

VIA E-MAIL

November 6, 2015

TO: Whitpain Township Planning Commission
FROM: E. Van Rieker, Township Planning Consultant 
RE: Township Planning Commission Meeting – November 10, 2015

Regular Session - 7:30 P.M.

1. Approval of minutes.
2. Review of a Land Development Plan for the Centre Square Commons Shopping Center located at 938-956-990-998-1010 DeKalb Pike & 1324-1380 Skippack Pike. This application involves construction of an 111,100 SF shopping center, 5,300 SF outdoor seating area and an 11,500 SF mezzanine area, which is on the southeastern corner of the intersection of DeKalb Pike and Skippack Pike. Access to the site will be from both DeKalb Pike and Skippack Pike. The property is located entirely within the Community Shopping Center Overlay District.

Comment:

- a. *For ready reference, please find attached my previous review dated 8/28/2015. Except as noted below (numbers reflect original memo) all items requiring a revision or an amendment to the final land development plans have been done.*
- 5) *Section 160-261.K provides that if eating and drinking establishments are (at any time) to comprise more than 30% of the total square footage of the community center a conditional use to provide required parking spaces must be obtained.*
 - *This requirement should also be noted in the parking category in the zoning requirements schedule.*
 - *It is likely that if all the current building areas identified for restaurant purposes are actually implemented then this particular requirement will be triggered. If this subject has not been treated in the initial conditional use decision then the applicant should be required to maintain a running tabulation and the Township Zoning Official should be notified of the status of this requirement on a regular basis.*

2. *It should be noted that Section 160-259 of the Community Shopping Center Overlay District establishes design criteria for conditional use approval, which states in part:*

“Having exterior spaces accessible to the general public and designed to achieve the following goals:

- *“Promote walkability” (subsection #1)*
- *“...develop a comprehensive circulation plan both for vehicles and pedestrians...” (subsection #5)*
- *“Create a plan where, once parked, the consumer can walk comfortably and safely through the center.” (subsection #6)*

Please note that these issues are covered in a separate review.

Please see section 2.C below and review memo attached.

3. *Lighting Plan (Sheet #8 of 16)*

- A. *It is anticipated that the Township Lighting Consultant will perform a complete review of the photometrics. However, I would offer the following comments:*

1) *The Architectural Design Guidelines Submission, revised date 6/4/15, includes numerous perspective exhibits, which illustrate extensive use of bollards. If the bollards are to be provided with illumination, then a detail and manufacturer’s design specifications should be included as part of the Lighting Plan. **So far, no details have been provided.***

2) *The lighting schedule indicates category B pole-mounted light fixtures to have a height of 25 feet. These light fixtures are positioned along the perimeter of the site development. It is suggested that a note be provided that indicates that these light fixtures will provide or are designed to equal a residential cut-off feature.*

It should be noted that the light fixtures are designed to direct illumination forward and to the side- not to the rear of light fixture.

- b. *Please find attached an updated review letter from McCloskey & Faber, my landscape architectural consultant, dated November 6, 2015. This review focuses on the landscape plans.*
- c. *In addition, due to the complex and extensive nature of the Hardscape Plan Submission (13 sheets prepared by Bernardon, dated 10/14/15) a second memo from McCloskey & Faber is attached which focusses on the Hardscape Plan.*

3. *Review of a Land Development/ Subdivision Plan for the Centre Square Fire Company Fire Station located at 1290 & 1298 Skippack Pike. This application involves the demolition of the existing fire station and the construction of a new*

14,786 Square feet fire station building, which is on the south side of Skippack Pike between DeKalb Pike and Wentz Road. Access to the site will be from Skippack Pike. The property is located entirely within the Community Shopping Center Overlay District.

Comment:

a. This application was previously reviewed at the October 13, 2015 Planning Commission meeting; The plans are continuing to be evaluated by the Township Engineering Department, including how they interface with the Centre Square Commons Plan – which immediately adjoins the westerly and southerly property lines.

4. Review current zoning hearing board applications.

1. #2059-15, Malvern School Real Estate, LP, Use & Signage

Comment:

a. The current matter before the Zoning Hearing Board consists of a request to reinstate or continue the use of the building as a daycare center and a variance to permit a sign on the front (south side) elevation of the building of approximately 24.9 s.f. whereas a maximum of 16 s.f. is permitted.

b. The use has been established since 1994, which was authorized by the Zoning Hearing Board, as a child care and learning center as well as a facility for elder adult activities. The proposed Malvern School would occupy the same premises that were previously occupied and used as the Goddard School, St. Miriam Academy and St. Miriam Church. Thus, the previous use of the building for institutional and child care services is well established.

c. The proposed sign would be positioned on the building façade which faces out to Norristown Road. In view of the fact that the sign would be positioned at least 150 feet from the edge of Norristown Road, it would seem that the overall signage in the context as viewed from Norristown Road and by visitors to the site, is appropriate and reasonable. The proposed sign does not appear to be illuminated. However, this issue should be resolved by the Applicant.

d. Perhaps the greatest change to the subject site will result from the expanded parking area, including a loop drive, which would approximately double the paved surfaces between the subject building and Norristown Road. Any approval should note the requirement of a submission of a Land Development Plan including grading as well as landscaping, etc. that would ordinarily accompany such a proposed activity, which is proposing approximately 9,000 s.f. of additional impervious surface. It should be noted that the overall circulation appears to be improved, given the fact that the existing “dead end” parking facility will be replaced with angled parking spaces, consisting with a one-way counter-clockwise loop drive situated to the front of the building. The

main driveway and its intersection with Norristown Road will remain essentially unchanged, except that curbing will be added along the throat of the driveway and the design will become a bit more curvilinear. See attached aerial view for existing conditions.

5. Review pertinent planning issues.

cc: Jim Blanch Bradley Tate Jennifer Gallagher
Karen Dolga Ken Corti Nicole Godson
Otis Hightower Penny Gerber Bernadette Kearney
Tory Meitner Richard Shorin
Roman Pronczak Ted McLaughlin

Attachments:

E. Van Rieker Memo dated 8/28/15
McCloskey & Faber Landscape Review memo
McCloskey & Faber Hardscape Review memo
Malvern School Aerial