

TOWNSHIP OF MIDDLETOWN
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

August 11, 2015

Present: Anthony Miranda, William Moran, Susan Powell, Greg Reitze, Peter Schettler, and David Sharbaugh

Kevin Matson, McCormick & Taylor consulting Engineered, and Bob Adams, Esquire

A. Call to Order

Chairman Mr. Sharbaugh called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

B. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Schettler motioned to approve the July 14, 2015 minutes. Ms. Powell seconded this motion and the Commission approved the minutes unanimously with a vote of 5-0 (one member abstained due to absence at July 14th meeting).

C. Old Business

None

D. New Business

Preliminary Land Development: Franklin Mint Tract—1442 W. Baltimore Pike—Proposed Mixed Use development per Middletown Township SU-1-A. This application is for the residential component of the project which is proposing 302 single family dwelling lots on 40 +/- acres within 151.7 acres, which is 1 of 3 parcels of the overall 173.8 acre Franklin Mint tract with SU-1-A zoning.

Steve Polaha, legal representative for the applicant, introduced himself and informed the commission that notices were sent to the abutting property owners. He provided the certifications he received from the property owners, the letter sent on the applicant's behalf to the Planning Commission with a copy of the notice sent to property owners, a list of the returned certifications received, and the USPS return receipts and receipt cards. Mr. Polaha also noted that Mark Dambly, property owner, Kevin McLaughlin, Senior Vice President of McKee Group, Nichole Klein, traffic consultant from McMann Associates, Barry Archambault, engineer consultant from Kelly & Close, and Lisa Thomas, landscaping consultant, were also present.

Mr. McLaughlin showed a diagram of the Pennell Road parcel and explained that a super convenience store, bank pad, and possible office building will be located on this parcel with “thorofare to Pennell Road.” He noted that the diagram shows a connection to the Granite parcel. While this is the desired plan, the location is currently unknown as discussions with land owners in this area are on-going. Mr. McLaughlin then showed the granite parcel and explained that high quality restaurants and a hotel would be constructed at this location.

He then moved on to show the Franklin Mint parcel, commenting that Ponds Edge is in-between the Granite and Franklin Mint parcel. Mr. McLaughlin stated that they were in discussions with the State Police about relocating to the Franklin Mint parcel. At this location, the existing building would remain and another office building would be constructed. This parcel would also be the location of the residential plan and SEPTA station. He reported that a “handshake deal” has been made with SEPTA in regards to this station and they are working on pedestrian connections. Mr. McLaughlin commented that SEPTA is anxious to get started and plan to have this station operating by 2020. Mr. McLaughlin noted that zoning at the Franklin Mint parcel allows a maximum of 350 residential units, but there will only be a total of 302. This would include 48 single detached and 248 single attached units. He explained that this will allow a diverse product mix and noted these would be “age-targeted” and the attached units would be a mix of townhomes and carriage homes. The homes would be designed in a way to attract older adults and detract from families wanting to move in.

Mr. McLaughlin informed the Planning Commission that the residential plan was recently filed and the Pennell parcel would soon follow. Currently, agreements are being negotiated for both the hotel and possibly moving the State Police barracks.

Mr. Reitze asked what the price range of the residential units would be and Mr. McLaughlin stated the range of \$300,000s and \$500,000s. There will be 24-26 townhomes and about 24 stacked townhomes (2 townhomes stacked on top of each other. These units would be designed and situated for those who want to be close to the train station and would be in the \$300,000s price range. He stated that the single units and carriage houses would be a higher price.

Nicole Klein, traffic consultant reported that a scoping meeting took place with PADOT, the Township manager, and Township engineer, in which the entire project was discussed. Ms. Klein noted that her study looked at Valley Road, site access on Route 1, access onto the Pennell parcel from Route 452 and Route 1, War Admiral Drive, Hunter Drive, Man of War Road and the intersection of Route 452 and Route 352. Ms. Klein stated she prepared the preliminary study and that the Township engineer issued a review. She is now preparing the master plan based on reliable estimates. She noted that as the parcels become more defined, she will make updates.

