

Tredyffrin Township
Planning Commission Workshop Meeting Minutes
November 1, 2007

A workshop meeting of the Planning Commission was held on November 1, 2007, at the Tredyffrin Township Building. Members present included: Sean N. McCauley, Chairman, Robert O'Leary, Vice Chairman, Libby Brinton, Edward C. Sweeney, Thomas J. Cooper, Robert Whalen, Giovanni D'Amato and Victoria Snyder.

Members absent: Michael Tierney.

Also present: Stephen Burgo, P.E., Township Engineer, Mike Fahey, Director of Building and Zoning, and Mimi Gleason, Township Manager.

Chairman McCauley called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

CARRYOVER MATTERS: The following topics were discussed from a conceptual and design perspective. No action was taken on any item listed below:

(Application #34-04) **First Baptist Church;** Land Development Final Plan: Proposal to construct a new church building on a lot adjacent to their current facility at 1040 Upper Gulph Road in an R-2 Residence District [Plan prepared by Cahill Associates, Inc. dated 10-12-07.]

Susan McDaniels, engineer for the project, stated that her firm had been hired to design a new stormwater system for the project. Damon and Associates had done the land development plans which received preliminary approval in February of 2006. The new system is an infiltration system with a bed under the parking lot into which the lot, the driveway, and the roof will drain. Mr. Burgo noted that the system should be inspected and cleaned out quarterly. Screens over the inlet pipes and guards on the gutters could be added to help keep debris out of the system. The applicant will have to submit an operation and maintenance plan before final approval. Mr. O'Leary asked that curbing be shown along the 40' from the entrance radius to the driveway radius. He also noted that the applicant had gotten an HOP in the past but would need to check that it is still valid. The Township will need a valid copy of the permit before final approval. Finally, Ms. Snyder asked for a landscape plan to show plantings in the bio-retention basin.

Application (#11-07) **University of Pennsylvania;** Conditional Use Amendment Application #79 and Land Development Preliminary Plan: Proposal to amend the prior conditional use approval for a 230,000 sf hotel in order to build a 90,000 sf medical office, teaching, conference, and ambulatory surgery center building at 1001 Chesterbrook Boulevard in an HO Hotel Office District [Plan prepared by Pennoni Associates, Inc. dated 4-11-07, last revised 10-22-07.]

Mr. O'Leary stated that the subcommittee had met with the applicant to discuss the plans. As a result, the parking lot was redesigned and is now out of the floodplain and wetlands. In order to accomplish this, the size and number of parking spaces had to be reduced. Mike Burg, attorney for the project, noted that this plan represents the maximum number of spaces that the applicant can provide. They are looking for input from the Planning Commission regarding this change. Specifically, a recommendation to the Zoning Hearing Board for the three variances that U of P will need. First, a variance for the parking stalls to be 8.5' X 18' instead of the 10' X 20' required by the Zoning Ordinance. Second, a variance for a reduced number of parking spaces. The applicant is proposing 409 spaces when the ordinance requires 500 spaces. Third, a variance to allow disturbance of the steep slopes. Several Planning Commission members wondered if the building could be made smaller. Representatives from the University said that

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would limit the use of the building which would make the project not economically feasible. Mr. McCauley felt that the parking garage should have another deck added and that fully engineered plans for that deck should be included as part of the current land development plans. Mr. Fahey said that the reduced size spaces for the parking deck was granted as part of the stipulation agreement for the hotel and could not be changed because the reciprocal actions for that bonus have already been performed. Mr. O'Leary remembered that there had been a shared parking agreement between Hardin and Dominion for the construction of the hotel. He asked Mr. Burg to look into whether that agreement existed and if it was still valid. Ms. Snyder suggested that the applicant look at the parking area in the northeast corner of the site. If the landscape islands were removed, the parking spaces could probably be made into 10' X 20' spaces so that SUVs and trucks would have some larger spaces to park in. The variance to have no parking islands could be added to the Zoning Hearing application. All of the Planning Commission members, with the exception of Mr. McCauley, were in favor of recommending the reduced number and size for the parking spaces as long as the NE corner is changed if possible. Mr. McCauley feels that there could be more structured parking added. All members were in favor of recommending the alterations to the steep slopes on the property.

Mr. Fahey had questions about the two reciprocal actions requested by the Planning Commission in exchange for adding a medical office building use to the previously approved condition use. Those actions are the building of the portion of the Chester Valley Trail that is on their property and the construction of sidewalk in front of the medical building up to the traffic light at the Rt. 202 ramp, across Chesterbrook Boulevard, and along that road to meet up with the sidewalk at the hotel. He noted that the right of way for the trail was not shown on the plans and asked if the applicant had contacted the County to check on ownership. Mr. Kissinger, engineer for the project, said that PADOT owns the right of way but the County is negotiating with them for ownership. Mr. Burgo said that the applicant will have to clearly show the right of way on revised plans and indicate who currently owns it. He also told the applicant to submit an Auto Cad version of their plan showing the portion of the trail on their property as well as the section that extends 6' beyond the driveway. U of P will have to send an agreement to the County stating that they will build the trail during construction of the medical building. The trail will have been approved by the County and will be in accordance with their specifications.

Mr. Fahey asked the applicant to show the sidewalk on revised plans. Mr. O'Leary clarified that the sidewalk would go along the applicant's property to the light at the 202 ramp and be asphalt. On the other side of Chesterbrook Boulevard, it will be concrete from 1000 Chesterbrook to the other side of the 202 bridge and then asphalt from there to where it will meet the walkway in front of the hotel. All crosswalks will be identified with imbedded markings as is seen in Chesterbrook.

