

Lawrence Township Planning Board
Special Meeting
Monday, September 30, 2013

Present: Christopher Bobbitt
Ian J. Dember
Philip B. Duran
Richard S. Krawczun, Municipal Manager
Terrence Leggett
Michael Powers, Councilman
James Kownacki, Mayor
Aaron D. Duff
Glenn R. Collins
Kim Y. Taylor, Vice-Chairperson
Doris Weisberg, Chairperson

Excused Absence: None

Absent: None

Also Present: James F. Parvesse, Municipal Engineer
Philip B. Caton, Clarke Caton & Hintz, Planning Consultant
Neil Yoskin, Planning Board Attorney
James Kochenour, Traffic Consultant
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 (for items no on the agenda)**

None

3. **Minutes for Approval**

Monday, June 17, 2013 minutes were unanimously approved.

4. **Resolutions**

- Resolution of Memorialization 18-13 approving Preliminary & Final Site Plan with Variance Application No. SP-6/13; **Educational Testing Service (Rosedale Campus Expansion)**, Rosedale Road, Tax Map Page 78.01+, Block 7801, Lot 21 was approved per unanimous vote.

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5. **Applications:**

Major Site Plan - Preliminary and Final Application No. SP-7/13 and Minor Subdivision Application No. S-2/13; **Costco Project**, 4100 Quakerbridge Road; Tax Map Page 42.01 and 42.03, Block 4202, Lot 1

Mr. Dember has a conflict with the application and therefore was not in the approval process and left the meeting at 7:05 pm.

John Marmora, Esquire, attorney for the applicant gave a brief description of the property. It is located at Quakerbridge Road and Avalon Way. They are proposing a subdivision for three lots and two will be for future development and the applicant has nothing to do with those two lots. One lot will be for a Costco Wholesale facility with gas. The location of the gas will be in the front by Quakerbridge Road with four isles and 16 pumping stations. It is in the Highway Commercial Zone. The applicant is not asking for any relief; they are asking for the variance because of the gas station.

Since Costco was at the Screening Committee meeting an application was filed and went to the Mercer County Planning Board and they had issues with the access. The County stated they would not approve the application because of the location of the access drive. A minor plan was presented at the meeting.

Mr. Yoskin raised a question that includes a subdivision application; however the property owner is not the applicant and the applicant for site plan approval is Costco and there is a consent form, a representative, Paul Gavin of the Gavin Group, is representing Princeton Office Park, owner of the property.

Witness #1: Heidi Macomber, from Costco is the Development Director and handles all entitlements and site planning and approval for this application.

Ms. Macomber explained that Costco is a membership club and sells high quality items at low prices. And employees within the community; there are 200 – 250 employees. Costco is proposing a liquor store and gas at this facility. This store is a prototype where the gas station does not accept cash only credit cards or debit cards; no diesel fuel will be sold. Ms. Macomber discussed the hours of operation and would like to be opened next fall.

Witness #2: Nicholas Verderese, Traffic Engineer. Exhibit A1 – Arial Exhibit (Quakerbridge Road, 295 and Lawrence Station Road). Exhibit A2 – Colored Version – Site Plan, Sheet 4 of 19, dated June 27, 2013 (Route 1 north) was presented to the Board. There is a traffic signalization by Avalon Way that would provide the main access point of the project for vehicles turning right or left; there is a connection into Avalon Way and there is a driveway at the southerly end and secondary access point opposite Avalon Way community center to get out of Avalon Way to Lawrence Station Road to ggo south and southwest of the project location.

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Exhibit A3 – Lawrence Driveway Concept 6, dated September 30, 2013. Mr. Verderese stated there was a meeting with the County and there was a driveway at the south end and at that driveway it was proposed to have a left turn in and a right turn out and the feedback from the County was with the distance of that driveway along Lawrence Station Road (which has three lanes) and the new plan eliminated the cut and moved it to the north about 80' to provide a left turn with a deceleration lane, with a third lane to turn right into either driveway.

The driveway has move 50 feet to the south to alleviate concern of Mr. Kockenour's letter because of the trucks to get to the loading area. There are 6 to 8 depot trucks that come to the store before it is opened and they will come from Route 1 to Quakerbridge Road (southbound) and go into the southerly driveway to make a 360 turn for the loading dock, which is a common design.

