

**Upper Merion Township Planning Commission
Regularly Scheduled Meeting for December 12, 2021**

The Upper Merion Township Planning Commission met for its regularly scheduled meeting on December 12, 2021, in-person at the Upper Merion Municipal Building Board Room and via Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 7:10 PM followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Matt Popek, Chair
Mark McKee, Vice-Chair
Martin Trumpler, Secretary
Jaquelin Camp
Kenneth Brown
William Jenaway, Board Liaison
Anthony Hamaday, Township Manager
Patrick Foley, on behalf of Leanna Colubriale, Township Engineer (Remington & Vernick)

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Minutes for the prior meeting on November 10 had previously been distributed. There were no further comments or edits. Mr. McKee made a motion to adopt the November 10 minutes as distributed with Mr. Brown seconding. The motion carried 5-0.

Schuylkill Gulph Associates, LP., Land Development Plan - 201 S. Gulph Road. Proposed 144,040 sf Distribution/Warehouse facility. 11.291 ac. Zoning District: LI Limited Industrial.

Discussion:

Mr. Hamaday began by summarizing the major points of the proposal. It involved the demolition of the existing building and construction of a new 144,000 sq ft distribution and warehouse facility. The applicant's attorney described the improvements to the property, including improved landscaping and stormwater management. A review letter from Remington & Vernick had been received, and the attorney felt that there were no issues that could not be addressed.

The applicant stated that they currently own 5 properties in Upper Merion township with a total of 310,000 sq ft with 17 different tenants, so they have a long history with the township. The building under discussion is now vacant and was built with older, outmoded standards and needs to be upgraded. This development would have new landscaping and buffering, upgraded stormwater management, modern sprinklers, lighting and HVAC, and windows along the front on the expressway side and at primary and secondary entrances.

A discussion of waivers followed. The applicant wishes not to plant trees in the stormwater catch basins and to have shrubs instead. This is to avoid root systems interfering with the basin and liner and PVC piping underneath. Additionally, maps did not offer the full 200 ft beyond boundary limits that would satisfy SALDO requirements. Another waiver was requested to omit detailed utility requirements to profile pipelines under pressure (not gravity driven). However, these pipeline characteristics will be present on detailed development plans. The stormwater basins will be flat-bottomed rather than have a 2% slope.

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Relief from site stabilization requirements is sought because of the magnitude of the project and length of time (more than 20 days) for construction.

Commission Comments:

In response to a question from Mr. Trumpler about the length of time for needed for stabilization of the construction area, the applicant gave a broad answer of 6 months. Mr. Popek commented that this stabilization waiver is not a frequent waiver to be requested. In response to a question from Mr. Hamaday, the applicant stated that there were many safeguards to protect against runoff.

In response to a question from Mr. Hamaday, the applicant stated that they were in contact with PennDOT concerning the catch basin in the west corner that PennDOT had jurisdiction over.

The applicant has not been contacted about future plans to potentially widen the Schuylkill Expressway.

In response to a question from Ms. Camp, the applicant stated that they thought the utility profiles were redundant, and the relevant information about pressure lines would be provided in notes to engineering drawings. Ms. Camp also questioned drainage in the flat-bottomed basins, and the applicant explained that there was an "under-drain" pipe with two feet of soil below the basin floor.

Mr. Jenaway brought up the issue of what would replace the benefits that the 18 trees would provide in soaking up water if the tree waiver was granted. The applicant stated that there will be a maintenance program initiated to keep the stormwater management system functioning as intended.

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In response to a question from Mr. Popek, the applicant stated that at this time there were no plans to create a "green roof" or install solar panels, although the construction could hold the load, because the architect advised against it for maintenance cost reasons. The building was being built "on spec" and the roof would depend on who a future tenant would be.

Ms. Camp inquired about infrastructure for electrical vehicles. The applicant indicated that enough power was being supplied to the building to accommodate that if a future tenant requested it. But no such infrastructure was planned at this time.

Mr. Popek commented that sidewalks were lacking along Long Road to the SEPTA bus stop. Mr. Hamaday commented that the sides of Long Road appeared mostly to be in private ownership.

Mr. McKee asked about the number of loading docks. The applicant clarified that there could be as many as 32 docks, but this would depend on requirements of a future tenant. The applicant also stated that there were no anticipated changes to the Long Road/Gulph Road intersection. No right turn for tractor trailers out of Long Road would be allowed. Signage would restrict such a turn. Also north-bound trucks on Gulph Road would be restricted from making a left turn onto Long Road.

Mr. Foley commented that the truck circulation path in the property could present problems and should be reviewed.

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Mr. McKee commented about how water would run off the property and eventually make its way to Crow Creek.

Mr. Popek summarized issues which would be detailed in the forthcoming county review letter.

No Public Comments.

Motion:

Mr. Trumpler made a motion to recommend approval of the Schuylkill Gulph Associates, LP., Land Development Plan at 201 S. Gulph Road by the Board of Supervisors subject to the condition that the applicant complies with various engineering review letters and issues that still need to be worked out, and with the recommendation that the applicant install as much infrastructure as possible in anticipation of a cleaner energy future, including electric vehicle charging. Ms. Camp seconded the motion, and it carried 4-0-1 with Mr. McKee abstaining.

PA Act 537 Sewage Facilities Planning Module Review – 2901 Renaissance Blvd.

Discussion:

Mr. Hamaday provided to the commission the revised sewage plan from the original plan from 7 years ago.

Motion:

Mr. Popek acknowledged that the Planning Commission received the sewage planning module for 2901 Renaissance Blvd and made a motion to recommend the planning staff complete the component, subject to removal of the paragraph not related to Upper Merion. Mr. Trumpler seconded the motion, and it carried 5-0.

PA Act 537 Sewage Facilities Planning Module Review – Mancill Mill Road Townhouse Development.

Discussion:

Mr. Hamaday advised that it would be appropriate to wait for action until January when the Board of Supervisors had a chance to approve the application.

ADJOURNMENT:

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 9:04 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Martin Trumpler, Secretary