

**Upper Merion Township Planning Commission
Regularly Scheduled Meeting for September 28, 2022**

The Upper Merion Township Planning Commission met for its regularly scheduled meeting on September 28, 2022, in-person in the Board 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 PM followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

ABSENT:

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Minutes for the August 24th were previously distributed. Motion made by Mr. McKee and seconded by Mr. Trumpler. All in favor.

Mr. Popek advised that the first two items on the advertised agenda would be switching order; the meeting would start with 850 Mancill Mill Road followed by Malvern Anderson.

850 Mancill Mill Road – Final Subdivision

Proposed 119-unit townhouse subdivision on Mancill Mill Rd.

Mr. Jones provided a brief overview of the project indicating that the project had originally come to the Planning Commission seeking both preliminary and final subdivision approval. The Board of Supervisors approved preliminary only, so now the applicant is back for final subdivision. Mr. Jones noted that nothing has changed substantially, except that additional waivers are now being sought. Mr. Jones indicated that what was originally a stormwater basin located in the center of the project is now additional open space.

Skip Brion, the applicant's attorney, provided a project overview indicating the center basin as removed and replaced with additional amenity space. While Mr. Brion agrees that there have been some minor revisions to the plan, all revisions have been reviewed by Township consultants and the applicant will comply with requested changes. Mr. Brion went on to introduce the members of the project team.

Mr. Brion indicated that the only outstanding issue is the intersection improvements along Route 23. Mr. Brion explained the historical context of the project, including the outstanding approval for a warehouse, and numerous meetings with Valley Forge Towers.

Mr. Brion explained that the fire marshal wanted to make sure that emergency services had adequate access to the properties. Mr. Brion mentioned that they are going to improve the access by adding another road that leads directly into the site. Mr. Brion indicated that they had gotten an easement from the sewer authority to

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widen the boulevard so the road will now contain one-way in and one-way out. Mr. Brion indicated that the applicant wants to pay a fee in lieu regarding sidewalk down Mancill Mill Rd. and indicated that he reached out to SEPTA regarding the bus stop on West Valley Forge Rd.; they indicated that they were uninterested in doing anything.

Mr. Brion requested a waiver as to planting types and instead indicated that his team would like to plant evergreen trees and under-story trees around the units (the project will meet the number of total required plantings). Mr. Brion also requested a waiver as to parking stall size in order to accommodate the required landscaping (spaces need to be shortened from 9' x 19" to 9' x 18"). Mr. Brion stated that in order to accommodate two-way traffic, the private road will be posted with "no street parking" signs throughout (off street parking will be permitted in designated guest parking spots).

Mr. McKee asked about unit garage size and Mr. Brion indicated that they would be two car garages.

Ms. Camp asked for clarity regarding the landscaping waiver. The applicant's landscape architect indicated that they are seeking two landscaping waivers, 1) for street tree spacing, and 2) utilization of evergreens as replacement plantings along the property line with Valley Forge Towers. Ms. Camp asked if landscaped areas will be commonly owned. The applicant's landscape architect indicated that all landscaping will be commonly owned.

Larry Dugan, the applicant's representative, indicated that backyards will be partially controlled by owners in that there will be some patios, but yards will not be blocked off. Ms. Camp additionally asked about the relationship between the trail and the project's sidewalk. Mr. Brion indicated that sidewalks will provide connections to the trail and that a future pedestrian connection will be provided out to Route 23 by the KOP BID (coordinated with future trail connection). Mr. Jones indicated that the details as to connecting sidewalk to Route 23 are still up in the air, but that some pedestrian connection will ultimately be provided. Mr. Jones further indicated that there will be a temporary traffic light associated with this project. This was followed by a discussion of pedestrian access.

Mr. Trumpler questioned grading and the dirt pile currently onsite. Mr. Dugan replied that the current grades are misleading because the dirt is being used for compaction and post site remediation.

Mr. Brown asked about design changes due to the elimination of the middle basin design. Mr. Dugan, indicated that capacity of the stormwater basin that was once in the center of the development has now been moved to the western side of the development and the size increased to hold additional storage. Adam Bower, the applicant's engineer explained that the basin already currently exists and will be able to accommodate any additional water accumulation. Mr. Bower stated that the basin pipes dump out to the other side of the railroad tracks and ultimately into the Schuylkill River. The basin would be designed in a meadow aesthetic. Mr. Trumpler asked if all stormwater would be going to the single basin and Mr. Bower indicated that was the case. Basin water would be piped under tracks. The basin would be reviewed under an NPDES permit and that the design change will only necessitate increased pipe sizing. Additionally, it was indicated that the emergency spillway would also be directed towards the tracks and river.

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Mr. McKee asked about the emergency access to the site through the Valley Forge Towers property, wondering if the access would remain with a locked gate. Mr. Brion indicated that the gate would likely remain locked with emergency services having a key or other means of access. Additionally, it was indicated that the emergency access would be paved and passible for fire trucks (20ft. wide access). It was further indicated that the Townhome project, as this will be a shared emergency access road for both projects, will pay an annual fee to help maintain the emergency access located on Valley Forge Towers property.

