

**Upper Merion Township Planning Commission  
Regularly Scheduled Meeting for October 26, 2022**

The Upper Merion Township Planning Commission met for its regularly scheduled meeting on October 26<sup>th</sup>, 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 7:00 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:**

No minutes to be approved.

**316 W. Church Road – Land Development**

*Proposed 40,000 sf. self-storage warehouse.*

Mr. Jones gave a description of the proposed project, explaining that it is a 4-story self-storage facility located on West Church Road near the John Middleton Company. Mr. Jones explains that this site was recently rezoned from LI to R2.

The applicant, Nick Abbonizio gave a description that the back of the site is zoned commercial and the front of the site is zoned residential. The applicant explained that there are not any buildings on the site currently. The aerial picture shown appeared to show a house or shed but it had been taken down.

The applicant explained that they had two ideas in mind, one being a four-story building in the back of the site furthest away from the nearby residential houses, or a two-story building covering more land and located closer to the residential houses. The applicant further explained that the neighbors gave them a hard time because they did not want either option, so they were unable to go through the zoning variance route because they needed support from the neighbors.

The applicant described that the proposal is now a four-story building under 50 feet in height, and each floor building footprint is 12,000 sq. ft., to make the whole building a total of 48,000 sq. ft.

The applicant explained that there will be an underground drainpipe to manage the stormwater. There is an area to the back left of the property that will help collect the excess water on the property, and the water will flow out on the other side of the train tracks.

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Mr. Popek mentioned that there were several comments from Remington and Vernick that looked to be up to about 20 waivers. The applicant mentioned that they are not going to need all the waivers; they want to work out most of what they can do, and the rest will become waiver requests.

Mr. McKee noted that the county had a comment about the loading dock not being big enough for a large truck to come in and load or unload and get out. Mr. McKee also notes that the trash dumpster area does not seem to be large enough to accommodate a full-size trash truck. The applicant explained that the ordinance says the loading area needs to be a minimum of an 8' by 20' area and the loading area they have proposed is a 20' by 20' area.

Mr. Popek suggested that if an 18-wheeler truck were to come in the parking lot, all the cars in the parking spaces along the side will not be able to get out. The applicant explained they are trying to keep this a very low profile, quiet development with minimal traffic. They suggested marking those parking spaces reserved unless full but they have no intentions that the parking lot would ever be completely full. They proceeded to explain that this idea of a storage unit is one of the lowest intensity uses and that they are trying to be considerate of the residents next door, as anything else would mean more traffic, more lights, etc.

Mr. McKee suggested using taller trees to help block the light for the neighbors because that is something they tend to call and complain about.

Mr. McKee asked if there is a sewer line service on Church Road and assumed the existing house had a septic system. Mr. McKee asked if that had already been filled. The applicant answered yes and that they pulled permits.

Mr. Camp raised a concern that the owners should advise the tenants when they lease the space that there's a limit on the size of truck they can bring in, because a large truck will not be able to come in and turn around with the parking lot they are proposing.

Mr. Foley stated his concerns related to buffering, the replacement trees, and stormwater and directed that those items will need to be revisited and that the applicant can reach out to them when they are ready.

Mr. McKee asks if there was a water line nearby. The applicant said they did not draw the water line on the plan but there is one and there is also a nearby fire hydrant that will be on the drawing for next time.

Mr. Popek thanked the applicant for coming in and instructed the applicant to address everything as much as possible before the next presentation to the Planning Commission.

**631 and 650 Park Ave. – Conditional Use**

*Proposed 212,600 sf office and accessory parking garage.*

Mr. Jones started by introducing the plan as separate parcels across the street from each other, which are on a cul-de-sac near First Ave and Moore Road. Mr. Jones mentioned that 650 Park Avenue was proposed for development before as a rectangular shape in 2018-2019. It was approved and could have been built,

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however, there are now different tenant considerations with different needs, and so the applicant is back with revisions to turn the rectangular building into an L-shape. There was a parking garage on the original site that is now being moved to 631 Park Avenue across the street. He finished by introducing Al Fuscaldo and the Brandywine team.

