



City Avenue Rezoning Workshop

Posted on January 28, 2012 at 4:54 pm



We attended the meeting this Saturday morning, Jan. 28, and its title really should have been: if we build it, they will come. That's a great title for a movie, but not for planning how to spend Lower Merion Township's tax dollars.

The effective date for the rezoning of this large piece of ground that fronts on City Avenue is April 30, 2012. But that's not a real date because if the map is not ready, according to Bob Duncan, then the date can be pushed back until the map is ready. There was no outer time limit set. One of the recurring problems in Lower Merion is storm water

management and that is acknowledged but not addressed.

This is an interesting map. It shows current buildings, current roads, current pathways, and a bunch of imaginary objects. The purpose is for Lower Merion to definitively establish roadways, bike ways, pedestrian paths, open spaces, parks, etc. in the area between Conshohocken State Road and the Schuylkill River. The pie in the sky idea is for people to be able to get out of their office buildings and walk the corridor. The purple areas on the map are designed for walkers and bikers. The gold areas are for new roadways. The hope is for the pathways to connect with railroad stations and bus stops. According to Bob Duncan, both SEPTA and the railroad people have agreed to increase service and stops according to the needs of the people who come.

It would be nice to have evening and late evening railroad and bus service in the area to make attending Center City events easy and convenient. But so far, no additional public transportation opportunities have been committed.

The 50 or so people who attended heard that there might be an additional 2,800 automobile trips a year predicted over the next 20 years and there might be \$4 million to \$5 million a year in additional real estate and other taxes. There was no prediction, or apparently even any thought given to, the number of extra police officers that would be required to maintain Lower Merion's high standard of safety.

Incentives for developers who want a higher density than proposed under the City Avenue Rezoning include public improvements, greater than those required under the zoning. It was acknowledged that if all the public spaces and connecting lines were not able to be accomplished by the developers, then the township would have to acquire the land for improvements. There was no

mention of cost. The public gathering spaces would be open and would not include enclosed structures such as bowling alleys, movie theaters, skating rinks, etc.

In touting the advantages of all the connecting bike and walker pathways, one of the audience members said that the Cynwyd Heritage Trail has 150 users an hour. When pressed on what exactly those numbers meant, there was no answer. Further questioning of 150 per hour, is that every hour, 24 hours, 7 days a week, or every hour, 12 hours, 7 days a week, or just the 1 hour when the count was made - all good questions to a scientist - there was no answer at all.

Comments

jeff dobkin

11:16 am on Monday, January 30, 2012

If I have to vote - and I do as a long term resident of Bala-Cynwyd, I vote no. No to all the further development of this area. We don't really need further development. And while I'm not really a tree hugger, I don't really want a Taco Bell in my backyard, like we're getting at City Line and Conshohocken. Some development may be good for an area, but I think we're maxed out. Just drive down City Line ave - it just doesn't get any more commercial than that. And to have this sprawl inward toward Bala, no thanks.

bcrider

2:59 pm on Monday, January 30, 2012

jeff- if you voted for the incumbents in the last election (Manos/McGuire) then in effect you voted for this plan. You will not get an additional chance to vote on this, because your commissioners already voted to approve it, and any additions to the plan or map are in the hands of your commissioners- Manos/McGuire.

Selma Davis

11:52 am on Thursday, February 2, 2012

Here's another interesting bit of information. No one has applied for a variance. Maybe, someone has shown interest off the record. And, there are no answers to the questions: what other areas of the township are being considered for rezoning? ardmere? gladwyne? haverford? And, I understand that the large lot size requirements for single family homes are deterrents to the so-called McMansions that are being built all over.

Marita Gambescia Gaudini

7:43 pm on Sunday, February 5, 2012

I'm also curious about the 150 users an hour comment. There is no doubt that the CHT is popular. But I've walked it round trip several times a week at different hours of the day and I can't say that I've seen a total of 150 people during any of those times. I imagine it will attract even more users come Spring/Summer. Perhaps the person who made the remark was talking about projected numbers?