



UPPER DARBY TOWNSHIP

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

100 Garrett Road. Upper Darby, PA 19082 Phone: (610)734-7613

October 18, 2024

UPPER DARBY TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

Attendance

Planning Commission Members Present:

- James Mullen
- Lee Ann Jordan
- Debbie NiFong

Virtual Planning Commission Members Present:

- Cassandra Hayes

Planning Commission Members Absent:

- Jeffrey Roken

Township Staff Present:

- Joshua Chast, Planning and Zoning Manager
- Allison Lee, Township Engineer

Previous Minutes

- Debbie NiFong called the meeting to order for the Planning Commission Meeting on October, 2024. A role call was held showing, Lee Ann Jordan and James Mullen present, Cassandra Hayes participated virtually. A motion was made by Cassandra Hayes to approve the September's Planning Commission Minutes. Lee Ann Jordan seconded the motion. All members voted in favor.

Communication and Bills

- No Communication or bills to discuss

ZONING – New Hope Property LLC 600 Garrett Road

Project Presentation by David Chafkowitz, developer of 600 Garrett Road representing New Hope Property LLC, owner of 600 Garrett Road.

- David Chafkowitz explained that the property has frontage on Garrett, Walnut, and Chestnut Street.
- Currently is a three-story building, previously a Buick car dealership.



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Proposed redevelopment plan

- David Chafkowitz explained Convert to a four-story building with commercial on the first floor and 27 one-bed apartments on the remaining three floors, nine units per floor.
- Commercial space estimated at 3,000 square feet, designed for two users (1,500 square feet) apiece. Possible convenience retail or service use.

Design and Parking Considerations

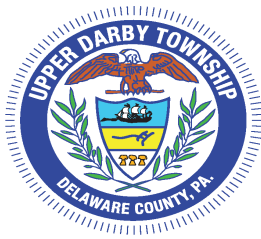
- David Chafkowitz explained the key design issue with the project: Interior parking layout and circulation with the existing ingress and egress not being wide enough for two vehicles. Proposed one-way circulation to resolve traffic flow.
- Parking strategy: Variance obtained for parking; neighboring property owner agreed to provide additional spaces.
- Potential request for waivers on compact parking requirements.

Renovation Plans

- Scott Mill a landscape architect/ site designer from Van Cleef Engineering Associates provided additional details on circulation and design specifics. He explained that the project is a complete renovation of the existing structure without expanding the footprint.
- Proposed landscaping and lighting plans to enhance the building's appearance.
- Scott Mill explained that the aim is to create a centerpiece for redevelopment in the area.

Parking and Loading Concerns

- There is room for a loading area above the parking area, elevator shaft proposed in that area allows for flexibility through design.
- Scott Mill explained that the biggest concern from the review letter was related to parking access. The design may need to accommodate one-way traffic for better circulation. He explained that there are 13 parking spaces are shown on the plan so far.
- A variance was obtained at the Zoning Hearing Board to reduce required parking to 13 spaces. The original calculation was for 55 spaces, but they obtained a special exception to reduce it down to 44 spaces, they then received a variance to reduce it to 23. Scott Mill explained that 13 spaces would be provided inside the plan with 10 spaces being leased from a nearby property.
- David Chafkowitz explained that the project aims to be mixed-use, with commercial space preserved and there is support from the township for this development approach.



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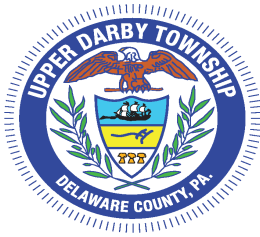
- James Mullen had concerns raised about parking becoming a burden for the neighborhood. James explained that there is public transportation nearby, but usage is unclear.

Community Impact

- James Mullen spoke about how the development is perceived as a trade-off for revitalization but how the previous owner kept parking for their own business.
- Lee Ann Jordan raised questions raised about the return on investment for adding a fourth floor and the impact on local schools and public services was highlighted, she also questioned the maximum occupancy for the apartments; Josh Chast explained how the units are designed for smaller family sizes or singles.
- Lee Ann Jordan highlighted that parking in the area is currently problematic and alluded to possible difficulties for delivery trucks (FedEx, UPS) noted. James Mullen also raised questions about parking for the new apartment units, and how the prior owner retained parking rights, making the building less desirable.
- David Chafkowitz stated that long-term lease for parking spaces could be secured for the tenant.

Future Development Vision- Mixed-Use Project Features

- Josh Chast Zoning manager made emphasis on placing the developments with high density near transit with the connection to 69th Street trolley across the street from the site was highlighted aim for a sustainable future with reduced car dependency. Josh Chast commented that "Density is really the answer," leading to less emissions and better air quality.
- Conversation around the importance of commercial space at ground level having a focus on vibrancy with retail or restaurant options.
- Josh Chast stated that they envision a future where many residents may choose not to own cars.
- Personal anecdotes between the developer and planning commission members shared about children living in cities without cars.
- Discussion between the developer and the board on building appearance and community integration.
- The board mentioned how the external appearance should reflect vibrancy and stature of the surrounding community
- Considerations for landscaping and plant types, questions from the board were raised about types of plantations planned.



