

Upper Providence Township
Planning Commission
Regular Meeting
March 26, 2018

The Upper Providence Township Planning Commission held its regular monthly business meeting on Monday, March 26, 2018 at the Rose Tree Fire Company, 1275 N. Providence Road. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM. The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. PC members present were Michael Crotty, Joseph Maylish, Brianna Schehr, David Thomas, and James Zaccaria. Also present were: James P. Kelly, P.E., Planning Commission Engineer; Beth Naughton Beck, Esq., Planning Commission Solicitor and Gregory Lebold, Township Manager. Jackie Larkin arrived shortly after roll call had been taken and the minutes had been approved, but otherwise was present for the discussion on the hotel application below.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Crotty made a motion seconded by Dr. Thomas to approve the minutes of February 26, 2018.

Mr. Maylish – Yes
Dr. Thomas – Yes
Ms. Schehr – Yes

Mr. Zaccaria – Yes
Mr. Crotty - Yes

Motion passed 5-0

Public Comments and Questions

None

Communications

None

Special Reports by Officers or Committees

None

New Business

Panichi Family Steep Slope Amendment

Mr. Crotty informed the audience that the report submitted by the Panichi family is currently under review by the Township Engineer and Solicitor. Mr. Crotty also noted that the Environmental Commission had a vacancy recently filled by Township Council, which should now allow them the ability to conduct business and provide the Planning Commission with feedback on the Panichi report, which will be required before the PC offers any recommendations.

Old Business

Aria Hotels LLC – Preliminary Subdivision and Land Development – 7,9, 13 State Road and 719 & 721 Summer Street - 2nd Submission

Mr. Robert Linn, initiated the second presentation on behalf of Aria Hotels LLC of the Preliminary Subdivision and Land Development Plan to the Board members. Mr. Linn began his presentation by surveying the audience on their attendance at the January 22, 2018 Planning Commission meeting and summarizing the various uses that had been considered for the property prior to the hotel initiative. Mr. Linn also reviewed the issues that were presented at the January 22, 2018 PC meeting with a power point presentation beginning with photos of the existing businesses that surround the property and the changes undertaken to the plans. Among the changes were the elimination of direct access onto Summer Street and the expansion of the buffer area in the rear of the property, which eliminated 1 parking space.

Mr. Linn verified that the hotel would have 51 rooms, 7 rooms on the 1st floor, 22 on the 2nd floor and 22 on the 3rd floor. He also noted that the hotel would be tied to a national chain, either Best Western or Ascend brand. Mr. Linn stated that an environmental assessment had been completed with no issues noted and that he had met with the neighboring property owners in an effort to address their concerns.

Mr. Linn introduced Chris Williams, P.E., from McMahon Associates, the traffic engineer recently hired for the project. Mr. Williams initiated his presentation by noting that any studies required by PennDOT or the Township would be undertaken to ensure the new use has minimal effect on existing traffic. He noted that the revised plans have created a controlled access point, located at the easterly edge of the property, along State Road. The controlled access point is the only entrance and exit from the property, thereby regulating how traffic enters and exits the property. Mr. Williams noted that under the hotel use creates a minimal amount of traffic and that the traffic design is in accordance with the use established under the Institute of Transportation Engineers. Mr. Williams stated that the traffic studies for the size and use of the hotel would generate approximately 22 trips in peak AM hours and 16 trips in peak PM hours.

At the conclusion of Mr. Linn's presentation, Mr. Crotty and the Planning Commission members questioned Mr. Linn and Mr. Williams on the location and time of deliveries, site visibility and existing signalization review, construction time and associated noise, proposed signage, snow removal, fire truck and delivery truck accessibility and construction equipment access. Mr. Crotty noted that a Landscape Plan and a Lighting Plan needed to be included for review and that the stormwater management control for the rear parking area remains to be resolved.

Questioning by the Commission continued, with the need for additional information, including: the need for truck turning templates to assure adequate emergency access and concerns with stormwater management. Mr. Crotty noted that a restriction on transient use has been evaluated by Township Council, and the Township Solicitor noted that an ordinance restricting the length of time an occupant could reside in the hotel is currently being drafted. Mr. Linn agreed to include a note on the recorded plans that limits the length of time that an occupant would be permitted to reside and prohibit the use as a temporary or permanent residence. Mr. Linn also noted that delivery time limitations would be included on the recorded plans, similar to the restriction imposed upon the Wawa Convenience Store Land Development when it was under review.

Mr. Crotty asked the members of the Commission if they had any additional questions of the applicant. With no further questions being asked at that time, Mr. Crotty asked members of the audience for any additional questions or comments on traffic related issues.

Audience members expressed concerns with issues ranging from traffic being increased, existing traffic problems at the 5 points intersection and the impact the additional vehicles from the hotel will have on an already congested area, traffic being routed through neighboring streets, pedestrian cross walk safety and relocation of existing pedestrian crosswalks, the impact the hotel access location will have on vehicles exiting from Greenhill Road, the impact of traffic on school buses in the area, requests for an expanded traffic study that included local streets that surround the hotel property and the ability of vehicles to line up with an existing congested intersection (5-points) and signage restricting access to Summer Street.

After Mr. Linn and Mr. Williams endeavored to answer the traffic related questions from the audience, Mr. Crotty then turned the questioning back to the Planning Commission members for any additional questions relative to the General Site issues. The Commission members questioned the location of any additional signage, the rates for room rental, the method of discharge for the stormwater management system, and the owner responsibilities in ensuring the upkeep of the facilities.

At the conclusion of the Planning Commission members' questions and comments on those matters, Mr. Crotty asked the audience if there were any questions related to the General Site improvements. Audience members expressed concerns with the maintenance and upkeep of the existing residential dwelling and accessory garage structure that are currently in disrepair; concerns with the longevity of the hotel and the possibility of it being abandoned or converted to low income housing if it is unsuccessful;

concerns that none of the negative aspects have been discussed, and if the current traffic study could be guaranteed to be the same in future years. There were also concerns that should this project be approved, that future development will increase and change the character of the Township. There was a comment that the area would be better utilized as a dog park.

In response to a statement made by Mr. Linn that the hotel project is a permitted use by right, Township Council President, Tim Broadhurst, noted that the project is still currently under review by the Planning Commission and that nothing has been approved.

The audience members that identified themselves were as follows:

Ellen Morfei - 925 Second Avenue; Joan Patko – 717 Summer Street; Kevin Reilly – 6 Cherry Street; Iris Paltin Gruar – 705 Summer Street; Almira and Fred Reid - 336 Summit Road; Christopher Stern - 942 Second Avenue; Humane Zia - 58 Cedar Hill Lane; Ann Pittenger - 709 Summer Street; Kelly Costello - 153 Winter Street; Cynthia Painter - 112 Sandy Bank Road; Emilio Mendelsohn - 340 Kirk Lane; Rob Holber - 140 Lakeview Drive; Angela Morgera – 4 Spring Street; Richard Heron - 340 Meetinghouse Lane; Elgin Akarsoy - 129 Carlton Place; Dawn Baker - 342 Summit Road; Bent Road resident. There were others that spoke but were unidentified.

No action was taken and the presentation was concluded.

Adjournment

With no further business to conduct, Mr. Crotty adjourned the meeting at 9:35 PM.

Submitted by:

Gregory C. Lebold
Township Manager