

**Minutes of Meeting
Springfield Township Planning Commission
May 6th, 2014**

The Springfield Township Planning Commission (PC) held its semi-monthly meeting on the date noted above. Chairman Bob Gutowski called the meeting to order at 6:59 pm, with the following members present: Amanda Helwig, Bob Gutowski, George Schaefer, David Sands, Steve Schagrin, Joseph Devine, Angela Murray, and Mary Holland. Robert Dunlop represented the Township and Brandon Rudd represented the Montgomery County Planning Commission (MCPC). Absent were James Mascaro, and Commissioner Tom Bell.

Minutes: Minutes of the April 1st, 2014 meeting were read. Motion to approve the minutes with minor amendment was made by A. Murray and seconded by S. Schagrin. All were in favor. M. Holland abstained.

Commissioner Report: No Report

New Business

St. Joseph's Villa

Charles Durkin, P.E.

110 W. Wissahickon Ave

Preliminary / Final Land Development

The Applicant presented that there were two values they tried to instill in their plans for the site, the first value being good community members and neighbors. They did meet with the neighbors to allow them an opportunity to review the plans that they had and to incorporate their suggestions. Secondly, the Sisterhood has a commitment to treasure and care for Earth, the Applicant feels they have made great efforts to do so and have made some changes based on the Planning Commission's recommendations and from the neighbors.

Neighbors were concerned with traffic and the visual look of the lot being put there, and it was decided to incorporate a 3-foot berm so as to make the lot not as visible from Wissahickon Ave. The Applicant also reduced the proposed parking lot from 212 to 180 spots. They have submitted a planting plan, and changed the position of the driveway access to help with headlights going into the neighbor's property. Previously, they had storm water infiltration in a basin that had two feet of stone in it. In testing the soil, they found that the infiltration was poor due to a tight clay layer, so to address the storm water requirements mandated by the state they created an extended detention basin where flow is directed into a large forward bay, collecting sediment, and then moving over a gabion into a depressed micro pool to again allow sediment to fall out before exiting and going down to the stream. The entire basin will be planted with hydraulic plants that will help evaporate and filter the water. The retention basin should store up to 19 thousand cubic feet of water and it's designed for a 100 year storm.

The islands between the parking bays were made wider and are well planted with native landscaping. The 3 foot berm which will be shielding light on West Wissahickon Ave will also be well planted. The lights to be installed in the parking lot will be 25 foot high and similar to the lights at the entrance drive. No light you will reach the street. B. Gutowski commented that the Applicant should use alternative native understory trees for the planting plan, less invasive species. A. Murray said that the county made some great recommendations to the Applicant and that the Applicant should take under consideration the size of the lot and better dispersion of the runoff.

FAV Associates representative Frank Zabawski conducted the traffic study, which indicated a shortage of 57 spaces based on a day to day basis, Monday through Friday evaluation. This did not take into account peak times for events and funerals. The proposal also does not take into consideration that by allowing for the construction of the new lot, they may be able to modify other areas and improve them with islands therefore

increasing storm water management on the site. No traffic increase and no change in activity it proposed for the site. Currently there are 142 employees and some forty second shift workers equates to the 180 new spots needed. The remaining and current designated 126 parking spaces will be designated for visitor, volunteers and special events. M. Holland questioned if there will be lighting along the walkway being created. C. Durkin said they may need to add more lights along the walkway. B. Gutowski reminded the Applicant that PC requested the lighting be zoned so that the lights are turned off during hours of nonoperation.

Public Comment

125 West Wissahickon Ave, James Green Jr.: Asked the Applicant if they considered a mix of gravel or grassed areas for part of the lot. B. Gutowski responded that because of the nature of the soil and the grass, there this actually improved filtration into the soil of the water with the new system.

119 West Wissahickon Ave, Glen Worgan: Stated he recognizes the need for additional parking, just seems that 180 parking spaces is excessive. Seems the plan calls for more like 50 to 60 spaces.

64 West Wissahickon Ave, Anita Mastroieni: Feels events at the Villa can be managed by planning better to transition between current occurring shifts on weekends. He is being told this will not increase traffic but she does not believe it.

62 West Wissahickon Ave, Mary Ann Reilly: Has lived there for 15 years. This is really going to be a big change the character of the property and the number seems very excessive to her for requested parking spaces. The driveway adjacent to the existing driveway will create a dangerous situation because there are other numerous driveways along West Wissahickon Ave. There will be an impact to pedestrians because now they have to negotiate two driveways. She also has storm water concerns. The meadow conditions need to be maintained and it doesn't seem that this plan maintains this. She's grateful that they are not in a flood area but she wants it to stay that way and she asked people think thoughtfully and long-term about the impacts of these changes.

125 West Wissahickon Ave, James Green Jr.: Suggested perhaps a pork chop exit be considered in a larger combined exit.

Peter Ernst of Erdenheim Farm said he did the tabulations and they are requesting a 130% increase in parking without a change of operations. He is grateful that the Villa is trying to be conscientious, but asked why this project cannot be phased.

Sister Judy Oliver of Bethlehem Retirement Village commented that they have 37 to 40 spaces along the road that are typically used and its very dangerous situation. The road should not be used at all in her opinion.