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Zoning Comments- presented by Josh Chast

- Josh Chast explained that the variances have expired; will need to return for zoning hearing board for an extension.
- Internal pedestrian walkways depicted on the final plan along with the need to show the ten spots agreed upon in lease.
- Josh questioned the developer to consider adding a crosswalk at the Shelbourne Walnut intersection and the refuge storage to be placed indoor to avoid obstruction, as the plan shows no setbacks for it.
- Lighting plan to depicting a separate lighting plan needed to avoid glare
- Josh questioned the developer to provide loading space details on the plan showing the loading zone along with a truck-turning template.

SALDO Comments -presented by Josh Chast

- Josh spoke about a lighting plan requirement to ensure no glare to neighbors.
- He mentioned parking stall sizes, that a waiver needed if stalls are less than 8 feet 6 inches, possible angled parking may alleviate the backup issues.
- Josh explained on the landscaping plan that some street trees shown are not an approvable use and should be approved by Shade Tree Commission.

Josh also recommended that there should not be trees within 50 feet of the right of way intersections, at the corners of the building but advised asking for a waiver as the location could use greenery and a bright spot of landscaping within this area of Upper Darby- Josh asked the Planning Commission to grant this waiver.

- Josh recommended a Preliminary final approval.
- An additional comment was to remove tree grates and replace them with mulch to reduce the impervious surface total.
- Josh Chast recommended approval contingent on Upper Darby Townships staff comments and receiving zoning approvals.

SALDO Additional Comments- presented by Allison Lee

- Allison Lee recommended replacing the curb ramps off Garrett Road to coordinate with PennDOT for a HOP, the developer may need a traffic impact study for signal timers.
- Allison Lee mentioned that no benches are on the plans and they would need to include with detail on it.
- Both driveway entrances should have clear site triangles to ensure proper clearance for oncoming traffic.



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- Allison Lee questioned who will be in charge of the site maintenance, David Chafkowitz replied, it will be managed by a property manager.
- Allison Lee highlighted that a sewage facilities planning module is missing as apart of the application, this evaluation of sewer capacity required for additional units and retail uses. David Chafkowitz mentioned they are working with the architect for the anticipated water needs and sewer needs based on 27 apartments plus retail.
- Fire hydrant location needs to be confirmed with the fire marshal.
- Comments from Josh Chast stating the fire marshal review is to be received before council review.
- Allison Lee asked for an erosion and sediment control plan to be included; needs to be part of the plan set.
- David Chafkowitz mentioned consideration for replacement of concrete sidewalks and tree well cutouts.
- Allison Lee highlighted that ADA compliance is needed for the southern intersection at Shelbourne and Walnut Street there will be no new impervious coverage; therefore, no stormwater requirements needed.
- Cassandra Hayes questioned if there are any commercial restrictions regarding zoning, for instance if a smoke shop is a permitted use in C1 district.
- Acknowledgment of support from Josh Chast for the new law regarding smoke shops in commercial restrictions.

Public Comments

- Suggestion from Steve Lockhard for a traffic island on Garrett Road for easier access to the trolley, Debbie NiFong mentioned that this is state highway consideration with PennDOT.
- General comment on potential tenant demographics and public transit usage.
- Concerns about upscale housing leading to reliance on cars instead of public transport.

Project Approval Options

- Discussion between Josh Chast and David Chafkowitz of options for project approval.
- Options include rejecting the plan, approve and agree with conditions lead out this far with continued collaboration with Township Staff, with the consideration that it is an existing building renovation rather than new construction, or tabling for further re-design and submission.
- Cassandra Hayes made a motion to table the plan for further re-design and submission, Lee Ann Jordan Seconded the motion. James Mullen, Cassandra Hayes and Lee Ann Jordan were in favor for the decision; Debbie NiFong was not in favor for the decision. Not a unanimous decision.



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New Business-

Urban Land Institute Project

- Debbie NiFong discussed the proposal to work with the Urban Land Institute on a design project for 69th Street. That it aims to create "Destination Downtown Upper Darby."
- Project involves stakeholder interviews and expert evaluations, with focus on public spaces, restaurants, and local attractions.

Urban Land Institute Project Background presented by Joshua Chast

- Josh Chast discussed that the project scheduled for April 2025.
- Planning commission will participate, likely one member.
- Lee Ann Jordan questioned what the costs are; Josh explained that costs are minimal- only costs include food and snacks, possible room and board for out-of-state travelers.
- Josh Chast mentioned that it is estimated \$100,000 worth of free professional work.

Community Input and Concerns

- Lee Ann Jordan reiterated the importance of safety and community appeal that "People have to feel safe."
- Josh Chast explained the need for actionable steps, "How do we implement these steps?".
- James Mullen raised concerns about crowd behavior affecting business interest.

Support for the Initiative

- Positive feedback was given from Debbie NiFong with her experiences with this initiative; she attended training sessions with Urban Land Institute.
- Encouragement from the board for new ideas and perspectives.
- Motion to approve support letter for the project.
- No Public Comment. Unanimous approval.

Meeting Adjournment

- A motion to adjourn was made by James Mullen. The motion was seconded by Lee Ann Jordan. Unanimous approval.
All in favor, meeting Adjourned.