

Upper Providence Township  
Planning Commission Meeting  
March 27, 2023

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The Upper Providence Township Planning Commission held its regular monthly meeting on Monday, March 27, 2023 in the Township Council Room. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM. And was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PC members present: Jackie Larkin, Mary Austin(late), Patrick Conboy, Todd Farally, Andrew Serota, Monica Shane and James Zaccaria. Also present: Don Vymazal, Township Manager, Carl Ewald, Solicitor and Kim McCloskey, Adm. Asst.

**Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Conboy made a motion seconded by Mr. Zaccaria to approve the meeting minutes of February 27, 2023.

Mr. Conboy	Yes	Ms. Shane	Yes
Mr. Farally	Yes	Mr. Zaccaria	Yes
Mr. Serota	Abstain	Ms. Larkin	Yes

Motion passed 5-0; 1 abstained

Ms. Austin arrived.

**Public Comments and Questions**

Residents in attendance were:

- Mr. Mancini, 173 Dam View
- Mark Freeman, 168 Dam View
- Theresa Murtaugh, 178 Dam View
- Winifred Freeman - 168 Dam View
- Mary Ellen Piraino, 172 Dam View
- Donna Mancini, 173 Dam View
- Laraina Lake, 156 Dam View
- Mike Volpio, 175 Dam View
- Dr. Piraino, 172 Dam View
- Steve Marsh, 105 Dam View
- Jim Colgan, 171 Dam View

Residents concerns: they don't feel as though this should be treated as a minor subdivision; the emergency access easement; the amount of mature trees that are going to be removed; lighting of cars, buses, etc - headlight penetration; the elevation of Benchmark vs. the houses on Dam View; landscaping requirements; stormwater management as they are all downhill from the school; impervious surface increase; storm drain capacity and plumbing capacity; disturbance to wildlife; Dam View residents rights to use the current easement; new playground; ; they would like it denied until further information is received

**Communications**

None

**Special Reports by Officers or Committees**

None

**Old Business**

None

**New Business**

**Benchmark/151 Dam View - Reverse SDLD/Conditional Use**

Christopher Schubert, attorney for Benchmark presented. The school has submitted two applications for consideration. A reverse SDLD to eliminate a lot line and make it one parcel and a Conditional Use application. The Benchmark school is currently in a contract with the Bradley's, the owners of the residential dwelling in the middle of the Benchmark property. Also present were Chris Hancock, Head of School, Gus Houtman, Engineer, Rich Cain, Architect. He advised that they held two previous public meetings to get the neighbors input.

Mr. Hancock explained the school population and how the classes and summer camp works. The Bradley's approached Benchmark in October and advised that they were going to sell. This represented an opportunity for Benchmark to move forward with some of their ideas regarding the entire property. The number of events, amount of participants and vehicles at these events was discussed as well as parking, safety, the location of the existing playground and the driveways that currently go to the Bradly property.

Residents had concerns about the driveway that goes through to Dam View Road. They have decided to eliminate that driveway all together in the hopes of discouraging vehicle parking on Dam View for events. They are proposing creating an emergency access only further in on Dam View with enhanced buffers.

Mr. Schubert talked about the history of the property. There was an easement granted to Benchmark when they initially purchased the front portion of the property. There was an agreement reached by Mr. Shooster and Bechmark that the driveway easement would be abandoned. There was a separate document which created the new emergency access easement.

The first application is for Reverse SDLD to remove the lot line separating the Bradly property which is approximately 3 acres from the Benchmark property, approximately 21 acres and making it all one parcel. The second application is for Conditional Use which is necessary. They have Mr. Kelly's review letter and they either have complied or will comply with all requirements. Mr. Houtman went through the review comments. The proposed improvements are access drive, parking and pedestrian circulation in the 5 year plan. He discussed the proposed parking spaces, the access drive, emergency

vehicle access and the stormwater systems. The Bradley house would be converted to school use for offices and classrooms. The carriage house would be used for storage for the campus. They propose adding 40 parking spaces between the Bradley residence and the existing residential dwelling. There is no expectation in an increase in either staff or student population.

They will remove the driveway and entrance pillars that are currently on Dam View going to the Bradley property entirely.

Member of the PC asked about parking on Colt Road and crossing Providence Road, they are proposing an additional 84 parking spaces which will limit the need to park on Colt Road. Can a traffic light be put at the entrance to the school or did they look into a parking garage. They are looking to trying to install a school zone in front of their school. They are currently existing nonconformity for parking. They do not meet PennDOTs criteria for a traffic signal at their location. They have made a submission of r a school zone during the school day and special events. They are not proposing any land development, they are just asking for the lot line to be removed.

At 10:03pm Ms. Larkin called an executive session. PC members returned at 10:20 pm. Ms. Larkin asked that they return with more information. What is the current status of the easement; what the authority is regarding the easement; see the plans with the removal of the driveway; the plan for the removal of trees; a report from a forensic arborist; waiver of deadlines under the MPC; a design for the access road and how it would look and what type of surface would be used. What areas are going to be address3ed with buffering for lighting and headlights

### **Adjournment**

With no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at 10:35 PM.

Submitted by:

**Kimberley McCloskey**

Kimberley McCloskey  
Administrative Assistant