

**Upper Merion Township Planning Commission  
Regularly Scheduled Meeting for January 11, 2023**

The Upper Merion Township Planning Commission met for its regularly scheduled meeting on January 11, 2023, 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 7:00 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  
Patrick Foley, on behalf of Leanna Colubriale, Township Engineer (Remington & Vernick)  
Ashton Jones, Township Planner

**ABSENT:**

**Reorganization**

Ms. Camp made a nominee for Mr. Popek to continue as a Chair with Mr. McKee seconding. All were in favor 5-0.

Ms. Camp made a vote for Mr. McKee to continue as vice chair with Mr. Brown seconding. All were in favor 5-0.

Mr. Brown made a nominee for Mr. Trumpler to continue as secretary with Ms. Camp seconding. All were in favor 5-0.

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:**

Minutes for the October 12<sup>th</sup> and October 26<sup>th</sup> were not completed and were tabled until the next meeting.

**121 E. Church Road - Land Development**

*Proposed 1,080 sf storage building addition*

Mr. Jones introduced the applicant, David Norcini, and the applicant's representation, Joe Zadlo. Mr. Jones describes this is an application for a 1,000 square foot pole barn addition with no utilities at an auto body store.

Mr. Zadlo provided a brief overview of the site, indicating that the Norcini family has been operating this auto body shop since 1978 and their current levels of operations call for a needed storage expansion. Mr. Zadlo further discussed that based on the traffic engineer's review, the first item suggested that they should consider changing the traffic pattern to having one driveway in to the site and one driveway out. Mr. Zadlo explained that although they had considered the suggestion and appreciate the feedback, they don't agree with it, stating that they have been in operation with the same traffic pattern since 1978 and they are comfortable with the existing traffic pattern they have.

Mr. Zadlo continues to the second item that they want to discuss with the traffic engineer's review, that the ordinance requires a minimum driveway width. However, they feel that they have a well-established curve

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line in front of their property, and on the opposite side of the street the turning lane for the traffic signal begins. Mr. Zadlo doesn't see any way to widen the street. Mr. Zadlo also explained that there is no sidewalk anywhere and understands that the board may request a contribution in escrow to grant a waiver.

Mr. Zadlo continued: the third item concerned parking spaces and saying that they need 3 parking spaces for each service bay. However, they are not adding any services; they have existing parking already so they are looking to not comply with what is being requested. Mr. Popek asked if they are aware of any active variance or waiver that would have been granted in the first place or if their property was grandfathered in. Mr. Zadlo stated that it has been this way since 1978 and has never been in front of the Zoning Hearing Board.

Mr. Norcini explained that the parking is not going to change and nobody goes past the access gate. They do not allow customers to park in the back; it is only for vehicles they are repairing. Their customers park in the front of the store and walk to the back. Mr. Popek asked if the area is currently all grass or paved where the proposed barn is going. Mr. Zadlo's response is that the area is currently stone and blacktop.

Mr. Zadlo stated that they currently have one ADA parking space and if the township feels they need to paint the lines and add another ADA parking space, then they will. Mr. Zadlo continued mentioning that the balance of the items they will comply with, except for providing turning templates for emergency vehicles and the largest delivery truck. Mr. Norcini mentioned that he has been a volunteer firefighter for 24 years and is certified to drive fire trucks, and he can confirm that they can get fire trucks around the building.

There was an open discussion about increasing impervious surfaces, trucks being able to drive around the property without getting stuck and no new issues being created by the addition.

Mr. Zadlo discussed the letter received from Remington and Vernick suggesting that they should revise the plans to provide a 40-foot front yard buffer. However, Mr. Zadlo feels that the parking spaces located in the front yard are an existing, non-conforming use and doesn't see the need for a variance required to maintain an existing non-conforming use. Mr. Zadlo explained that under the grass area in front of the building is a large gas line for Sunoco, so they will be severely limited from planting street trees or landscaping in that area. Mr. McKee confirmed that it is a 14-inch gas pipe line and thinks it would be a better idea to leave it as a trail or grassy area instead of putting a concrete sidewalk on top of a gas line.

There was an open discussion about pedestrians walking over a sidewalk vs. a grass area, and if someone had to come in a dig up the gas line whether it would be easier to dig up grass vs. concrete.