Mr. Verderese stated nothing on the site plan has changed with the exception of the driveway. Mr. Krawczun stated on Exhibit A3 the reconfiguration of the parking from the new driveway to the north and that the parking has also been eliminated. Mr. Verderese stated that they closed off the site to go straight to get to the front door. One other change is the 13 parking spaces along the building because it is a highly traffic area so the parking spaces were eliminated. Another change is the connection into the gas area which was eliminated due to queuing occurring at the pumps. The fuel trucks will come in the same direction as the depot trucks and will go out to Avalon Way to the traffic signal out to Route 1.

Mr. Caton stated that the parcel is 50' near the jog area and that area is not added to the gasoline function it is added so that the pad site is a reasonable size. Mr. Verderese stated they are at 680 parking spaces. There is a stub road to the left that will be added later for access to the property.

Mr. Marmora stated all three lots will share cross access and does not show because it is currently unknown what it will be. Mr. Caton stated that when the site was rezoned last spring to Highway Commercial, there is another 14 acres south of this 17 acres site that is zoned Highway Commercial which has development capacity and that is what that stub street is for. The two lots will be owned by Princeton Office Park and will be back to the Planning Board for future development and access will be through the Costco property.

Councilman Powers wanted to make sure if a delivery truck made a mistake can they maneuver around and correct their mistake. Mr. Verderese stated they will have to utilize the entire lane if they come in at a wrong entrance and will not have to back out onto Quakerbridge Road.

Mr. Verderese continued with the entrance for the customers being at the northeast corner of the building and it aligns with the islands perpendicular because pedestrian traffic is heavy. The liquor is located on the east side and the entrance is on the northeast corner and the gas is majority from Route 1 and there are eight separate aisles and 16 fueling positions.

Mr. Verderese explained the driveway from Avalon Run and that it would not create more traffic and would be for people coming from Lawrence Station Road. Mr. Verderese stated that the County wants to take the fair share to Village Road for issues on traffic traveling southbound because the left turn lane is short and Costco provided a concept plan to lengthen that lane so when the County widens the bridge it will get them an additional eight feet so ten vehicles will be able to sit in the left turn lane.

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Mr. Verderese stated there are 680 parking spaces where 787 is required by the Land Use Ordinance and studies from other Costco's this store would need 500 parking spaces. The traffic study also looked at 60,000 sf of what could be built on the remaining lots and wanted to make sure the driveways would work.

Witness #3: Russell McFall, Civil Engineer, prepared the Land Development plans and engineering designs.

Mr. McFall testified about how to situate this project on the site. Two main issues were to provide a sound design and how to situate this site so it has less of an impact on the residential property in the rear. One thing to look at was placing the operational part as far away from the residential site as possible (front and loading dock) by shielding them and to benefit the site was along Avalon Way, because of the heavily buffered area along the northern side; however, by the western side there is a vegetative buffer and a berm; so by pulling Costco forward and eliminating the parking area and to save the natural buffer because of the mature healthy trees which would be hard to replace. The proposal is to remove the junk vegetation and use the mature trees and infill the buffer with new vegetation and add landscaping throughout the remainder of the parking. There are five emergency access doors in the back of the building.

Mr. Caton stated the various exceptions from the ordinance under the design standards dealing with landscaping, any of those exceptions have a problem with what kind is okay and what needs to be infilled and will meet with Mr. Caton in the field. Mayor Kownacki's concern was the timers and lights on the building and stated he appreciates the changes that were made when Costco appeared before the Screening Committee, such as the landscaping and the road for fire apparatus.

Lighting is proposed for a typical shoe box lighting mounted at 30' and the requirement is 25', typically Costco's mounting is 38'. Mr. Caton stated the shoe box fixtures are all going to be shielded to prevent spillage to the residential areas that are nearby. The utilities will be provided to the site from Quakerbridge Road and the sanitary sewer will be connected from Avalon Way. The stormwater management will be handled through four underground detention basins which will service Costco itself and there is an above ground basin for the gas station. Mr. McFall stated the review and testing for the environmental report is still in progress and a work plan will be prepared. Mr. Yoskin stated the Board does not have jurisdiction on the letter and if the cleanup is not performed to the satisfaction of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection than the project cannot proceed.