Ms. Klein explained that access to the residential area of the Franklin Mint parcel would be via the existing Franklin Mint Museum entrance at Valley Road. She reported that improvements would be made at the entrance, including a separate right turn lane on Route 1, the driveway being constructed with proper turn lanes, upgraded traffic signal, an evaluation of the left turn signal to assure it meets standards, and an upgraded pedestrian crossing at the intersection since there will be a walkway along the developer's property border of Route 1. She stated the traffic impact study for the residential portion was completed and that the master plan would be provided to the Township within the next month. She then reviewed the McCormick & Taylor comments. She stated that the applicant would comply with all technical comments. She explained that the last 3 or 4 comments were the only ones that still needed to be addressed and reported that she would work with the Township and PADOT for the offsite mitigation of intersections indirectly involved. Ms. Klein noted that she met with PADOT and the Township about the State's Route 1 and Route 352 intersection project and that it now includes the intersection of Route 1 and Route 452 as well. She stated she would continue to work closely with the Township, McCormick & Taylor (the Township's traffic consultant), and PADOT on these matters.

Mr. Moran asked where the service road would be located. Ms. Klein noted there was no inner-connection within the property at present; however, the developer is trying to make this happen. The goal is to have a service road that would go around the parking lots of the Franklin Mint parcel, through Ponds Edge and then continue through to the Pennell Road parcel. This would be contingent upon receiving easements from a few property owners though.

Mr. Miranda asked how long the right turn lane would be. Ms. Klein responded it would not run the length of Baltimore Pike and would only be at the at the Franklin Mint Museum entrance at the intersection of Route 1 and Valley Road. Mr. Miranda asked if it would be possible for drivers to avoid the Route 1 congestion by getting into the turning lane or using the service road. Ms. Klein said the service road could technically be used for that purpose; however, it would be designed in a way that would discourage that from happening since the intention of this road would not be as a cut-through for traffic. Based on further questioning, Ms. Klein shared that speed bumps were a possibility and that it would not be in the driver's interest to use the service road as a cut-through since it would not be an easy ride and would be a slow route. Mr. Sharbaugh stated it may not be easy but it may prove to be faster than waiting for the traffic light and asked what deterrents would be in place. Ms. Klein stated stop signs and speed bumps and that she could look into the service road construction further to see what else could be done to deter the cut-through. Mr. Moran asked if the roads were to be dedicated or remain private and Ms. Klein responded private.

Timothy Sullivan, 300 Valley Road, stated that it seemed likely that Baltimore Pike would be widened in the future and asked if additional right of way was being offered by

the developers. Ms. Klein reported the developer was in discussions with PADOT but that these discussions were very preliminary. Mr. Sullivan suggested the Planning Commission should make the additional right of way being offered a recommendation.

Art Rothe, former Township engineer was in the audience and asked what type of mitigation for Route 1 and Route 452 intersection and Route 352 and Route 452 intersection were being considered. Ms. Klein stated that as Ponds Edge went through their study, they looked at a separate left turn lanes for the Route 352 and Route 452 and that she believed that would also mitigate their needs as well. She noted that McCormick & Taylor was doing a feasibility analysis for the Route 452 and Route 1 intersection and that she was awaiting the results.

Glen Houtz, 223 Hunter Street, noted that there were many discussions in the past about a loop road and that it was always looked at negatively. He expressed that he thought an access road on the property could be problematic and felt that it would require a traffic signal at the Route 452 entrance. Ms. Klein emphasized that the property entrance on Route 452 would not have a signal and would not allow for left turns. She also noted that PADOT was pushing for the inter-connection. Mr. Sharbaugh asked if the connection was only possible if easements were granted by property owners. Ms. Klein stated the developer could get a connection through Ponds Edge but would need the easements to get to the Pennell parcel.

