

LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP PLANNING BOARD MEETING
Monday, May 20, 2019

Present: Christopher Bobbitt, Mayor
Maria Connolly
Ian Dember
Philip Duran
James Kownacki, Councilman
Terrence Leggett, Vice Chairperson
John Ryan
Kim Taylor
Edward Wiznitzer, Chairperson

Absent: None

Excused Absence: Kevin Nerwinski, Municipal Manager
Brian Slaugh, Planning Consultant

Also Present: Donna Miller, Acting Planning Consultant
James F. Parvesse, Municipal Engineer
Edwin Schmierer, Planning Board Attorney
Susan Snook, Recording Secretary

Statement of Adequate Notice:

Adequate notice of this meeting of the Lawrence Township Planning Board has been provided by filing the annual meeting schedule with the Municipal Clerk as required by law; by filing the agenda and notice with the Municipal Clerk, posting prominently in the Municipal Building and mailing to the Trenton Times and the Trentonian newspapers.

Public Comment:

Brooke Hunter, Historian was present representing the Lawrence Historical Society which has been following the Trails at Princeton Pike subdivision application with the possible impact on the 1761 Brearley House, which is on the National State Register of Historical places and the surrounding historical area. They do not object to the development, they are opposed to the current proposal and have some concerns. They object to the destruction of the archaeological site which contains prehistoric and early American artifacts as well as the historic barn associated with the 1761 Brearley House. They are also concerned about the encroachment of the view shed by the proposed plan to build out to the park boundary within 90' of the Brearley House. This will do damage to the view shed and negatively impact the site's historical integrity and visitor experience, which includes many school children every year.

Attached is a statement explaining the concerns in detail, dated May 6, 2019. The intention is to make these intentional impacts of the current proposal known now so they can be properly addressed to avoid any harm to the historical presentation and preservation of the Brearley House.

Chairperson Wiznitzer commented that there is an application; however, it has not come to the Board yet. When it comes to the Board, they will hear testimony, see the evidence and are welcome to attend the meeting.

Minutes for Approval:

April 1, 2019 minutes were approved per unanimous vote.

Resolutions:

Resolution of Memorialization No. 8-19; Major Subdivision – Final Approval Application No. S-2/19; **The Boro's of Lawrenceville, LLC (Edward D. & Edward M Bucci)**; 125 Roxboro Road; Tax Map Page 19, Block 1901, Lot 6 was approved per unanimous vote.

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Applications:

Rider University: Presentation of Facilities Master Plan

Mike Reca, Vice President of Facilities and Mark Solomon, Attorney for the University was present. Mr. Reca spoke about the plan and how the University will position themselves in the future from a competitive standpoint. There will be offerings to students so they can be more competitive. They are a private institution and rely on any monies from donors.

The President of the University put in engaged learning which ties into the academic piece of the University and you will graduate with your transcript for classes and grades but also get a separate transcript for your engaged learning, which is study abroad, internships, volunteer and you have to have so many hours of these types of programs to coincide with your academic achievements in order to obtain a Rider degree. They are also trying to build a living and learning community in that they want more students to live on campus and want to have quality facilities in which to teach these new academic programs to the students of the future. Once this is completed, we start with the facilities master plan to start this endeavor, copy of the Rider 2030 is attached.

This document will be reviewed every other year. This is over two hundred million dollars of construction and renovation; however, when opportunities arise this plan keeps it cohesive that it ties to everything else. Mr. Reca referred to certain pages in the plan and described what was on each page, such as turning the campus into neighborhoods; showing the new theater; using the lake for science projects and adding a boardwalk; adding a welcome center at the traffic light. Referring to Page 67 shows the housing and retail buildings, on the north side would be apartment style housing like suites and apartments with retail on the first floor. Rider University owns the house at 3 West Long Drive and is separate from the property; the University would like to put offices in there temporarily until it can be figured out on what the moves would be internally. They would like to use that property in connection with the north lane and have another access into the campus which would be more functional for the staff and use the main entrance, at the traffic light, to be the grand entrance for recruitment.

