Voorhees Township Environmental Commission Minutes October 15, 2019

The Chairperson called the meeting to order. It was stated that this meeting is being held in compliance with the “Open Public Meetings Act and has been duly published and noticed as required by law”.

FLAG SALUTE

ROLL CALL

Present: Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Schwartz, R. Gaffney, Mr. Pike and Mr. Hale

Absent: Mr. Rashatwar, Mr. Khayati and Mr. Sytnik

Mr. Joseph Giddings, CME Consultant also present.

NEW BUSINESS

Virtua-West Jersey Health System Inc.

Block:228 / Lot:7

200 Bowman Drive, Voorhees, NJ 08043

Preliminary and Final Site Plan

Mr. Hyland from Hyland, Levin, Shapiro, LLP addresses the environmental commission and explains that Virtua-West Jersey Health System, Inc. is applying for Preliminary and Final Site Plan for a Proton Therapy Addition Project. He then introduces Mr. James Rivard, Senior Vice-President of Support Services at Virtua. Mr. Rivard advises that the proposed plan is for approval to construct a $45 million dollar, 2-story, 8,126 s.f. building addition to the East side of the existing hospital and wellness center inside the Virtua Medical Center. The footprint of the addition falls entirely within the exiting parking lot. The project will cause a net decrease in impervious coverage partially due to the reduction of the total number of parking spaces by 63 but will remain within the townships parking requirements for the entire facility.

Mr. Rivard explains that in 2015 Penn Medicine and Virtua entered into an agreement to provide radiological and neurological medicine through a comprehensive cancer program. With the use of Proton Therapy, research has shown better and longer lasting results then the traditional radiation therapy. The applicant advises that the machine itself weighs anywhere from 100-150 tons, stands 18 feet high, has thick walls and will require the foundation of the existing building to be reinforced. The chamber that holds the machine is about 44 feet wide, 88 feet long and has a tail of about 30 feet. The addition will be composed of concrete because of the water content found in concrete and its ability to absorb the proton beam. The machine itself will be hoisted in with cranes and the facilities proximity to the drainage fields will not be affected.

Mr. Hale asks the applicant to discuss any and all environmental impacts that this project may pose. Mr. Robert Foley of Dewberry Engineers explains that there will be additional illumination of the parking area and that the handicap parking that will be affected still falls within the permitted township regulations. There will be a sanitary sewer connection and the underground stormwater detention basin will be affected slightly but there will be no effect on the seasonal high ground water. The project will require (10) parking lot trees be removed as well as some vegetation in the Southeast corner.

Mr. Hale asks whether there are any environmental concerns related to the machine and building itself. The applicant advises that barring a catastrophic size earthquake the building and machine itself will not pose any environmental hazards or concerns. Asked about the projected timeline of construction, the applicant advises that they’ve received Department of Health approval and should see Department of Community Development approval within 16-17 weeks. The target date for the start of construction would be February 2020 and should last approximately (1) year. The work hours will vary during construction but given the location of the property, light and noise pollution will not pose an issue.

Mrs. Brown requests that the applicant consider electric charging stations and try to integrate sustainable practices if possible. Mr. Rivard and Mr. Foley both advise that solar was considered at the time of the original building construction and will certainly try to incorporate it in the future construction.

The Meeting is then opened to the public.

Seeing no public, the public portion is closed.

Mr. Hale requests that a memo be sent to the Planning Board to read as follows:

* Following a complete and thorough EIR presented by Dewberry Engineers regarding the Proton Therapy addition to the existing hospital, the Voorhees Environmental Commission finds no identifiable environmental impacts that have not been addressed.

With all in favor of the memo, Mrs. Schwartz makes a motion to close the meeting and Mr. Pike seconds the motion.

MEETING ADJOURNED

VEC Secretary,

**Kendralyn Cornwall**