

UPPER SAUCON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

Meeting Held April 4, 2017

Township Municipal Building
6:30PM

Members present: Samantha Falcone, Gerry Anthony, Brian Macfarlane, Antonio Roman, Rod Chirumbolo, George Bloeser and Al Cancellieri

Absent: None

Also present: Trent Sear, Upper Saucon Township Staff
Tom Dinkelacker - Upper Saucon Township Solicitor
Kevin Chimics - Upper Saucon Township Engineer

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM with recital of The Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Minutes:

Since the minutes from the March 7, 2017 have not yet been prepared, the Commission took no action.

2. Subdivision and Land Development

A. Copperhead Grille Land Development Plan

Attorney Kate Durso and Jason Buchta, the project engineer, presented the project. The proposed project is located at the intersection of Preston Lane and PA Route 378 opposite the Center Valley Post Office. The project will consolidate two (2) lots recently approved by the Township as Village Commercial Overlay (VCO) for the purpose of parking lot expansion and addition of an outdoor dining area to the restaurant. A key approval condition for changing the parcels to VCO was the applicant propose a berm with specific/extensive plantings and landscaping to screen adjacent residential properties in the Parkside Manor development from noise, lighting and other impacts of the restaurant/parking lot.

Attorney Durso explained that the placement of the older building/parking lot in the VCO Overlay resulted in the need for several variances and design modification requests. In fact the ZHB had granted the necessary relief at their April 3, 2017 meeting. Mr. Buchta summarized the parking lot and access drive design and PA HOP application. Mr. Buchta provided details on compromises made due to staff concerns with existing conditions along old Bethlehem Pike, including converting an existing driveway to one way, loading area modifications, reduced usage of parking spaces backing into the street, signage and dumpster improvements.

Attorney Durso raised the issue of compliance with the VCO requirements for pedestrian walkways and connections. Based on discussions with staff, the idea has been to modify VCO requirements by providing a walkway along the south side of Preston Lane (Post Office frontage). The applicant will provide a walkway design on the revised plan and propose a fee in lieu to allow the Township to work with the Post Office to create this walkway as well as the crosswalk over Preston Lane at Old Bethlehem Pike. Discussion ensued regarding the origins and destinations of pedestrians along the Preston Lane corridor. Mr. Chimics confirmed that the Official Map shows a walking path along the Post Office frontage, to extend the existing path at SLHS for ultimate connection to the Library/Community Park.

Attorney Durso addressed an unclaimed area between the Copperhead Grille property and the PA DOT right of way and assured the Commission that a legal mechanism will be drafted to document ownership of this area which PA DOT does not want. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the waiver for street trees along Preston

Lane. The applicants insist that the existing space to provide street trees is too narrow and that short of removing portions of the existing parking, providing street trees is not practical. In addition street trees pose a threat to the infiltration bed under the new parking lot.

Commission members raised additional issues for discussion including the access lane design at PA Route 378, lighting and fire truck access. Staff was able to direct the Commission to comments received from Chief Castetter as well as subsequent approvals from PA DOT and Snyder Hoffman. In addition, the Commission discussed the need for an easement to account for stormwater that flows off of Route 378 through a channel that flows towards Old Bethlehem Pike. There are catch basins within the unclaimed area as well. Attorney Dinkelacker will provide a legal opinion on the need for the plan to address this situation with a legal easement.

At the conclusion of discussion, a consensus was reached to table the plan to allow for additional review of a revised plan for consideration of an approval recommendation at the May 2, 2017 Planning Commission meeting.

3. Public Comment:

None

4. Discussion

Attorney Dinkelacker and Mr. Sear summarized the background behind the proposed Zoning Ordinance amendments in Ordinance 141-M. The amendments represent minor changes to certain provisions that are not working well in day to day implementation and need minor word changes or policy modifications. Mr. Macfarlane made a motion to recommend adoption of Ordinance 141-M, which was seconded by Mr. Anthony and approved 7-0.

Mrs. Falcone gave a brief summary of a recent private meeting she attended for affected residents to discuss their concerns with the development concept being presented to the Township by Kay Builders at the Lehigh University parcel on PA Route 309, the former Fox Run site. Mrs. Falcone noted concerns were raised about the different element that would seek out apartments and high density housing and the different price points that would be introduced. A specific concern is the disagreement in the community over the number of children that would be generated by the development. Attorney Dinkelacker advised that further discussion be deferred until the subject was placed on an agenda with the developer present.

Adjournment: With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Trent Sear,
Acting Secretary