Andrew Fallon, 295 Glen Riddle, asked how speeding would be addressed on Route 1, as there is already so much of it at present. Ms. Klein stated that was an enforcement issue; however, a crash analysis would be conducted. Mr. Fallon also asked why the State Police barracks were being relocated. Ms. Klein reported the relocation was requested by the State Police. Mr. Fallon expressed that Route 1 is already experiencing heavy traffic and felt that more housing would only make this worse. Ms. Klein agreed this may be the case during peak hours currently, but that the developer was working with the Township and PADOT on the improvements to the Route 1 and Route 452 intersection, which should help lessen the traffic.

Barry Archambault, Kelly & Close site development engineer, reported that the zoning for this property is SU-1A and that it is the only area zoned as such in the Township. He reported the property is almost a total of 174 acres, 132 of which are located on the Franklin Mint parcel. Mr. Archambault explained that code requires 1.5 parking spaces per unit and the design actually provides over 4.6 spaces per unit, for a total of 1,386 parking spaces. He noted that units have a 2-car garage, a driveway that can fit 2 cars and then on-street parking throughout the complex.

The setback requirement from the highway is 80 feet and Mr. Archambault indicated that the development would meet this requirements, with the buffer, retaining wall and walkway being in-between the residential units and highway. Mr. Archambault explained that

the residential units sit on 46 acres and would be built in 3 separate phases, which would be determined as per the builder's request and market conditions.

Mr. Archambault went on to report that utilities for the residential units would include Aqua for public water, PECO for electric and gas, Comcast and Verizon for cable services, and public sewer. He noted that the developer is working with MTSA on the 3rd phase of the CCI upgrade and the residential units would tie into the public sewers during Phase 3. The location of the tie-in is still being determined but would be tailored to accommodate MTSA's plans of where Phase 3 should be built. Interim sewer service would be at the pump station located on the Franklin Mint property and can handle the first phase of the residential project, and possibly even the second.

Mr. Archambault explained that the street frontage would sit higher in order to provide screening for houses along Baltimore Pike. He expected rock to be encountered during digging and noted this would not be easy to get through. He also stated that the project would require significant retaining walls along the outside of the development (next to Baltimore Pike and the woods). He noted that the wall along Baltimore Pike will be aesthetically pleasing since it will be in public view.

Mr. Archambault reported that numerous geotechnical studies have been conducted over the past decade, which is being analyzed as they work on the stormwater management design to help determine infiltration. In terms of stormwater management, there is a ridgeline that runs through the site to an unnamed tributary towards Chester Creek. The back 1/3 of the property has a rate release of 50% and the front 2/3 of property has a 100% rate release. There are 2 stormwater management facilities. The seepage beds would be modeled as 2 ponds. He emphasized that the stormwater management plan is still very preliminary and that as more geotechnical data comes in, the plan would be tailored as needed.

In terms of the comment letter from McCormick & Taylor, Mr. Archambault stated that the applicant would comply with about 80% of comments and wished to discuss the remaining 20% further. He noted that comment #4 on subdivision and land development states that dead-end roads are prohibited. The applicant contends that what McCormick & Taylor have labeled dead-end roads on the plan are actually alleys and allowed by the ordinance. He noted that when he met with the Fire Marshal, the Fire Marshal indicated he was okay with this set up. Mr. Archambault stated he was still awaiting the Fire Marshal's comments. He then went on to discuss the pedestrian walkways. The ordinance requires sidewalks on both sides of the road in non-single family neighborhoods. He stated that the developer wished to have 2 sidewalks on each side of the main road and then have only 1 sidewalk on one side of the road within the neighborhood court because there would be less pedestrian traffic at these locations. He believed this would suffice and would also reduce the amount of impervious space. Mr. Archambault moved on to the comments regarding stormwater management and stated the developer was still

in preliminary planning and would need to have further meetings with Kevin Matson regarding this matter. Mr. Matson noted he did not object to further meetings.

Mr. Archambault noted that the plan shows an overlapping boundary between the SEPTA property and residential property. He explained a handshake agreement is in place with SEPTA at present for easements to create a mutually beneficial boundary.