Application (#12-07) **Islamic Society**; Land Development Preliminary Plan: Proposal to build a 200 seat two story detached worship hall at 958 Valley Forge Road in an R1 Residential District [Plan prepared by Momenee and Associates, Inc., dated 6-27-07, last revised 10-12-07.]

Mr. Fahey noted that the applicant had received three zoning variances for the project. A special exception to extend the use, a 0' buffer, and undersized parking spaces. He said that the height of the building was still unclear, and asked the applicant to provide signed and sealed architectural drawings showing the height on each elevation. Mr. Burgo told Mr. Jon that an operation and maintenance plan would have to be submitted for the stormwater management system. Mr. O'Leary stated that the lights shown on the landscape plan and the lighting plan did not match. He asked the applicant to make that revision and also questioned the dark areas along the driveways. He suggested that the Islamic Society look into adding lighting so that the driveways would not be completely dark. Mr. O'Leary said that the County review had asked for an additional 5' of right of way on the Society's property so that Valley Forge Road could eventually have a 60' right of way instead of the current 50'. The Sidewalk, Trail and Path Committee should look at the plan and might want the sidewalk to be 7' in from the edge of the paving as opposed to the 5' mentioned at the last PC meeting. Ms. Snyder pointed out that there is only one ornamental tree added along Valley Forge Road. She asked the applicant to look into the Subdivision Land Development Ordinance and add more street trees if needed to meet the requirements in that ordinance. Mr. McCauley asked if the Islamic Society was going to tear down the existing house on the

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property. Mr. Jon responded that they would not be demolishing it. However, they would look at their finances after construction of the new building and might consider improving the façade if there is enough money left. When asked how the existing building would be used, Mr. Jon said that the regular prayers and some classes would be held in there. He also stated that no one would be continuously living in that building. The new building will be used only for larger gatherings as it is too expensive to keep open on a daily basis.

Application (#13-07) **Jenkins Arboretum**; Land Development Preliminary Plan: Proposal to build a 3,800 sf addition to the Education Center and redesign the parking lot at 631 Berwyn Baptist Road in an R1 Residential District [Plan prepared by CMC Engineering, dated 7-05-07, last revised 10-2-07.] Joel DeFreytas, engineer for the project, said that he had submitted revised plans to Mr. Burgo which addressed the issues he had about stormwater and included an operation and maintenance plan for the system. A registered landscape architect discussed the landscape plan and said that his calculations showed that the arboretum would need 31 trees to meet the Township ordinances. Twenty four of the thirty one would be small trees, but eight of them would have to be 8' high evergreens. He stated that it would not be a good idea to plant 8' evergreens in the area which the Planning Commission had identified as needing additional plantings. They would not do well there and would most likely fail. Mr. McCauley said that the PC had only asked that the applicant plant enough to shield the neighbor's house from headlights. The zoning variances had been granted with the condition that the applicant come up with a landscape plan that the PC approved. Ms. Snyder said that the PC does not necessarily want thirty two trees. They just want additional understory which could be smaller shrubs. They could give a waiver from the additional trees required by the ordinances. Mr. Sweetman asked what would be an amount of plantings that could be agreed upon. It was decided that ten holly and ten rhododendron of a 3-5 gallon size would be acceptable. The applicant will need to submit a revised landscape plan containing a compliance chart and showing the twenty new plantings. The landscape plan should be signed and sealed by a registered landscape architect.

Application (#14-07) **Kilgore Valley View Professional Campus**; Land Development Preliminary Plan: Plan to build a parking lot as part of the Kilgore Valley View Professional Campus on Industrial Boulevard in a LI Limited Industrial District [Plan prepared by Momenee and Associates, Inc., dated 1-24-07, last revised 10-18-07.] Staff had several comments about the revised plans submitted for this evening's meeting. Mr. Burgo noted that the stormwater system is still buried beneath about 20' of earth. The weight of this soil would most likely compact the soil at the bottom and lessen or eliminate its ability to infiltrate, and any future operation and maintenance issues would be a nightmare. He suggested that an infiltration system at 10'-12' deep is pushing the limit and this system is far beyond that. A geotechnical expert for the applicant said that there was no way to measure whether or not the system would work correctly. Mr. Burgo asked the applicant's engineer if they had thought about splitting the system up into two basins instead of one very big one. The engineer answered that the best perk test results were in the back of the property, so that is where they put the stormwater basin. Mr. Burgo suggested that they look at the possibility of making the planting island a bio-retention area and move the basin up closer to the building. Mr. O'Leary asked about the very large retention wall along the back of the property. He wondered if a 30' high gabion wall would hold up. The geotechnical expert said that the wall was not a traditional gabion wall of wire baskets filled with rock. He explained that it is a strong wire mesh face with a geotech fabric wrapped around it which holds the fill. Topsoil is then layered on and planted so it looks like a grass hillside. It is very similar in strength to a reinforced wall. There is a 23' wall of this type in the Atwater Corporate Center and another one of 35'-40' height at Brookworth Plaza off of 322 in West Chester. Mr. Burgo further suggested that the applicant evaluate all stormwater velocities. The existing basin into which the stormwater will be released will most likely need to be regarded and stabilized. Ms. Snyder noted that the applicant will need a zoning variance for impervious, however, she questioned if 130% is really necessary and reasonable. The applicant clarified that the 130% impervious is based on the net lot size and that the impervious coverage for the gross lot is only 40%. The applicant has submitted

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their zoning application for the November 20th meeting and wondered if they could get a recommendation for their variances from the Planning Commission this evening. No PC member was willing to give that recommendation, so the applicant will have to ask for a continuance on their zoning application.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:45 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Carol O'Neill
Recording Secretary