Mr. McKee made a motion to recommend approval with waivers for irregular street tree location, variety of tree type, and parking stall size. This was seconded by Mr. Trumpler, with all in favor.

Malvern Anderson - Subdivision

Proposed 25-lot subdivision at Reedel Rd and Clement Cir.

Mr. Jones provided a brief description of the proposed project which would consist of 25 single-family homes on a private road.

The applicant's attorney provided a brief introduction to the project team and Rolph Graf, the applicant's engineer, gave an explanation of the project. Mr. Graf indicated that the property was zoned R-2 and made up of two parcels, totaling approximately 19 acres - the single-family homes would take up about 11 of the 19 acres with the rest being open space. Mr. Graf indicated that open space was not a requirement but that it was being provided to save some of the existing vegetation, as the site is largely wooded. Additionally, Mr. Graf indicated that there is some contamination adjacent to this property, and that there is a restricted area which cannot be developed. Mr. Graf indicated that the plan is zoning compliant and that there will be both on site stormwater and landscaping. Mr. Graf further indicated that the road will be private and is designed with a 50 ft. ROW and 32 ft. cartway (parking will be permitted on one side). Mr. Graf indicated that while the fire marshal has no issue regarding onsite maneuverability, an emergency access may be required. Mr. Graf indicated that from a traffic review standpoint, they will comply with all requirements, and that county concerns, as indicated in their letter, will be largely addressed with the exception of three waivers, 1) center line radius (roadway design), 2) driveway/intersection separation (this affects the first two lots), and 3) plan size/scale (ordinance requires no smaller than 1 in=50 ft).

Mr. Popek asked if the intersection between Reedel Road and Clement Circle is supposed to be a 4-way stop. Mr. Graf indicated that there is a two-way stop proposed but the intersection could easily be a 4-way stop (the entire intersection will have ADA ramps). Mr. Graf and Mr. Popek decided that a 4-way stop would be better than the 2-way as currently designed. This was followed up by a discussion regarding ADA ramp compliance and the Planning Commission's desire to not have ramps funnel pedestrians into the center of an intersection (move ADA ramps away from the intersection).

Mr. McKee asked about existing onsite stormwater facilities and the applicant indicated that the current stormwater facilities (which are utilized by other surrounding projects) are not proposed to be altered and will remain as is. Mr. Graf indicated that while the existing facilities are on the project site, via easements, those

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facilities are maintained/operated by other entities. Mr. Jenaway indicated that the applicant should have a clear understanding of these easements.

Mr. Popek asked where an emergency access would go if required by the fire marshal and Mr. McKee indicated that a connection to Brownlie Rd. was indicated in the Township's Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Graf indicated that major grading would be required in order to reconfigure the plan to have a second access connected to Brownlie Rd. Mr. Jenaway reiterated that the applicant should be prepared to discuss the possibility of said connection to Brownlie Rd. Mr. Graf indicated that it was his opinion that it was highly unlikely that access to the site would be an issue in an emergency. This was followed by a discussion of future possibilities for an emergency access. Mr. Graf indicated that he is working with the fire marshal and will continue to do so. This was followed by a discussion of the Schuylkill Parkway "road to nowhere". Various Planning Commission members expressed an understanding of the issues with creating access on Brownlie Rd, but the applicant indicated that they would investigate access further.

Mr. Graf asked if there was any opinion on the waivers being requested. Mr. Trumpler asked about the driveway setback waiver. Mr. Graf responded that if the Commission was not receptive to the waiver, houses could be flipped and they would be able to comply (it's just not the best design).

Mr. Jenaway asked about snow removal. Mr. Graf explained that snow removal would be the same process as any other development (deposited between curb and sidewalk), with residents responsible to clear the sidewalk and driveway. Mr. Popek suggested to make a designated area for excess snow removal on the empty lot towards the entrance of the development. Mr. Jones indicated that the development has excess on street parking so parking areas could also be designated as snow plow areas.

Mr. McKee asked if the stormwater outfall structure was designed appropriately. Mr. Graf indicated that it will be designed to comply, although some details need to be worked out. Mr. McKee indicated that the overflow for the basin is indicated in the area where ongoing remediation efforts are located on the adjacent parcel.

Mr. Jones indicated to the Planning Commission that the applicant is only seeking preliminary plan approval. This was followed by a general conversation regarding unit costs, bedroom distribution, and parking requirements (based on 2-car garage). Mr. Jones added that the completeness review indicated outstanding items which should be indicated in any waiver request and if a waiver is not requested an item will be required. Additionally, Mr. Jones alerted the applicant to review Section 145-38 to Section 145-38 40 which indicates requirements for open space in residential subdivisions.

Mr. Foley indicated that follow-up conversations with the Township Engineer should be had regarding stormwater. Mr. Foley also indicated concern regarding downstream impacts which would need to be further evaluated.

No formal action was taken by the Planning Commission.

ADJOURNMENT:

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With no other business to discuss, Mr. Trumpler moved to adjourn the meeting with Mr. Brown seconding and all in favor at 8.40 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

Martin Trumpler, Secretary