



JENKINTOWN PLANNING COMMISSION
October 15th, 2019
6:30pm-8:30pm
325 Highland Avenue, Jenkintown Pennsylvania

MEETING MINUTES

Attendance

Members Present: Gabriel Lerman – Chairperson, Phil Zimmerman, Jon McCandlish, Lucinda Bartley, Alison Danilak, Glen Morris
Members Absent: Joe Hentz,
Others Present: George Locke – Borough Manager, Deborra Sines-Pancoe – Borough Council President, Alexandria Khalil – Borough Council Member

Reports/Actions

Meeting Minutes

Meeting minutes from September 2019 Planning Commission (PC) meeting were approved.

New Business

440 York Road Proposed Redevelopment

A representative from Westrum Development presented to the PC a redevelopment proposal for a project located at 440 York Road. The existing building had been the former Chelsea of Jenkintown senior care facility, but is currently unoccupied. As described by Westrum Development, the proposed project would be a conversion of the existing facility into a specialized memory care unit. Although some minor interior modifications would be necessary, the building configuration would largely remain unchanged. Only exterior renovations and modifications to parking would be required as part of the redevelopment proposal. As such, Westrum Development believes that the project would generally conform to current zoning and use requirements, and would only expect to apply for a conditional use to accommodate possible non-conforming parking conditions.

Borough council member Alexandria Khalil inquired about the proposed facility's access to ambulances, and whether one would be dedicated to the center. Westrum responded that one would not be dedicated and that the center would rely on municipal ambulance services. He furthermore stated that this was a typical arrangement in his company's experience.

Ms. Khalil asked about the level of care that the facility would likely serve. She elaborated, asking if all patients would be mobile or limited to their beds. Westrum clarified that patients' conditions would vary and that the facility would serve a variety of patient care levels and types related to memory.

Mr. Morris inquired about staffing for the proposed facility. Westrum described typical staffing needs being most elevated during meals with 20-25 employees with lighter staffing at other times, particularly in the evenings. Mr. Morris asked if the facility planned to staff a resident physician and Westrum clarified that it would not.

Mr. Morris asked about the number of units proposed for the project. Westrum stated that although the project was still in an early phase, they would propose little if no change to the current number of 60 units.

Mr. Morris inquired about the condition of the existing elevators, and if any upgrades or modifications would be necessary. Westrum stated that there is currently only one elevator in the building and that

although it was in serviceable condition it would likely need to be upgraded. He also clarified that the building currently wouldn't meet fire egress requirements and that an additional elevator, or configuration of shelter-in-place areas would have to be considered.

Ms. Danilak inquired about Westrum Development's intentions regarding maintaining access easement agreements with neighboring Grace Presbyterian Church. Westrum responded that although discussions regarding this subject had not yet begun, they would indeed respect the easement and would be open to further discussions regarding access and parking.

Ms. Khalil expressed concern about the building's non-compliance with fire egress code. Westrum reiterated their plan to implement shelter-in-place strategies and explained that their successful experience with similar solutions has spanned over 30 years.

93 York Road Land Development

Representatives from Jenkintown Commons Limited re-presented their redevelopment proposal for land development review and conditional use approval regarding a property located at 93 York Road. The developers were seeking PC recommendation to Borough Council for both land development review and conditional use approvals. They specifically sought a conditional use approval to include a proposed drive-through component for a coffee shop restaurant tenant. The owner/consultant team summarized project details and items discussed in the previous PC presentation and review.

Mr. Morris noted that previous PC comments regarding trash storage and collection appeared not to have been addressed and asked the developer to reiterate how these items would be accounted for. The developer explained that based on their experience, the number and location of trash collection/storage points was adequate for the for the project. Mr. Morris asked if the storage areas would be gated and what the material of the enclosure would be. The developer confirmed that all trash areas would be gated and enclosed by an opaque fencing material. Mr. Morris expressly reiterated his concern that the current trash collection and storage strategy as planned would be inadequate. He furthermore expressed consternation that the development team had apparently made little attempt to address previous PC comments regarding trash storage and collection. The developer apologized and stated that it wasn't their intention to ignore PC comments but reiterated their stance that the proposal adequately addressed the subject of trash.

