

**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 tables until the next meeting.

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

*Proposed 1,080 sf storage building addition*

Mr. Jones introduces the applicant, David Norcini and the applicants represented, Joe Zadlo. Mr. Jones describes this is an application for a 1,000 square foot pole barn with no utilities just an addition to an existing pole barn at an auto body store.

Mr. Zadlo provided a brief overview of the site indication that the Norcini family has been operating this auto body shop since 1978, they are a long well standing member of the community, they take care of fire company vehicles, emergency service vehicles, they are very community-oriented group of people and their operation is calling for a needed storage expansion. Mr. Zadlo further discussed that based on the traffic engineers review, the first items suggested that they should consider changing the traffic pattern having one driveway in and one driveway out. Mr. Zadlo explains that although they had considered the suggestion and appreciate the feedback, he doesn't agree with it. Stating that they have been operation with the same traffic pattern since 1978 and they are comfortable with the existing traffic pattern they have.

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Mr. Zadlo continues to the second item that they want to take issue with, the ordinance requires a minimum driveway width. However, they feel that they have a well-established curve line in front of their property and on the opposite side of the street, in the middle of the property begins the turning lane for the traffic signal. Mr. Zadlo doesn't see any way to widen the street. Mr. Zadlo explains that there is no sidewalk anywhere and understands that the board may request a waiver contribution in escrow.

Mr. Zadlo continues, the third item concerns parking spaces and saying that they need 3 parking spaces for each service. 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 asks if they are aware of any active variance or waiver that would have been granted in the first place or if that was grandfathered in. Mr. Zadlo states that it's been this way since 1978 and has never been in front of the Zoning Hearing Board.

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

Mr. Zadlo states 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 continues mentioning that the balance of the items they will comply with except in lieu of turning templates for emergency vehicles and the largest delivery truck. Mr. Norcini, who is also deputy chief mentions that he has been a volunteer firefighter for 24 years and is certified to drive a ladder truck the pump truck, rescue trucks he can confer 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 problems being created with 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 existing, non-conforming use and doesn't see the variance required to maintain an existing non-conforming use. Mr. Zadlo explains that under the grass area in front of the building is a large gas line for Sonoco, so they will be severely limited to plant street trees or landscape that area. Mr. McKee confirms that it is a 14-inch gas pipe line and thinks it would be a better idea to leave it as a trail or grassier 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 has to come in a dig up the gas line it would be easier to dig up grass vs. concrete.

Mr. Zadlo reiterates that the 1,000 sq. ft building is going on top of impervious and they are not changing the storm water nor adding an impervious coverage so the remaining various comments don't apply. Mr. Foley explains that the comments do apply because they are redeveloping the site, modifying, regrading and the code does have redevelopment requirements to reduce the 20% impervious. Mr. Foley asks for clarification on if the drainage field noted on the plan is for sewage or storm water. It was confirmed that it was for drainage.

Mr. McKee asked how many total employees they have and if they were in and out a lot. Mr. Norcini answered a total of maybe 10 employees and people are coming and going quick just to check on their vehicles. He

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states about 1% use the restroom. Mr. Foley revisits his comments and says that they do have the right to ask for a waiver and the township will have to understand the justification. He believes that their existing impervious area is exceeding the requirement right now, having about only 3% grass/green area. Mr. Foley mentions that there are a lot of stormwater issues within the township so anything providing stormwater management is going to help out.

Mr. Norcini states that they have never had any water issues on there property and Mr. Foley follows with a comment that their proper is downstream. Mr. McKee makes clarification that the property slops back to Queens Lane 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 its such a small additional and if they need to add funds into stormwater its not going to be worth it.

Mr. Foley states 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 explains that they need to state the facts on the plans that they are existing, not confirmative. Mr. Norcini mentions they have 24 stipe parking spaces they can fit more than 40 cars on the property without a problem. Mr. Camp makes a comment that it isn't a waiver that is actually necessary so much as a clarification that while you only have so many paved striped parking lots parking spaces, you 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. Mr. Jenaway explains the other applicants dealt with this by installing a small rain garden that will capture enough storm water and that should make the board happy. Mr. Jenaway recommends 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, its when people come in and say there not going to do anything about it, they get pushed back from the board. The third thing would be the street trees and vegetation, Mr. Jenaway suggested coming up with a plan of what they think they can do but they are understandable that there isn't a lot of space.

There was an open discussion about where exactly the property line is and already maintaining asphalt that is not apart of the property as well as planting vegetation.

Mr. Brown made a comment stating that if you were coming down the sidewalk on the side of this property you've got 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 grands 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 get to the businesses in this corridor. Mr. Zadlo's response is that they will work this out with the board and satisfy them.

Mr. Zadlo returns to his question and asks if the Planning Commission understands their cooperation well enough to allow them to go on to the Board of Supervisors and settle the issues that are in their ballpark with the understanding that they will work Mr. Foley on stormwater management.

Mr. Popek thanks the applicant and attorney for their cooperation and presentation and asks if there are any other comments or discussion from the planning commission members.

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Mr. Trumpler made a comment that most of the issues were brought up, some clarification is all that should be needed. Mr. Trumpler agrees that the sidewalk issue and storm water management with a rain garden needs to be somehow negotiated being important issues. Mr. Trumpler explains that 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 thing that got brought up, so he would be in favor of a motion to approve subject to further negotiations on sidewalk and storm water management.

Mr. Popek agrees that is he overall feels the same way and understands what the applicant is trying to do and feels like the impacts overall are minor with some additional stormwater management to satisfy all the additional regulations of stuff that have crept in over the last 50 years.

Ms. Camp agrees and thinks that coming back to the planning commission with a revised plan isn't really necessary and would recommend going to the board.

Mr. Popek entertains a motion to move forward. Mr. Trumpler recommendation to approve to the board of supervisions, subject to the conditions that there's clarification on several of the waivers, seconded by Mr. Brown, 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