

CONSHOHOCKEN BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES/REPORT TO CONSHOHOCKEN BOROUGH COUNCIL

MEETING DATE: February 10, 2022

261-263 EAST ELM STREET

APPLICANT: Craft Custom Homes, LLC
PROPERTY: 261-263 East Elm Street

COMMISSION ACTION: Recommendation for approval of preliminary and final land development approval, with requested waivers, subject to compliance with all review letters identified hereinbelow.

WAIVER'S REQUESTED:

1. SALDO § 22-306.A(1) to allow use of an aerial photograph rather than showing existing features within 100 feet of the proposed development, subject to providing such additional information as shall be required by the Borough Engineer during the review process
2. SALDO § 22-308.C to allow one submission for preliminary and final land development
3. SALDO § 22-403.D(3) to allow a sight distance of 50 feet where 75 feet is required
4. SALDO § 22-404.2.A to allow proposed driveways and curb cuts within the front yard setbacks
5. SALDO § 22-404.2.G and J to allow proposed driveways below the minimum 20 foot width, to allow 16 foot one-way driveways
6. SALDO § 22-404.3.G to permit the radius of the interior islands in the garage area to have a radius of less than 5 feet, with the proposed radii being 1 foot to 2.5 feet
7. SALDO § 22-409.2 to permit grading within 3 feet of the property line, with maintenance access easements granted if needed
8. SALDO § 22-410.4.A to allow storm sewer pipes within the site to be less than the minimum required size, as shown on the plans
9. SALDO § 22-421.4 to permit the applicant to locate required street trees within the right-of-way, subject to the requirement that PennDOT approve of the placement of the trees, and that the applicant maintain the trees
10. SALDO § 22-421.5 to excuse the requirement of screening for the project
11. SALDO § 22-421.6 to allow the applicant to provide pedestrian lighting only on the applicant's side of the street

MATERIALS REVIEWED: The Planning Commission reviewed the following materials:

1. plan set prepared by Vastardis Consulting Engineers, LLC, dated November 25, 2020, last revised October 23, 2021
2. architectural renderings, floor plans, and photographs, 19 pages
3. report titled “Stormwater Management Information”, prepared by Vastardis Consulting Engineers, LLC, dated December 2, 2021
4. list of requested waivers dated December 2, 2021
5. review letter of Borough Engineer, dated January 20, 2022
6. review letter of Borough Zoning Officer, dated January 13, 2022
7. review letter of Borough Fire Marshal, dated December 23, 2021
8. review letter of Borough Traffic Engineer, dated January 21, 2022
9. review letter of Montgomery County Planning Commission, dated June 22, 2021

MEETING SUMMARY:

The applicant proposes to consolidate two existing lots, demolish all existing features, and construct a 21-unit, 4-story residential building with a roof deck, 42 off-street parking spaces and 5 car-lifts, with parking accessed through an entrance on East Elm Street and exit onto Poplar Street. The proposed improvements would reduce the impervious surface coverage. The project previously obtained zoning hearing board and conditional use approval.

The following members of the Planning Commission were present: Elizabeth MacNeal, Chair, Daniel Swartley McArdle, Vice Chair, and Dana MacNeal. Also present for the Borough were Borough Solicitor, Michael Peters, Esquire, Borough Engineer, Karen MacNair, P.E., Borough Zoning Officer, Eric Johnson, P.E., Borough Traffic Engineer, Brian Keaveney, P.E., P.T.O.E., and Executive Assistant to the Borough Manager, Brittany Rogers.

Present for the applicant were Debbie Shulski, Esquire, Ryan Alexaki (a representative of applicant), Nick Vastardis, P.E. (applicant’s engineer), and Andy Heinrich, P.E., P.T.O.E. (applicant’s traffic engineer).

Chair MacNeal opened the meeting and turned it over to the applicant for a presentation.

Attorney Shulski introduced applicant’s team, reviewed the project in general terms, and reviewed the history of the project. Mr. Alexaki reviewed the site plan and the elevations with the Planning Commission. Mr. Alexaki explained how the parking was laid out. Mr. Alexaki explained that the applicant had incorporated the prior recommendations of the Planning Commission and Borough Council (from when the

conditional use application was before both) in terms of adding plantings and benches on both frontages, and additional lighting.

Mr. Vastardis, applicant's engineer, explained the waivers being requested by the applicant, and the reasoning for each.

Chair MacNeal asked the Borough's professionals and staff to review their review letters with the Planning Commission.

Ms. MacNair, Borough Engineer, had the applicant's engineer confirm that the wall identified in comment 13 of her review letter would comply with the 48-inch height requirement, and Mr. Vastardis confirmed that it would.

Ms. MacNair asked applicant to clarify whether the driveway width and the height going into the garage would permit an F-150 size truck. Mr. Alexaki confirmed that such a truck would fit, but delivery vans and the like would not.

Ms. MacNair asked the applicant to confirm, as set forth in comment 30 of her review letter, that the applicant would be extending the sidewalk along Poplar Street to provide direct access to the Schuylkill River Trail, and applicant confirmed that it was willing to do so.

Mr. Johnson, Borough Zoning Officer, made specific note that the applicant would be required to comply with the technical requirements of the Borough's floodplain regulations.

Mr. Keaveney, Borough Traffic Engineer, informed the Planning Commission that the site did not require a traffic impact study, but that the applicant did submit an analysis demonstrating that the proposed traffic would be slightly less than previous uses. Moreover, the applicant had agreed to reassess the driveways and traffic flow at 75% occupancy. Mr. Keaveney explained that, as to sight distance, the applicant was meeting PennDOT's requirements, but not the Borough's. Mr. Keaveney noted that PennDOT will need to decide whether or not the applicant will need an HOP.

The Planning Commission did not have specific questions from either the Montgomery County Planning Commission or Fire Marshal review letters.

Vice Chair Swartley McArdle asked the applicant to explain the parking layout and set up. Mr. Alexaki explained that of the 42 surface parking spaces, only half of them will be assigned, to allow for better guest parking.

Vice Chair Swartley McCardle posed questions regarding pedestrian lighting around the site, and Ms. MacNair explained that there would be bollard lighting installed for pedestrian level lighting

Chair MacNeal asked a question regarding sidewalk access and whether the project was meeting ADA access requirements. Mr. Alexaki explained that the latest revision addressed ADA access from the sidewalks to the building. Ms. MacNair explained that, additionally, certain curb ramps will be replaced to improve ADA access.

Ms. MacNeal asked for public comment. No public comment as offered. No comments were received via e-mail either.

Ms. MacNair asked the applicant to confirm that even if utilities are not placed underground (to the extent the utility provider will not allow it) that the site will still be made safe for purposes of emergency access. Mr. Alexaki explained that all utilities within the site will be underground, and that the utility provider has already agreed to relocate above-ground utilities as needed to ensure safe emergency access.

Vice Chair Swartley McCardle made a motion to recommend approval of the project subject to compliance with all review letters, which motion was seconded by Chair MacNeal. All members voted in favor of the motion.