

Lawrence Township Planning Board
Regular Meeting
Monday, August 6, 2012

Present: Christopher Bobbitt
Ian J. Dember
Philip Duran
Richard Krawczun, Manager
Terrence Leggett
Mayor James Kownacki
Aaron D. Duff
Glenn R. Collins
Doris M. Weisberg, Chairperson

Excused Absence: Councilman Gregory Puliti
Kim Taylor

Absent: None

Also Present: James F. Parvesse, Municipal Engineer
Philip B. Caton, Clarke Caton & Hintz, Planning Consultant
Neil Yoskin, Planning Board Attorney
Susan Snook, Recording Secretary

1. **Statement of Proper 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, and by filing this agenda and notice with the Municipal Clerk, posting prominently in the Municipal Building, and mailing to the Trenton Times, and the Lawrence Ledger newspapers.

2. **Public Participation - None**

3. **Minutes for Approval:**

The Monday, April 2, 2012 minutes were unanimously approved.

4. **Resolutions of Memorialization:**

Resolution of Memorialization 15-12 denying Minor Subdivision and Variance Application No. S-2/11; **Marianne R. Mele**; 58 Carter Road, Block 6601, Lot 36 (formal action taken)

Resolution 15-12 was approved as a denial.

Resolution of Memorialization 17-12 approving Major Site Plan – Preliminary and Final Approval Application No. SP-7/11; **Safari Energy, LLC (Mercer Mall)**; 3357 Brunswick Pike; Block 5201, Lot 45

Resolution 17-12 was approved.

5. **APPLICATIONS:**

Information Presentation: LAWRENCE HOPEWELL TRAIL, Lewisville Road (BMS) Property and Lawrenceville School

Mr. Krawczun dismissed himself because he is a member of the Lawrence Hopewell Trail.

Eleanor Horne, 35 Dix Lane and is Co-President of the Lawrence Hopewell Trail. The Lawrence Hopewell Trail is a non-profit community based organization overseeing the development of a multi-purpose trail connecting Hopewell and Lawrence Townships. The proposed 22 mile trail is approximately 75% completed. Approval is being requested for the construction two important segments of the trail which is Lewisville Road and the Lawrenceville School connector.

The Lewisville Road segment will take the trail off road from across the Brearley Oak on Princeton Pike approximately 3,000' to opposite the athletic fields at the Lawrenceville School. Funding is from a grant to the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC). The Lawrence Hopewell Trail holds an easement on the Bristol Myers Squibb (BMS) property and has given Lawrence Township a construction easement for trail construction. The DVRPC has approved the construction plans and Lawrence Township will be in charge of the actual construction.

The Lawrenceville School connector is a 50' that will cut across the athletic field from the Lewisville Road crossing to an existing path on the opposite side of the fields. This will take the trail off of Lewisville Road and onto an interior campus road. The money for the construction of this section of the trail will come from the funds left over from the DVRPC grant and was approved by DVRPC to be used in this manner. The Lawrenceville School will be the contractor for the segments and the LHT will reimburse the school at the completion of construction.

Michael Gray Project Manager introduced Tim Moore, Buildings and Ground of the Lawrenceville School. Mr. Gray stated there is a crossing from the Brearley Oak, a trail connection from the canal through the Princeton Pike Corporate Center crossing at the crosswalk at Princeton Pike at the Brearley Oak. Mr. Gray described what existing conditions were and stated the trail will be porous pavement which is 10' wide around the oak through the trees (not a straight path) across the street from the parking lot at the baseball field at Lewisville Road at Lawrenceville School to connect to the existing trails to show more of the Lawrenceville School property. The bids are out this week and construction to begin in fall and finishing approximately six (6) weeks thereafter.

A brief discussion about road humps on Lewisville Road being enough for slowing the traffic down for safe passage. There will be a mid block crosswalk, on the east side which will slow traffic down. The path will be open to the public and will be closed during high events days and the closing will be posted on the web-site and the section will be closed off.

Major Subdivision – Preliminary & Final Approval Application No. S-1/12 & Site Plan Application No. SP-3/12, MULLER AUTOMOTIVE GROUP, INC. (LAWRENCE TOYOTA), 2871, 2865 & 2851 U. S. Route 1, Block 3507, Lots 20 – 22 (continued from June 19, 2012 (Signage and Vehicle Display areas)

Gary Forshner of Stark & Stark, Attorney for the applicant. Mr. Forshner stated Lawrence Toyota was in front of the Board in June and approved the site plan. Lawrence Toyota is currently in for signage and display area approval as well as clarifying some of the fencing. This application is effectively 5 or 6 uses on this site which are the two new car dealerships; the used car dealership, detail shop; body shop and the service and has the second most frontage on Route 1 which creates dynamics for this situation.

Lawrence Township Planning Board
Monday, August 6, 2012
Page 3

The monument sign near the front of the property and the height of the sign is noticeable. Exhibits for the visibility of the sign will be explained by the Planner. In addition, the display area will not be on a ramp or elevated; it will be at curb height; to put a few cars on the site. One item is the security fencing and the gates in the front, where a chain in the front will minimize the access to the site. The only exception will be where the service is; the change will be a night drop off or an early morning drop off and located in the front in an open area for this purpose.