In response to Mr. Moran's inquiries regarding street and sidewalk dimensions, Mr. Archambault reported the roads were 24 feet wide from curb to curb. There would then be 3 ½ feet of "green strip" and then a 4 ½ foot wide sidewalk. The driveway would connect to the sidewalk but cars would not be permitted to be parked on the sidewalk area. On the streets without sidewalks, there is 32 feet in-between the curb and the other end of the sidewalk.

Mr. Sharbaugh commented that he liked the amount of parking and asked Mr. Archambault to address comments 7 and 8 on tree plantings. Mr. Archambault deferred to the landscape architect.

Mr. Moran noted the setback was only 80 feet and not 100 feet. Mr. Archambault explained that 100 feet was required on the Franklin Mint parcels with the Franklin Mint building but because the museum is coming down and there will not be a building there, that requirement is not necessary. Regardless, he stated the developer would remain outside of the setback. Ms. Klein noted that even with the right turn lane, the 80 foot setback is exceeded. Therefore, if PADOT chose to widen Route 1 and use the right turn lane as a third lane, the minimum requirement for setback would still be met.

Mr. Schettler inquired about the intended use of the alleys. Mr. Archambault explained they would function more like shared driveways for residential units and would be 16 feet wide, with pavers 4 feet wide on each side to allow for emergency vehicles.

Bob Adams introduced himself as special solicitor for the Township and asked to be copied to any future documents. Mr. Archambault agreed. Mr. Adams went on to state that many of the comments to the technical issues simply stated "to be provided with final plans." His expectation was that these issues would be addressed well before final planning. Mr. Archambault stated the developer would be prepared to address issues as the project continued and that he would work closely with Mr. Matson.

Mr. Matson noted that the intersection between the residential portion and the office section would be more appropriate in the more classical "T-shaped" design. Mr. McLaughlin noted that as Ms. Klein mentioned, the developer's goal is to calm traffic at this part of the site and not encourage through-traffic. The Granite Farms traffic light would be the principal connection for the office space. Mr. Matson stated a curved linear road is not normally calming as per code. Mr. McLaughlin reiterated they don't want to promote through-traffic.

Mr. Matson stated the units appear to front on both the main roads and alleys and asked how the houses would front on the street. Lisa Thomas, project landscape architect, stated the main boulevard goes into the site with a planting island separating the two-way traffic. The single family homes would be accessed from the street with a front door adjacent to the driveway. There would be a walkway to the front door, facing the street. The alley areas are located at the north end of the parcel. Home owners would drive down the alley to their garage to access home. The front door would be along the street, not the alley. No houses are fronted in the alleys. There would also be a connected inter-community sidewalk that would access the Baltimore Pike walkways. Mr. Matson asked if the alleys were one way. Ms. Thomas stated they would be two-way but would not have a lot of traffic. Mr. Matson felt 16 feet wide alleys were too restrictive to be two-way. Ms. Thomas explained that cars would filter through the site and there would be less traffic further into the development, specifically at the alleys. Mr. Matson felt that this level of detail was not included in the plan and requested the applicant put it in the plans.

Ms. Powell asked if Alley 1 fronts to the Alley and Ms. Thomas answered in the affirmative. Ms. Powell expressed that she felt it was just semantics not to call the alley a street. Mr. Matson recommended the Township's legal consultant review this. Ms. Thomas stated she would get more information together to have a more thorough discussion on this matter. Mr. Matson noted that a 16 feet wide alley would make it very difficult to do a 3 point turn. Ms. Thomas stated she understood.

Mr. Matson stated that not all property owners would use their garages to park cars and asked if there would still be adequate parking if this were the case at this property. Mr. Archambault stated there are 140 additional parking spaces outside of the garages and driveways. He stated they may not be perfectly placed for all areas but that they could look into it further. Mr. Matson commented that while the parking spaces may be compliant with code they may not meet future needs.

Mr. Matson also indicated that he wished to have a meeting with the developer to discuss the stormwater management plan in more detail. He then asked for the dimension of the largest retaining wall. Mr. Archambault stated about 20 feet at this time but that they were letting the geotechnical data dictate the design. When Mr. Matson asked for more information about the deal with SEPTA, Mr. McLaughlin stated that they are working on pedestrian access and may relocate the Pennell house for the station. He noted that SEPTA likes the plan and wants to work with the developer. He emphasized the lines would conform.

