

Lawrence Township Planning Board  
Regular Meeting  
Monday, March 17, 2014

Present: Christopher Bobbitt  
Ian J. Dember  
Philip Duran  
Richard S. Krawczun, Municipal Manager  
Stephen Brame, Councilman  
James Kownacki, Councilman  
Glenn Collins  
Kim Y. Taylor, Vice Chairperson  
Doris M. Weisberg, Chairperson

Excused Absence: Terrace Leggett, Aaron Duff

Absent: None

Also Present: James F. Parvesse, Municipal Engineer  
Philip B. Caton, 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, March 3, 2014 minutes were unanimously approved.

4. **Applications**

Major Site Plan Application – Preliminary & Final Approval Application No. SP-14/13; **Auto Lenders Car Sales Facility**, Brunswick Pike and Brunswick Pike and Magnetic Drive, Tax Map Page 20.01, Block 2206, Lots 3.02 and 3.04

Gary Forshner, Stark & Stark represented the applicant. Mr. Forshner summarized the property stating it is a permitted use from the Land Use Ordinance; Lawrence Township Council recently adopted an ordinance for this zone making it a permitted use on the 10.4 acre lot. The applicant's attorney has spent time with our professionals to iron out a lot of the details so the issues could be addressed. The location is on Business Route 1, immediately across the road is the Lawrence Lexus.

The vacant piece of property was approved for a previous car dealership which sat vacant for a long period of time. The witnesses were introduced and explained what their testimony will consist of.

Witness #1: Michael Wimmer, original founder of Auto Lenders decided when cars came off of a lease was to sell the vehicles, which had one owner with low mileage (26,000 – 27,000 miles). This facility will have a 40 car show room; and is the largest independent car dealership in New Jersey. The vehicles go through a 40,000 sf reconditioning facility located in Winslow and explained the criteria of steps the vehicles goes through (1,000 cars a month) and will be delivered to sites to be sold. This site will not have a reconditioning site; however, there will be a full service section. Mr. Collins wanted to know how many cars will be for sale and how many are for loaners. Mr. Wimmer stated the rentals will at the closest Enterprise Rental, which is who they utilize and the showroom will have 40 cars.

Witness #2: Terry Combs; Adams, Rehmann Hagen, Landscape Architect and Professional Planner. Exhibit A1: Arial Photo of subject property from 2009, dated March 17, 2014. Mr. Combs super imposed the site onto the plan and described the location of the property; what surrounds this property and what was on this property previously. It is located on 10.5 acres. The current condition of the property is a vacant lot; which once had a restaurant and then a single family home; it has two driveway cuts (north and south) by the previous owner granted; it was granted approval by the Planning Board in 1999; the original subdivision was granted in 1996; in 1999 an application was filed for the Lexus property as well as the owner of the subject property in conjunction with the application for a new car dealership in the northern section of the property (Saturn) and the southern end for two dealerships; however, they were never approved. A stormwater facility was to be shared by these properties and it was constructed and will facilitate the size of this project.

The current application is a 30,000 sf building which will be setback about 300' from Brunswick Pike (in center of property); the two existing driveway access will be eliminated (Exhibit 2 – Approved Site Plan and Development Plan for the 1999 approval, dated March 17, 2014) which was submitted for the stormwater design. The second floor will be for storage.

Exhibit A: Landscaping Plan, Sheet 6, dated March 17, 2014. The existing driveways are located at each end of the property and they are being eliminated and will have a single two-way access (right in; right out) and will be centered on the building. There will be two accesses onto Marrow Lane (one will be the primary for customers and the second (eastern end) will be for service and deliveries. The front portion of the property is the display area and there are 320 spaces; there is a showroom which will accommodate 40 vehicles.

Mr. Collins had concerns with regarding to testing drives and using the jug handle on Lake Drive and can we restrict them using this jug handle because of the volume of traffic. Mr. Combs stated parking for customers is in front; parking for service and employees are in the rear (96 spaces) in addition to the inventory spaces. On the north side of the building is a service canopy and will have three service drives for customers.

Mr. Combs described the basin is sized adequately and is located at the northeast corner of site, the current stormwater management regulations which were not in affect at the time of the Lexus approval which is for water quality (infiltration basin). The 16,000 sf of the 30,200 sf is for the showroom and offices for sales and administrative staff; the back portion of the building (14,000 sf) is the service area with 16 service bays and two wash bays.

The impervious cover is 60%; a buffer which will be 320' back from Route 1 and the ordinance starts at minimum of 40' for residential; and for office and retail is 15'; there is a 75' Transco easement on this property (all improvements are out of the easement); a 40' planted buffer and will be planted with evergreens trees, shade trees, ornamental trees and shrubberies consistent with the ordinance requirement and the plantings go beyond that easement. There is another 50' grass and planted area. The closest point to the residential lots is 165' and generally is 190' or 200' to the edge of the parking. The building setback to the residential area is 220' from the building to the property line.