A security gate is currently located in this area and would like to have this security gate remain, which are not shown on the plan. The only change is a decorative fence because if this area is open to the public then a fence at the property line is not needed, so the proposal is no fencing along the common property line with the shopping center until the security gate and the fencing will remain. Mr. Caton pointed out the fencing is not a requirement.

Tamara Lee, P.P. Principal Planner for the applicant explained the plan and stated it is a 21 acres site and had three businesses on it; which were the dealership, Capitol Lighting and the rug shop. The dealership is taking over those two properties which will be 1,300 LF of frontage along Route 1 and to absorb these other two properties into the dealership and reconfigure the site so it works better.

There are currently five free standing signs, the dealership has three; the lighting store had one; and the rug store has one. The proposal is to remove most of the free standing signs for the lighting store and rug shop; however, continue to use the three currently owned by the dealership by re-facing two of them and replace one of them. Because the dealership supplies so many different type of services the signs are needed. All façade signage will be redone and will all be tied together including the monuments sign. The detail shop will not have a sign because it will not be opened to the public. The façade signs at the used car building, Exhibit A6, which was from the previous meeting, would be for more than one façade sign which is allowed by ordinance. The square footage of the façade sign is well below what is allowed (5% of façade). The used car building signage is on the front which includes three signs which is the identification sign; Lawrence Toyota dealership sign, which will be all similar and the third is a logo sign over the entrance door and all have a purpose and function and totals 65 SF of sign and 5% would allow 108 sf. There is a sign on the northside of the building is for the Collision Center, which is not visible from the street which would only be seen inside site.

The showroom addition is to split the Toyota showroom from the Scion showroom, which will have their own entrance and logo, which will be over the entrance door, total of four signs. A sign on the north side of the building is needed because it is hard to see the site coming from the south, until they get to the site, which is 400' to the entrance. There is also a sign which is facing south and is a service sign over the canopy and can be seen only if you are on site, which totals 2.1% of the entire façade.

An additional sign variance is required for the three free standing signs, which are existing and will be re-faced; the primary sign will be 22'; one is for the collision center and one for the used cars. The sign for the additional height, Exhibit A8, the first two pictures have been switched. The trees will be removed to add a sidewalk and will plant additional trees where they will not interfere with the sidewalk. The reason for the 22' height is so the Scion will be visible from the street and be above the height of the cars.

Lawrence Township Planning Board
Regular Meeting
Monday, August 6, 2012
Page 4

Thomas Mueller, VP at Lawrence Toyota. There will be chains to keep out when the dealership is closed and no additional height will be added on the street. The sign on the south side of the building will not be effective and could be eliminated. A challenge with this site is the first driveway is so quick and people miss it and will move it back, so signage in the front of the main building is critical. Mr. Caton asked about the third free standing sign which requires the variance. Ms. Lee stated it is 1,300 lf of frontage on 22 acres with a lot going on and there will be different cliental. The free standing signs are being reduced from five to three.

There was a brief discussion about the collision service area and Mr. Mueller stated he is also the owner of Team Toyota and they do all customers, 60% Toyota and the balance of the 40% of all brand vehicles. Mr. Krawczun asked if this is an additional use on the site. Mr. Caton stated it is not a different ownership and is on the same lot as the used car sales and is not limited as business practices to only Toyota and is open to the public. Ms. Lee stated the intent is to be a full service dealership and that was the whole point of expanding to put all of the services on one site and to unify it and the new design of the facades and the new design of the signage in an attempt to make this a one unified site and to improve it for the highway.

Mr. Krawczun questioned the over night drop and asked if there was going to be accommodations or dropped off vehicles that are damaged, where they will be brought to your facility and will stay until the company does an estimate. Mr. Mueller stated cars do get towed in and explained the locations on the map. Mr. Krawczun stated in an event after there is a drop off of a damaged vehicle, that some condition of approval that any vehicle being dropped off after hours is removed by 10:00 am of any business day so that the vehicles are not hanging around for 3 – 4 days instead of adding more fences.

Ms. Lee described the display area and there was originally three areas were cars were going to be displayed and they need to be screened instead there is a larger area to arrange a number of cars which is shown on the "Vehicle Display Area Plan". Mr. Caton stated that he is okay with the new display area.

Mr. Caton stated he understands the third free standing sign; however, he wishes they were a different style and more in conformance to what the Ordinance calls for. Mr. Caton stated that the sign on the northside of building, façade sign is useful and in general is satisfied with the number and area of the façade signage apart from the 22' in front by the new car building.

Mr. Krawczun agreed about the sign on the northside of the building even with the removal of the trees will not attract a lot of customer because that side is not visible. The display area creates a location where the cars are going to be displayed and will be setback from the existing parking lot.

Mr. Forshner stated he thinks this sign has a purpose but has the least utility, he agreed to remove the sign on the northside of the building.

A motion was made by Mr. Krawczun to approve Application Nos. S-1/12 & SP-3/12 Muller Automotive for revised display area and sign variances as submitted without the sign on the northside of the façade.

Lawrence Township Planning Board
Regular Meeting
Monday, August 6, 2012
Page 5

7. Adjournment:

There being no further to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Digital audio file of this meeting is available upon request.

Respectfully submitted,


Susan J. Snook
Recording Secretary

Minutes Approved: 
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