Mr. Reitze asked if the buildings would have sprinkler systems on the property. Mr. McLaughlin stated attached dwellings have to be and that they would follow code. Mr. Reitze also asked the developer to look into what fire apparatuses can negotiate the alleyways

and Mr. Archambault stated he would. Mr. Reitze suggested all buildings should have sprinklers.

Mr. Sharbaugh asked who would be responsible for snow removal and Mr. McLaughlin stated the Home Owners Association would ultimately be responsible.

Mr. Fallon asked if the museum was to be demolished. Mr. McLaughlin stated it was but that portions were to be saved. He also asked if it would be considered private property with Resident Only signs. Mr. Archambault stated they did not make a decision on that yet. Mr. McLaughlin stated he would be having a conversation with the Township about the use of the open space. Mr. Fallon asked if there would be adequate lighting and Mr. McLaughlin stated it would meet requirements. Lastly, he asked if the projects would happen simultaneously. Mr. McLaughlin stated that was the desired result but the parcels had to be presented to Planning Commission separately.

Mr. Rothe noted that Mr. Adams commented about revising plans. He stated that Ponds Edge required a number of changes and that there seems to be a number of changes associated with this plan as well. He reviewed the changes discussed and commented that they hadn't even discussed the Park and Recreation fee. He felt that there needs to be many significant changes made before plan approval could be given and suggested the Planning Commission refer to Ponds Edge.

Mike Huckis, 521 Ridge Avenue, stated a 30 foot retaining wall infers there will be a lot of topographic changes and inquired if the open space was designated to be used as open space or simply because the land was not buildable. Mr. Archambault stated it was to maintain open space and that retaining walls are actually designed to minimize disturbance.

Mr. Sharbaugh expressed that while he felt the overall intention of the plan is acceptable, there were still a number of open issues that needed consideration. He did not believe the Planning Commission was in a position to make a decision.

Ms. Thomas moved on to present information on the landscape and lighting plans. She stated there would be a main boulevard and 5 sub-neighborhoods. The landscaped architecture would primarily be between Baltimore Pike and residential units with benches, lights, shrubs, and flowers. The walls were to be designed and complemented with trees and shrubbery. The main boulevard would have street lights, trees, shrubs, and perennials in the islands. Sub-neighborhoods would have trees and greens to buffer between the back of the homes and streets. She stated that she received a response letter from Mr. Comitta and the developer would comply with all comments.

Ms. Thomas stated that comments #7 and #8 of the McCormick & Taylor letter referred to waivers and relate to the type of development this is. 210 39 C3 and C4 relate to the

location of trees and the developer is asking for a waiver because if they complied, there would be very few trees. She stated that she would work with Mr. Comitta to assure the landscaping was satisfactory.

Mr. Moran asked what the elevation would be along Route 1 compared with Route 1. Mr. Archambault stated it would be higher but only by a few feet.

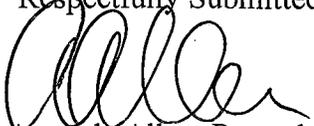
Mr. Sharbaugh asked if anything would be in place to stop tree roots from uplifting sidewalks. Ms. Thomas answered in the affirmative, stating that root barriers would be in place to deflect the roots underground.

Mr. Sharbaugh motioned to table a decision regarding the preliminary land development for Franklin Mint until the specified issues were resolved. Mr. Miranda seconded this motion and the Planning Commission approved unanimously with a vote of 6-0.

Ordinance to amend the Township's existing Floodplain Conservation District regulations in order to keep Township Floodplain regulations compliant with FEMA.

Mr. Schettler motioned to recommend approval of the ordinance subject to Council review. Ms. Powell seconded this motion and the Planning Commission approved unanimously with a vote of 6-0.

Mr. Sharbaugh adjourned the meeting at 9:26 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda Allen, Recorder