

**Upper Merion Township Planning Commission
Regularly Scheduled Meeting for July 27th, 2022**

The Upper Merion Township Planning Commission met for its regularly scheduled meeting on July 27th, 2022, in-person in the Henderson Room, located in the Township Building, and via Zoom. The meeting information was fully advertised and a meeting agenda placed on the township website. The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Matt Popek, Chair
Mark McKee, Vice-Chair
Kenneth Brown
Jaquelin Camp
William Jenaway, Board Liaison
Patrick Foley, on behalf of Leanna Colubriale, Township Engineer (Remington & Vernick)
Ashton Jones, Township Planner

ABSENT:

Martin Trumpler, Secretary

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Minutes for the July 13th meeting had previously been distributed. Motion made by Mr. Brown and seconded by Ms. Camp. All were in favor.

2100 Renaissance Boulevard – Land Development

Approximately 42,000 square feet building addition

The applicant's attorney, Zach Migeot, provided team introductions and a brief overview indicating that the proposed building addition had a 19,000 square foot (sf) footprint and was to be largely located on top of existing parking (with the exception of approximately 1,000 sf). Mr. Migeot indicated that there is no proposed height at the moment, as the ultimate height will be tenant driven (expected to be a life science/office user). Additionally, the applicant is seeking a waiver for sidewalks (if necessary) due to the fact that they do not exist on adjacent properties and any construction of sidewalk would disturb the berm and vegetation, and require utility lines to be relocated.

Mr. Popek asked if there will be multiple floors in the building and Mr. Migeot responded that there will be three floors but that the height will not exceed the maximum required.

Ms. Popek asked about waivers and if sidewalks are the only waiver required. Mr. Migeot indicated that he does not believe a sidewalk waiver is required as this is a building addition. Ms. Camp asked if this was the interpretation of township staff and Mr. Jones indicated that while the township would take the approach that a waiver is needed, the applicant's opinion is not necessarily wrong and there could be a legal argument either way. Mr. Jones further indicated that if a sidewalk was not installed, a payment in lieu could be required, but that further discussion will be needed to determine the need for a waiver.

Ms. Camp asked about how the addition of sidewalk would impact the site's impervious coverage. Mr. Migeot indicated that currently the proposal is increasing impervious coverage by approximately 1,000 sf and that the inclusion of any sidewalk, while in the right of way, would require approximately 1,000 lineal feet of additional sidewalk and impervious coverage.

**Upper Merion Township Planning Commission
Regularly Scheduled Meeting for July 27th, 2022**

Mr. Popek asked if the building itself is currently occupied. Mr. Mingeot replied while the building is currently occupied he is unsure at what percentage.

Ms. Camp asks if the new addition will affect the amount parking spaces required on the property. Mr. Mingeot replied that the site is “over parked” and that the current plan shows that 338 parking spaces are required while 412 are provided. Mr. McKee mentions that the parking requirement is 3 parking spaces per 1,000 sf, and this was followed by a discussion regarding future uses and parking requirements when considering an unknown tenant. Mr. McKee indicated while a sidewalk waiver may be appropriate it would make sense to have pedestrian crossings which would connect to the trail system across Renaissance Blvd. Mr. Popek reiterated that the county had similar comments regarding pedestrian connections and access to bus stops.

Mr. Popek indicated that he wants to confirm that the new sidewalk in front of the building will be ADA complaint, especially in light that the existing curbing may not be. The applicant indicated that it will comply with ADA regulations.

Mr. Popek asked if the applicant had reviewed professional letters and Brian Madsen, applicant’s engineer, responded that they have seen the county and township engineer letters but have not seen other professional letters (traffic professional and fire marshal). Mr. Jones indicated that in summation there was nothing in the traffic letter that was insurmountable and indicated that the township would provide the applicant with the fire marshal letter.

Mr. Foley indicated that the area of disturbance does not appear to include landscaping, replanting of the basin and areas where additional trees are to be added. Mr. Madsen asked if planting trees was considered disturbance and Mr. Foley responded that the applicant should look to discuss why they are not included, considering they are planting many trees and adding plugs.

Mr. McKee asked for clarification regarding the existing building’s square footage. Mr. Madsen responded that the footprint of the building was just under 35,000 sf and that they are adding an additional 19,000 sf of footprint. Mr. Jones interjected that they are adding 42,000 sf of new leasable area, counting the multiple floors of the new building. Mr. McKee brought up other issues including traffic generated by other developments, general circulation of traffic throughout the area, the dangers of building buildings without knowing future users, historic residential neighborhoods, and traffic impacts on residents.

Mr. Jenaway asked if 3 stories was possible with only a 50 ft. height as it was his understanding that life science uses required 20-foot floor plate. The applicants team responded that it can work and that they are not seeking any height variance.

Mr. Popek reiterated that pedestrian connections and crosswalks are important to consider and that the applicant should take a further look into this.

Mr. McKee asked if the parking area north of the building was utilized as part of the parking calculation and the applicant indicated yes. Mr. McKee further stated that the parking is not near the building and the applicant should consider having a structured garage close to the building and the 3- story building over parking in the remote parking area or at an adjacent facility.

**Upper Merion Township Planning Commission
Regularly Scheduled Meeting for July 27th, 2022**

Mr. Brown made a motion to recommend approval with the requested sidewalk waiver (if appropriate) and to encourage the applicant to investigate pedestrian connections to the existing nearby trail system and bus stop. This was seconded by Ms. Camp, with a 4-0 vote.

Mr. Popek indicated that the next two items on the agenda, 555 Flint Hill Road and 446, 456, and 588 Swedeland Road, have been pulled off by the applicant and will be heard on August 24th, 2022.

ADJOURNMENT:

With no other business to discuss, Mr. Brown moved to adjourn the meeting with Ms. Camp seconding and all in favor at 7:37 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

Martin Trumpler, Secretary