Mr. Combs stated the two service bay doors will not face the residential area per the requirement of the ordinance. Mr. Caton questioned the oil room with sound rated partitions (south side) of the building which does not require treatment from the ordinance, it is sensitive to the residential area and Mr. Nicholas will answer under his testimony. Vice Chairperson Taylor questioned how many vehicles can fit under the canopy. Mr. Combs stated three in each isle so a total of 9 and it is about 60'. Mr. Kockenour asked about the New Jersey Department of Transportation Access Permit, the type and background.

Witness #3: Thomas Nicholas, Chief Operating Officer. Mr. Nicholas stated the objective for this facility is to have 200 cars a month and will be stocking on site approximately a 60 day supply with 400 cars. The recon center has a studio where every care is photographed where the customer can go through the pictures and the reason for this is to minimize a test drive. However, the average customer drives two cars; selling 200 a cars a month on average of about 8 – 10 sales per day, where Saturday might be a little bit heavier, roughly 20 test drives and on the high side 30 test drives a day on an average.

The canopy is for people to drive up and get out of the elements. The volume anticipated will be 40 repairs a day. There is roughly 50% of appointments and the rest are walk-ins. The service area is closed on Saturdays. There will be no expansion at this site. Mr. Krawczun asked about hours of service. Mr. Nicholas stated they will be opened from 8:00 am – 5:00 pm.

Mr. Kockenour questioned the new car deliveries, on a weekly basis, what it expects on new car deliveries and getting the car carriers into the site using Texas Avenue and the Lake Drive u-turn. Mr. Nicholas stated they use a four car carrier for deliveries and are replenished as deleted; trades are picked up and taken out. Mr. Caton asked about the 12 x 35 proposed loading area, which is smaller than the ordinance, is adequate on the size of the carrier. Mr. Nicholas stated the loading area is designed to handle an eight car carrier. Deliveries are several times thru the day and are made by car or van. Other deliveries are UPS, vending machine, just normal supplies.

Witness #4: Douglas White, PE. Mr. White stated prior approval for the stormwater quantity volume and rate control. It will first go through a water quantity control basin and detention basin to process the water before it goes to the off-site water quantity control basin. The paving and roof tops will be piped into the basin; the inlets around the basin go into the basin and the outlets to that basin go to the off-site basin. The reduced impervious coverage from this plan from the previous approved plan, the quantity meet controls are being met, which reduces the impervious coverage. The basin has an overflow and a positive outlet and a volume depth of two-feet of hold and will infiltrate into the ground. Section 3.9 of the drainage calculations dated November 2013; the basin will empty between 13 and 14 hours.

Witness #5: Steven Fenwick, Architect and Principal Planner.

Exhibit A4: Artist Rendering of the Proposed building, dated March 17, 2014

Exhibit A5: Floor Plan, dated March 17, 2014

Exhibit A6: Elevations of Buildings, dated March 17, 2014

Exhibit A7: Other Facilities at Other Locations, dated March 17, 2014

Mr. Fenwick stated gave a brief discussion of the building. The design of the building is white with clear glass and royal blue accents and cladding of the building with metal panels. The rear of the building will have decorative concrete masonry units. The main façade will be largely clear glazed.

Witness #6: James Vena, Traffic Engineer. Mr. Vena's report is dated October 31, 2013 and the purpose was to evaluate the traffic impact specifically the signals to the north at Darrah Lane, the jug handle and the signal to the south at Texas Avenue; and the unsignalized signal to the north of Marrow Lane. Traffic counts were performed at each of these intersections which were during the peak demand; generally in the evening hours between 4:00 – 6:00 pm and Saturday between 11:00 – 2:00 pm. See Page 3 of 7 in the traffic study for the pm peak hours for site traffic. There was no change of the overall service to the intersections.

Exhibit A3: The site has two access driveways on Route 1 with a right turn in and right turn out (one at the northern end and one at the southern end); there is a pending New Jersey Department of Transportation application to consolidate these access points. The consolidated way out is actually consistent with the State's goal to minimize the number of access points within a State highway. An improvement to the southern driveway from the residential neighborhood to the south by consolidating the drive; it is actually shifting the driveway further from the residential neighborhood by 300'.

There are two proposed access points from Marrow Lane. The driveway closest to Route 1 will be primarily to service customers; employee traffic and delivery trucks. Mr. Kochenour stated delivery trucks using rear access of off Marrow Lane so truck deliveries will not have to use the main driveway; also when the trip generator analysis was performed that they used the New Jersey Department of Transportation data; but they did their own data collection and the numbers from New Jersey Department of Transportation were elevated. Mr. Vena stated they were similar to how intense this site actually is and will be less than what is being showed.

Mr. Caton stated the entrance isle that will not have truck traffic is 30' wide; there is a 24' wide standard for two-way traffic, is there is a need for the additional six feet. Mr. Vena stated it is the main entrance for all customer traffic and the driveway has been designed to accommodate larger vehicles like a large box truck, as well as a fire truck will use that access. There are two fire hydrants along the front of the site and one is currently located in the post driveway which will be shifted to the south and the second one is at the corner that will remain; there is also one on the site (south of the building).