The PC asked the developer to explain again their strategy for site circulation. They summarized drive aisle and parking configurations as well as site entry and exits. The PC noted that previous comments regarding access from a rear parking area to the back of the building by way of a marked crosswalk had been considered by the developer, and included in the current proposal.

The PC inquired about the south-eastern most exit from the property and noted potential motorist confusion due to the exit's proposed configuration and proximity to the intersection of Wyncote Road and Old York Road. The developer clarified that it had performed traffic studies that had shown this to be an acceptable solution, and expressed that they believed that there shouldn't be any confusion to motorists. Mr. McCandlish stated that the exit could be slightly re-configured and shaped to improve exiting traffic towards the intersection, and better signal to drivers that motorists are not to exit westbound on Wyncote. The PC requested that this be something that would be considered in any necessary proposal revisions prior to BC approval.

Ms. Bartley asked that the developer consider strengthening the clarity of pedestrian circulation around site entries and exits, stating specifically that the sidewalk aprons at crosswalks seemed overly large. She asked that the developer consider including stripping at all crosswalks and making the aprons more appropriately sized to the width of the crosswalk.

Mr. McCandlish noted that language referring to the coffee shop/restaurant use within the proposal materials had been revised to reflect previous PC comments but in the application still referred to the proposed coffee shop as a "fast-food" use. He further clarified his concern being that if ever the coffee shop closed, or the property was sold, a fast-food restaurant with drive-through could be a permitted use if the language were not changed. The developer understood the concern but reiterated that they believed that the scope of the conditional use would be limited specifically to the proposed coffee shop, and that if any other tenet were proposed in the future the conditional use wouldn't apply and a fast food restaurant with drive through would not be permitted. The PC requested that regardless of the conditions

of the specific case, the language of the application be changed from “fast-food restaurant” to “restaurant”.

The PC discussed that conditions with which they would consider recommending the proposal for BC approval, including:

Pertaining to Land Development Approval

- Reconfiguration of the south-eastern exit to promote proper channeling of exiting traffic.
- Inclusion of pedestrian crosswalk striping at all site entrances/exits.

Pertaining to Conditional Use Approval

- Revision of language in the conditional use application from “fast-food restaurant” to “restaurant”.

Following a subsequent discussion, the PC motioned to make a recommendation to BC for approval of both Land Development and Conditional Use for the proposed redevelopment of 93 Old York Road, pending conditions discussed were met prior to the developer meeting with BC. With all in favor the recommendation was approved, and a letter was drafted stating the PC’s conditional recommendation for both approvals.

On-Going Business

EV Charging Stations

Mr. Locke relayed updates to the PC regarding the application for grant funding and implementation planning pertaining to EV parking and charging stations in the Borough. He reiterated that funding application materials would be due in late December, and that the Borough was still considering locations for the charging stations.

Mr. Locke requested that members of the PC continue to work with him to assist in selecting locations for EV parking and planning for the project in general. Ms. Bartley committed to preparing her recommendations for the parking locations prior to the next PC meeting.

Mr. McCandlish pointed out the benefits locating these parking spots near not only existing electrical infrastructure, but also places that would contribute to pedestrian connectivity to the commercial core of the Borough. Mr. Locke relayed that unfortunately many businesses would not be interested in locating EV dedicated parking in the town square due to the loss of a standard parking space.

Northern Gateway Updates

Mr. Locke conveyed that engineers had surveyed the area in proximity to a steel menorah structure located at the corner of Old York Road and Rodman Ave, and determined that it is currently within a right-of-way. He confirmed that the structure would need to be removed or relocated, and that the property owner would be notified soon.