Witness #4: Douglas Brookbank of Mulvanny G2, Architect. Mr. Brookbank showed the building design from the following Exhibits - A4: Sheet P1, Site Perspective at Warehouse (front entry); Exhibit A5 Material Board (masonry detail); Exhibit A6, Sheet P2 Entrance; Exhibit A7, Liquor Store (side of entry); Exhibit A8, Sheet P4 - Tire Center; Exhibit A9, Sheet P5 Liquor Sales; Exhibit A10 - Building Elevations.

Mr. Brookbank described the front views, parking design, bollards in front of the canopy for safety, the change in heights, different color, and added metal channel detail. There will be lights in the ceiling and how the light system worked which will be on sensors and the roof will accommodate solar panels. Vice Chairperson Taylor asked that part of town is very wet and fungus grows on the homes, how will the building hold up in this environment. Mr. Brookbank stated the material does not have to be painted; therefore, there will be no corroding.

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Mr. Collins questioned the sign in the rear. Mr. Caton stated at the Screening Committee meeting the signs were discussed and this sign faces the residents in the units. There are two flag signs that faces north and west and cannot see any purpose to advertise to people who live across the street. Ms. Macomber stated the purpose of the sign is because of the road and will be sitting at 23' on the building. Mr. Brookbank stated it is externally illuminated and will go off at night. Mr. Caton stated that he would like to see both signs eliminated because no one using that road could not see a Costco and they are well over the ordinance standards for signage. Mr. Caton also stated that sign was lost at the Screening Committee meeting.

Exhibit A11, Sheet P6 and Exhibit A12, Sheet P7– Fuel Facility: has a LED area under it and it is one-way and can be fueled by either side; waiting for the technology on the fixtures on the LED and will have to be replaced eventually. LED works better with concrete than asphalt. Exhibit A13, Sheet P8 – Fuel Facility which is on the outbound movement; Exhibit A14, Sheet P8; Exhibit A15 – Fuel Facility which shows four islands and a small warming hut for the attendants to basically stay when weather is really cold. Exhibit A15, Sheet DD4.203, Overall interior of Building.

Mr. Brookbank stated the changes made since the Screening Committee and the variances are for the façade signs; requesting signage at the fuel facility (all four sides of the canopy) without graphics which total 80 sf; variance for the fuel price sign (in front of the store). Mr. Yoskin stated it is not legal in New Jersey to sell gas unless the price is located in the area of the station and it will have to be a condition where a plan would have to be submitted, not to the Board, but administratively.

Mr. Brookbank stated the monument sign located at the corner of Quakerbridge Road and Lawrence Station Road is for the pharmacy located in Costco which is required by law to be provided (Exhibit A17 – Monument sign). The pharmacy sign is required to be in the right-of-way and visible from the road per the law. Mr. Caton stated that a condition of approval if the pharmacy sign can go on the building and the Board will prefer that which will not affect the size of the monument sign being proposed. Mr. Krawczun asked if there is any new signage for the new entrance, Exhibit A3. Mr. Brookbank stated there is not.

Witness #5: David Roberts, P.P., Maser Consulting. Exhibit A18: Colored Site Plan & Conditional Use Approval – Costco Wholesale Club with Fuel Sales, copy attached. Mr. Roberts stated to do a Costco of this size you have to follow the outline of the lots and the building encompasses the lot. Mr. Caton questioned the building to the south of the Costco site which is a vacant building and will it be demolished. Mr. Marmora stated Mr. Berger, owner, will demolish all buildings. The stub road is provided to mesh with the parking of this site.

Mr. McFall stated sidewalks will be proposed along Avalon Way up to the intersection to the clubhouse and enter the site, as well as along the frontage of Quakerbridge Road. Mr. Caton stated at the Screening Committee meeting it was discussed about a crosswalk along Avalon Way along the western side; the plan is to irrigate the buffer, and the wetlands determination was not made as part of this application and is waiting for the subdivision to be approved and would be for Costco property. The sign on Exhibit A14 facing the Avalon Run apartments will be removed (west side).

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Mr. Caton summarized the conditions of approval.

Public Participation:

None

6. **Old Business / New Business / Correspondence:**

None

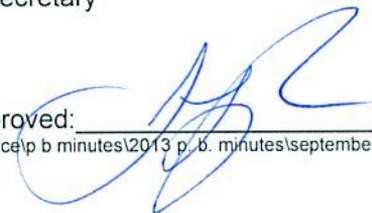
7. **Adjournment:**

There being no further to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:14 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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