Mr. Combs went through the relief of waivers and variances:

- §420.H.3: Outdoor sales and display in the HC enclosed by visual barriers. The applicant is providing screening in critical areas in the residential area (parking and display areas). Mr. Caton stated the applicant has agreed to some kind of low shrubs across the front. The applicant is proposing around the display, along the frontage, planting annuals and agreed to plant low evergreens along the edge of the roadway.

- Quantity of façade signs. There is one façade sign that is an arched entrance sign with the logo. The ordinance permits one façade sign and/or two façade signs, if a corner property and technically there are two streets; therefore, two signs would be permitted; however, the ordinance restricts the façade to have the same message as the primary. Instead of another Auto Lender sign have a sign over the canopy that is for the service area, facing Route 1.

Mr. Caton stated the number of signs; overall area of the signs and the extent to which the Auto Lender letters stand out from the wall and the recommendation is that Auto Lenders signage is geared to the entrance way and it is related to the architecture and it works properly with the building and it is justified as well as the letter size. Mr. Caton suggested they drop "department" and just have "service".

- Sign height for the free standing sign. There is 770' of frontage on Route 1 and proposing one free standing monument sign that is 6' wide and seeking the variance to be allowed 22' high. Mr. Combs referred to Exhibit A8 – Sign Exhibit/Details, copy attached.

- The waiver is for the hours for signage, the ordinance states the signage not be lite between the hours of 10:00 pm and 7:00 am. The sign will be LED back light and will remain on a bit longer and will be shut down at midnight and the façade sign will remain on until dusk.

Mr. Krawczun stated what is to remain illuminated is the sign and security lighting and all other lights would go off.

Mr. Combs stated the parking lot will have security lights and will remain on until dusk. There is a waiver for the stormwater basin for the planting of trees in the interior of the stormwater basin and this was a requirement because of the change in the stormwater management which is a water quality basin (a sand bottom basin). The other waiver is for perimeter plantings, shade trees, and 18 more trees are needed to meet the standard. A relief was required for planting quantities within the parking lot islands; the ordinance requires a certain rate of plantings per 100 lf of islands and six large trees, 4 small trees and 6 shrubs for every 100' of island. The islands that will be eliminated are in the center of the display area that run along the length of the parking and the end caps will be widened for better movement.

Mr. Caton stated the customers are free to walk through the inventory and these linear planted areas will be an obstacle. However, rather than having the areas asphalt striped, the front parking lot line to be shifted back and increase the planting along the front. Chairperson Weisberg questioned the species because some are troublesome. Mr. Caton will work that out with Mr. Combs. Mr. Combs stated there are three pine trees and two oak trees (which are specimen trees) that are very large and in the middle of the display area and an oak tree along the frontage (one in the driveway and one in the sight triangle) which are not specimen trees.

Mr. Combs stated the ordinance states a min to max ratio for the light levels and min to average and would like to have a brighter parking area which will exceed the ratios. LED lighting is proposed and the levels are max 1 to 12 and min 1 to 7 (15 to 17 in front and 10 to 12 throughout the display and more conventional for the parking). A waiver for the length of the access drive with an island into the site before you get to the first collector drive in the parking lot, because it will have very little traffic on it, which is 28' instead of 24' per the ordinance (12' for each drive in and out).

Mr. Krawczun stated a sales person does not go with a customer; how does the car get from the display area to the customer to drive home. Mr. Nicolas stated the sales person takes the car to customer. Mr. Kockenour stated there a number of rows, circulation isles, in the front for the new car area and has no intention to fill the isles with cars. Mr. Nicholas stated they are not for vehicles.

An exception for the access drive and it should be landscaped which is a standard by New Jersey Department of Transportation, provides extra width which would make it a better situation. A waiver for the 7' wide sidewalk per the ordinance, a 4' is being proposed because of the adjacent properties sidewalks are 4' and per Mr. Caton's office the sidewalk will be increased to 5'. Mr. Forschner stated the other waiver is for the screening of the perimeter of the display area and some screening will be provided along the back of the site with evergreens and shade trees.

Mr. Collins questioned the location of the dumpster which will be located in the rear of the property. Mr. Forschner went through the professionals report (Clarke Caton & Hintz, dated January 30, 2014; Arora & Associates dated January 29, 2014; Municipal Engineer dated January 22, 2014; Shade Tree Advisory Committee dated January 28, 2014; Health Committee dated January 23, 2014; Public Safety Coordinating committee dated January 13, 2014 and Environmental Resource and Sustainability Green Advisory Committee dated January 16, 2014. .

Mr. Caton summarized the conditions.

5. **Old Business / New Business / Correspondence**

None

6. **Adjournment:**

There being no further to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:58 p.m.

Digital audio file of this meeting is available upon request.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan J. Snook  
Recording Secretary

Minutes Approved: 