Mr. Zadlo reiterated that the 1,000 sq. ft building is going on top of already impervious cover and they are not changing the stormwater nor adding impervious coverage so the remaining various comments don't apply. Mr. Foley explained that the comments do apply because they are redeveloping the site by modifying and regrading, and the code does have redevelopment requirements to reduce the impervious runoff. Mr. Foley asked for clarification on if the drainage field noted on the plan is for sewage or stormwater. It was confirmed that it was for Sewage. Mr. Foley said that it needs to be clarified on the plan.

Mr. McKee asked how many total employees they have. Mr. Norcini answered that they have 10 employees and customers are coming and going quickly just to check on their vehicles. He states about 1% of customers use the restroom. Mr. Foley revisited his comments and said that they do have the right to ask for a waiver and the township will have to understand the justification. He believed that their existing impervious area is

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exceeding the requirement right now, by having about only 3% grass/green area. Mr. Foley mentioned that there are a lot of stormwater issues within the township, so anything providing stormwater management is going to help out.

Mr. Norcini stated that they have never had any water issues on their property and Mr. Foley followed with a comment that their property is upstream from the issues. Mr. McKee made a clarification that the property slopes back to Queens Drive and it would make sense that they do not have any water problems, and although it is a small project they still need to consider some kind of stormwater management. Mr. Norcini added in that it's such a small addition and if they need to add funds into stormwater management, it's not going to be worth it.

Mr. Foley stated that there are 24 parking spaces and asks how many bays they have. Mr. Norcini answered less than 8 bays with another building that has one bay. Mr. Foley explained that they need to state the facts on the plans that they are existing non-conforming issues. Mr. Norcini mentioned they have 24 striped parking spaces, and that they can fit more than 40 cars on the property without a problem. Ms. Camp made a comment that it isn't a waiver that is actually necessary so much as a clarification that while they only have so many paved striped parking lot parking spaces, they do have plenty of space available that can be used as parking to satisfy the requirement.

Mr. Jenaway discussed that there were two other properties that came before the board in recent months and there were three major issues similar to this project. The first one being they have 99.9% impervious coverage. Mr. Jenaway explained the other applicants dealt with this by installing a small rain garden that will capture enough stormwater, and that should make the board happy. Mr. Jenaway recommended coming in with a plan for the sidewalk issue; he has seen all different type of options come in and as long as they are viable then it should work – it is when people come in and say that they are not going to do anything about it that they get pushback from the board. The third thing would be street trees and vegetation; Mr. Jenaway suggested coming up with a plan of what they think they can do, but it is understandable that there isn't a lot of space.

There was an open discussion about where exactly the property line is in relation to the gas pipeline and roadway, and already maintaining asphalt that is not a formal part of the property as well as planting vegetation.

Mr. Brown made a comment stating that if you were coming down the sidewalk on Church Road on the side of this property, you have to go diagonally to get over to the sidewalk on Henderson Road because the sidewalk on Henderson Road is coming under the Turnpike, so you would be better off crossing at the light on the other side of the road. Mr. Popek granted that the large driveway accessing Church Road makes it challenging; however, if people are walking through here, there's a decent chance that they're trying to reach the businesses in this corridor. Mr. Zadlo's response was that they will work this out with the board and satisfy them.

Mr. Zadlo returned to his question and asked if the Planning Commission understood their cooperation well enough to allow them to go on to the Board of Supervisors and settle the issues that are in their court with the understanding that they will work Mr. Foley on resolving stormwater management.

Mr. Trumpler made a comment that most of the issues were brought up and that some clarification is all that should be needed. Mr. Trumpler agreed that the sidewalk issue and stormwater management with a rain

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garden needs to be somehow negotiated, being important issues. Mr. Trumpler explained that this is a light industrial area and the business had been there for 50 years, so he would give them the benefit of the doubt on a lot of things that were mentioned, so he would be in favor of a motion to approve subject to further negotiations on sidewalk and stormwater management.

Mr. Popek agreed that he overall felt the same way and understood what the applicant is trying to do, and felt like the impacts overall are minor with some additional stormwater management to satisfy all the additional regulations that have been implemented over the last 50 years.

Ms. Camp agreed and thought that coming back to the planning commission with a revised plan wasn't really necessary and would recommend moving this plan to the board.

Mr. Trumpler made the motion to recommend to approve to the board of supervisions, subject to the conditions that there is clarification on several of the waivers. This was seconded by Mr. Brown, and all were in favor.

**230 Mall Blvd. - Land Development**

*Proposed 55,150 sf research and testing building*

This item was removed from agenda and no discussion occurred.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

With no other business to discuss, Mr. Brown moved to adjourn the meeting with Mr. Trumpler seconding and all in favor at 8:01 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

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Martin Trumpler, Secretary