Mr. Solomon stated the West Long Drive house has been used for residential and to use it temporarily for staff, and additional parking. If it proceeds, that property would be a part of the overall concept. Mr. Reca continued the University would like to increase enrollment over the next 5 to 10 years to about 400 students. Referring to Page 56: Phase 1 is mostly complete and Phase 2 is the Route 206 project.

The Board members questioned Mr. Reca on the Rider Master Plan.

No vote was required.

Amended Preliminary and Final Major Site Plan with Variance Application No. SP-4/18; **Lawrence Shopping Center Associates, LLC (LA Fitness) – Signs**; 2495 Brunswick Pike; Tax Map Pages 20 & 20.01, Block 2001, Lots 2 – 5, 60 – 66 and 68

Lisa A. John-Basta represented the applicant stating LA Fitness received approval in September of 2018 and at that time there was an application to replace the free standing signs; however, the sign application was withdrawn. The Lawrence Shopping Center is currently undergoing façade renovations and the free-standing signs would be upgraded to match the façade.

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Witness #1: Josh Sewald, PE and PP stated there are two existing free standing pylon signs. One is on Brunswick Pike and one is on Princeton Pike. The Brunswick Pike sign is larger in floor area and height and Princeton Pike is tall but has two tenant logos (Burlington Coat Factory and Cooper's). The LA Fitness will start construction soon and would like to provide a new prominent ID sign on both roadways. The sign on Route 1 will be in the same exact position; while the sign on Princeton Pike might be in the right-of-way and will make sure it is on the property when the brand new sign is installed.

Exhibit A1: Pylon dated April 23, 2019 will be on Route 1, it is 249 sf at 32' high; however, the total sign area allowed is 35 sf. The main reason to modernize the sign is to match the renovations. The site is uniquely shaped, it is perpendicular to both roadways and the major tenants do not get visibility from the roadway and the owner wants them to have some visibility on the signage panels. There are 17 panels and the goal is to bring some life and visibility to the major tenants. There are 40 spaces in the shopping center and not every tenant will get a panel.

Exhibit A2: Pylon dated April 23, 2018 will be on Princeton Pike and will have six panels. This sign is over the property line and will be moved onto the property, but the variance requested is not to move it back 15' from the roadway because if you drive on that road, there are trees and buildings on the roadway, so you don't see the sign until you are at the property.

Clarke Caton Hintz requested that the applicant add street address on sign as well as some plantings at the base. Double faced signs shall not exceed 18"; no more than nine panels on a sign is allowed and being proposed is 18 on Route 1 to identify more tenants; logos are sometime more recognizable. Ms. Miller clarified that there was no imagery to identify what the sign faces were going to look and they like the quick identifiable logo as opposed to text, which is faster to read then words. The Land Use Ordinance does not say it has to be one or the other. Ms. John-Basta stated they do not have all the tenants identified at this time and can't say for certain if they will be all logo or all text at this point in time.

The Board members had questions and comments concerning the owner running another business and how it has thrived; which makes it a good business reason that these signs need to go up. Jack Jemal, owner of the Lawrence Shopping Center stated the intent of the sign package is because of the façade renovations; they know how to bring in tenants to shopping centers and know what business to bring in. Signage is a huge factor because the tenant wants to see what they are going to get as far as visibility. He spoke about the project he did in Hamilton Township at Independence Shopping Center and how it is thriving today. Mr. Jemal stated there are 40 different stores which means there are only 18 slots and that 22 tenants will not get a slot on the sign, it will be based on anchor and size. Mr. Sewald responded you will not have that big bright light, at least 60% will be gone because of the colors and logos.

Councilman Kownacki questioned the sign on Princeton Pike that there should be an adjustment with a timer to go off at 11:00 because there are residents across the street. Mr. Sewald agreed that after the last stores closes it will go off one-hour after that.

Public:

Nick Sferra stated the owner is doing an awesome job. Burlington is concerned because the shopping center has been renovated but that wing has not been touched. Mr. Jemal stated it is in the next phase.

The Board member had discussions and comments.

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Public Hearing:

None

Old Business / New Business / Correspondence:

None

Closed Session Resolution

None

Adjournment:

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Digital audio file of this meeting is available upon request.

Respectfully submitted,


Susan J. Snook
Recording Secretary

Minutes approved: Aug. 5, 2019