of the site and the uses consistent with HI/LI zoning.

Project Engineer, Christopher Hager, described the site's Karst topography's existing and protected areas, as well as the location of the steeper, not naturally-occurring slopes that will not be disturbed. Mr. Hager identified the locations of two sewer easements, one of which will be monitored and maintained by Drummond.

The applicant proposes to:

Construct a 40-foot high, 315,000 square foot building for the primary FedEx Ground distribution facility, a gateway building, salt dome and maintenance facility. Combined building coverage for the plan is thirteen percent. The permitted building coverage is seventy-five percent.

Provide six hundred (600) parking spaces for people and drivers, who, working the peak shift within the building, can bring their van or car to the site; four hundred fifty (450) truck and van spots/positions throughout; and 97 loading positions.

Provide extensive landscaping and re-vegetation around the perimeter and in portions adjacent to the building. A waiver will be requested for landscaping on the parking lot.

Recognize the Township's and FedEx's criteria and construct two sound walls designed by an acoustic consultant. One 10-ft. wall will be installed on the southern end along "B" Street. The other wall will be 22-ft. high and installed on the western side of Flint Hill Rd.

Control storm water draining from the entire property into culverts at a managed rate and contain that water entirely within two highly-engineered, lined bio-retention ponds equipped with underdrains and four feet of permeable, amended soils and specifically-designed heavy plantings.

Provide fully-compliant lighting at a 30-ft. mounting height.

Provide one ground sign and one building sign.

Request a waiver from providing landscaping within the parking lot by proposing to push the landscaping to the perimeter of the secured facility.

Request a waiver from the township's ordinance that requires the size of a parking space to measure 9.5 ft. by 19 ft. to 9 ft. by 18 ft., the industry standard.

Request a waiver from the ADA compliant size of 9.5 ft. by 20 ft. to 9.5 ft. by 19.5 ft., with the standard car or van striping next to the stall.

Install sidewalks along River and Flint Hill roads, along the side on "B" Street where the bus stop is located, and in front of the FedEx facility.

Work with the Board of Supervisors and the Chief Fire Marshal about an emergency access onto Flint Hill.

Tidy up the "B" Street and River Road intersection.

Install a new signal on River Road that lines up with the FedEx Ground and Philadelphia Inquirer's driveways.

From group discussion:

Recharged, excess water will eventually come out the underdrain and go into the river. A hundred-year storm ponding the two basins with 18 inches of water must be drained within 72 hours per DEP requirements.

As per DEP criteria, captured rainwater stored in a 50,000 gallon tank must be used within a 72-hour period for a variety of tasks, including truck washing.

Reroute outfall discharges back onto the applicant's site before it goes out onto Drummond's property. All of the proposed discharge rates are less than existing.

Matthew McClure stated that the applicant has not found a solution for the Township's request to provide a connector road for this area and is going back to the drawing board to see what can be worked out. Additional traffic counts were done. A trip generation study will be presented to PADOT.

In response to Mr. McKee's inquiry about the eight-acre environmentally-constrained area, Matthew McClure, who claims not to be an environmental lawyer, stated that this site is not on a Superfund list. It was a tar disposal site, unused since its closure in 1986.

In response to Mr. Garzillo's question, Mr. Greene replied that the amount of on-site employees will vary as the seasons change and that the number of net-new employees could be obtained from FedEx. Mr. Greene provided descriptions of the types and sizes of low-emission vans and trucks that enter this site equipped with a specifically-designed non-tonal back-up alarm.

Mr. Disario, the applicant's traffic engineer, stated that a detailed traffic impact study is being reviewed by PADOT and the Township's traffic consultant. He added that the impacts associated with this facility are not going to be significant and can be mitigated where needed.

To obtain the overall distribution for both passenger cars and FedEx vans Mr. Disario relied on census data specific to people that work in Upper Merion and where they live. His findings are as follows:

- Forty-nine percent of passenger cars and local FedEx vans come to/from the northwest of the site.
- Fourteen percent come to/from the east and northeast.
- About twelve percent come to/from the southwest.
- The balance comes to/from the local roads serving further east and south and along the Schuylkill to/from Philadelphia.

Mr. Disario stated that this type of facility does not generate many large trucks. What the applicant envisions at this time as a preferred route is that the trucks would be oriented to/from 76, the Schuylkill Expressway and 476, along 23 (Front St.) down into West Conshohocken, and make their way onto Matsonford Rd. and access highways via the various ramps that are available, to and from the site.

In response to the question raised by PADOT and the Township's traffic consultant regarding the 320 corridor/Swedeland Road as a preferred alternative for either trucks or some of the cars, the applicant will perform additional traffic counts and analyze both corridors to determine where trucks should be routed.

Referring to the historic village residential roads where cart ways built in the 1700's and a historic, certified 200-year old stone-arch bridge are part of Route 320, Mr. McKee

cautioned Mr. Disario about using the Gulph Mills interchange. Ms. Camp agreed that some roads in the 320 corridor are clearly residential. Mr. Elgart was not in agreement with Mr. Disario's use of the census data. Mr. Disario offered to look at individual census tracks.

Mr. Disario described on-site activities that take place between midnight and eight a.m. when the majority of the larger trucks arrive at the building and at 2 a.m. when an influx of employees place the sorted packages into vans for local distribution.

Anticipating a higher volume of site-generated two-way trips, Mr. Disario did not use ITE's data in formulating the morning and evening values for FedEx cars, vans and trucks that will be applicable to the site at its full-out phase in five years. As a mitigation improvement the applicant proposes to install a right-turn overlap for south-bound traffic moving from Front Street onto Matsonford.

Ms. Camp asked if the analysis of the two-way trip data dovetails with the Philadelphia Inquirer's site. Mr. Disario replied that traffic counts, taken at the Philadelphia Inquirer's site from 7 to 9 a.m. and from 4 to 6 p.m., were captured and taken into account. The Philadelphia Inquirer's exit-only driveway was used as a reference point and will line up with the applicant's driveway. The applicant also proposes to install a traffic signal and widen their site's frontage to create an exclusive left turn lane into their site for north-bound traffic and a right-turn for south-bound traffic.

Mr. Ken Forman, area resident, inquired about the availability of shared riding or a shuttle bus to transport employees to their workplace. Members provided the names of several area corporations that provide shuttle services. A suggestion was made to provide their transit-using employees a shuttle service from the Gulph Mills high speed train station. Mr. Disario offered to forward the suggestion to the Operations division.

Mr. Loeper requested that questions about the impact of traffic on neighborhoods be addressed at the next meeting.

Mr. Ken Forman asked if designated routes could be mandated. Mr. Greene referred to the term "preferred" routes and reiterated that FedEx has control of where their drivers go.

Area resident, Mr. Richardson, commented that the positive impact of creating local jobs outweighs traffic concerns.

There being no additional business the meeting was adjourned at 9:45.

Sincerely yours,

MARK MCKEE, SECRETARY

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