B. Gutowski asked if they look into creating one driveway. C. Durkin responded that the cemetery is in the way and this was the only reasonable solution.

A. Helwig responded to the neighbors' concerns about having two driveways with employees exiting. She commented that since the intention of the newly created lot was to move all employees to this location that the majority of the traffic will only be coming out of this parking lot and not the other driveway at times of shift change.

Chairman B. Gutowski polled the Planning Commission for their thoughts after hearing the applicant's comments and the public comment.

PC Comments

B. Rudd with Montgomery County Planning Commission did he seem to believe that one hour of the day of heavy parking needs dictates a 123 space surplus. He believes 180 spaces are too much.

S. Schagrin commented that he sees 180 total of employees that the Applicant wants to be moved to a new specified location. He understands everything else will then be used for volunteers and visitors. He's OK with the number of requested spaces.

A. Helwig commented that she sees 57 undesignated and unsanctioned spaces being used that there is a need for 40 additional spaces for shift workers and perhaps a small capacity for special events. She would like to see 120 spaces approved and hold 60 in reserve cutting the plan down by one third. Of course the maximum storm water management would have to be completed for the total 180. By keeping the 1/3 in reserve it is creating good will with the neighbors and also seeing if the demand is truly there so that it is only a simple action of the applicant to come back to the Board of Commissioners to get the extra spaces installed when and if needed.

R. Dunlop commented that right now they have a 71 space deficit and they are entitled to those to come into compliance with zoning.

M. Holland commented that she had a concern about the awkwardness of the lot location. She feels like it's a separate entity she feels the walkway is long and awkward and she is not really sure about what the solution is. She's also concerned because they are bordering on a flood plain and wants to know what the current storm water management is now on the site, is there room for improvement. It seems that it just runs into the creek. There's no guarantee in her opinion the basins will be maintained, she would like to see them go over and beyond what is required for storm water management to try and take on some of the other storm water on the site.

D. Sands commented that he sees 57 undesignated, 40 shift and about 35 spaces along the driveway that need to be accommodated to make it safe. That's 136 spaces and he'd like to see maybe 20 put in reserve. So in summary he would support 156 approved spaces.

A. Murray said she will not go into the numbers as everyone else. She said she is a planner would say that parking is moving in the direction of being shared in other municipalities. She commented that perhaps they need to look more closely at their operations and stagger how people come and leave the property to address the issues of lack of parking. She'd also like to see at least one half off the lot put into reserve, more consideration given to the neighbors, and storm water management.

G. Schafer said he was more in line with David Sands recommendation of 156 spaces. He thought the number was excessive but not unrealistic. His concerns were aesthetics, traffic and storm water management. In this case, there seems to be no change in volume of traffic. When it comes to impervious surface, these measures proposed seem to actually improve storm water management on the ground considering the makeup of the clay soil and he gave an example of his property. He would also encourage the Applicant to maximize their plantings for aesthetic purposes.

J. Divine asked if the Applicant could explore other possibilities on the rest of the site. The Applicant commented that they had looked at the rest of the site to see if they could address the parking need however the way the Village property lays out this is not possible. J. Divine commented that he agreed with A. Helwig with 1/3 of the lots being placed in reserve. He also commented that he would like to see more of Montgomery County Planning Commission's letter incorporated into the Applicant's presentation.

Summary of Items PC Recommendations

- 1.) Substitute native and noninvasive plants into the planning plan.

- 2.) Zone lighting should be incorporated into the plan so that lights are turned off during nonoperational hours.
- 3.) Look to open up the driveway width to make a safer entry and exit
- 4.) Speak with the township engineer regarding the cart width modification / easement
- 5.) Make sure a note is placed on the plan to accommodate potential trail or sidewalks if either is required or will ever be done.
- 6.) Incorporate storm water management best practices try to take the piping that is currently going around the proposed lot and discharging to the side of the parking lot. Address this in the more proactive way, not only meeting but exceeding storm water management.
- 7.) Complete all storm water management now even if placing spaces in reserve.
- 8.) Lighting needs to be addressed along the pedestrian walkway
- 9.) Verify with the township and the county the actual limit of the 100 year flood plain. It should be based on current information.
- 10.) Consider placing a portion of the spaces in reserve.

PC Review of Township letter dated May 5th 2014

Applicant will comply to all Engineer comments with the following exceptions:

Under Zoning Ordinance Comments: 1.) Applicant will discuss with the Solicitor and Township Engineer.

Under Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance Comments: 7.) Same as 1.) Above.

Under Storm Water Management Comments: 18.) Applicant will discuss with Township Engineer.

Under General Comments: 27.) Applicant will discuss with Township Engineer.

At this time, A. Murray requested the Applicant table the application due to the number of requests and also because some of the PC recommendations and requests may affect the layout of the lot and the storm water management. The Applicant replied that they will come back at a future meeting and take all the Planning Commissions comments as well as the neighbor's comments into consideration with their plan.

Old Business Tecee Tract will be coming in for another change of Zoning.

Montgomery County Planning Commission handed out the final copies of the Comprehensive Plan

Motion to adjourn 10 p.m. made by A. Murray and seconded by S. Schagrin. All were in favor.

Amanda Helwig, Secretary