Mr. Fuscaldo explained that what is being presented is two conditional use applications and confirms that back in 2018-2019 they received conditional use and land development approval from Upper Merion Township to build a 100,000 sq. ft office building, but the project was too small, so now they are back to expand the footprint to 212,000 sq. ft and move the parking garage to the property across the street.

Mr. Fuscaldo continued that the conditional use application for tonight pertains to the height of the structures. The ordinance requires that if an applicant wants to go above the maximum 55-foot height limitation, they can go up to 65 feet by conditional use provided that the plan increases the setbacks of the rear and side yard by 2 feet for every foot that you go above 55 feet in height. Mr. Fuscaldo explained that what they are asking for tonight is to recommend approval of the building at 60 feet in height, which is no taller than the what the previously approved building would have been.

Ms. Camp asked about the terms of the additional setbacks required for the additional height when extending to the L shape. Mr. Fuscaldo explains that they meet the conditions for the conditional use for the height for both buildings.

Mr. McKee asked if there will be three stories, each 20 feet in height. The applicant responds that there will be four stories, each 15 feet in height.

Mr. Fuscaldo explained that they are proposing to build a raised crosswalk to connect the parking garage to the building, sort of like a speed bump.

Mr. Trumpler made a motion to recommend approval for the conditional use applications at 631 and 650 Park Ave., which was seconded by Mr. Brown. All were in favor.

**KPMU – Zoning Ordinance**

*Ordinance to amend certain zones to permit hospital as a use and to amend the KPMU to require mixed use in multifamily buildings*

Mr. Jones gave a description that what is being presented is an ordinance to add hospitals to the KPMU, HI, and LI districts, and to make some amendments to KPMU regarding a mixed-use requirement in multi-family buildings, along with some edits to permit outdoor recreational facilities. Mr. Jones explained specifically what is being considered tonight is the hospital use, making sports permitted in both indoor and outdoor spaces, and making the requested footnote edit.

Mr. Jenaway stated that the Supervisors would like an answer to confirm whether or not they are against the hospital use in the HI, LI, and KPMU zones, because they are going to have to redraft the ordinance and they want to move on that because the hospital marketplace is getting extremely active.

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Mr. Popek mentioned that Simone Collins, who assisted with drafting the original zoning ordinance, has submitted a letter stating that they agree that adding hospitals to permitted uses in the KPMU is a good addition.

Mr. McKee stated that he concurred with that statement and that it makes sense, and he supported that with consideration given to the transportation access and proximity to new residential development. Mr. McKee mentioned that he does have some concerns with by-right uses in both LI and HI districts, because in the nearby zoning there may be communities impacted by the hospital traffic or noise levels.

Mr. Jenaway stated that before a hospital is built, they have to comply with joint commission requirements. Those requirements include access, roadway distance, and height of the building, and if they can't meet the joint commission criteria, the Township won't even consider it.

Mr. Jenaway made a statement that the hospital in Pottstown is moving to Harleysville, so many people in Pottstown, Limerick, and Sanatoga will need a different hospital.

Mr. Popek made a motion to say the Planning Commission supports code amendment 1, Sections A, B, C and D, which was seconded by Ms. Camp, and the motion carried 4-1 with Mr. McKee voting no because he feels there should be more control by the supervisors on the LI and HI districts. He supports A but B and C are in LI and HI districts.

Mr. McKee made a motion in support of amending code amendment Section F for indoor sports and recreational facilities to instead of removing the word "indoor", that the permitted use of outdoor sports and recreational facilities is added. Mr. McKee would also like clarification on what is indoor and outdoor recreational use and to clear up the terms. The motion was seconded by Mr. Trumpler, and all were in favor.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

With no other business to discuss, Mr. Trumpler moved to adjourn the meeting with Mr. Brown seconding and all in favor at 8.24 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

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Martin Trumpler, Secretary