Voorhees Township Environmental Commission Minutes February 11, 2020

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: Mr. Rashatwar, Mr. Pike, Mr. Sytnik, Mr. Khayati, Mrs. Brown and Mr. Hale

Absent: Mr. Gaffney and Mrs. Schwartz

Mr. Joseph Giddings, CME Consultant also present.

OLD BUSINESS

Approval of Minutes

* January 14, 2020

Mr. Rashatwar makes a motion to approve the minutes from the January 14, 2020 as distributed and the motion is seconded by Mrs. Brown.

NEW BUSINESS

**Virtua – West Jersey Health System, Inc.**

Block: 228 / Lot: 7(portion) & 12

165 Route 73 & 100 Bowman Drive

\*Before the application is presented, Mr. Rashatwar advises the board that he has worked with Mr. Hyland, the applicant’s attorney, on previous projects but that there will be no conflict of interest regarding this application.

Mr. Hyland presents the application to the Commission and explains that Virtua is proposing the construction of a standalone, single-story building to serve as a natural birthing center. He explains that Virtua Hospital purchased the land to be developed, which had previously been a Karen’s Furniture. The proposed construction would be accessible from Route 73 and will only have an “emergency” path from the facility to the main hospital.

Mr. Rivard, Senior VP of Support Services for Virtua Hospital, approaches the commission and advises that Virtua currently delivers close to 9000 babies per year. Of all births nationwide, he explains that almost 2% are planned births to occur outside of the hospital. Seeing a need for a more natural birthing center, Virtua would be the first free standing natural birthing center in New Jersey. It would be constructed as a home like setting for low risk births with 3 birthing suites and 4 exam rooms. They would be open 24/7 365 and plans to deliver anywhere from 150-300 births per year. The parking for staff would be at the main hospital with a walking foot path for employee pedestrians.

Mr. Serotti from Langan Engineering provides the following information in regard to the application:

* Impervious coverage is less than ¼ acre
* The run-off rom the Karen’s Furniture site, currently drains to the hospital main campus
* Construction will convey run-off and send it to (12) stormwater basins
* Landscaping will increase the groundwater recharge
* The site previously had gas connections and a Phase I in 2012 revealed no underground storage tanks. A Phase II was found to not be necessary.
* The applicant agrees to certify clean the imported fill
* The applicant is requesting a waiver from the Tree Compensation Plan.

\*Mr. Hyland explained that 10 years ago Virtua Hospital paid the Voorhees Tree Compensation Fund $319,000.00 and feels a waiver is justified.

The application is opened to the Commission for suggestions and comments. Mrs. Brown asked if the engineers and applicant have considered Electric Vehicle Charging Stations. Mr. Rivard explains that Virtua Hospital is currently considering ways to incorporate charging stations on campus.

Seeing no public Mr. Hale requests a motion to forego the public portion. Mrs. Brown makes a motion, seconded by Mr. Rashatwar and all commission members in attendance agree.

Following a complete and thorough EIR presented by Langan Engineering regarding the free-standing Virtua Birthing Center at the site of the existing hospital, the Voorhees Environmental Commission recommends the following:

• The applicant agreed that they have/will comply with the recommendations of the consultant’s letter dated February 7, 2020.

 • Additionally, the applicant has agreed to note on the plans that all imported fill will be certified clean.

• Applicant has agreed to complete a TCP to reflect the number and nature of the trees being removed.

• Applicant has also stated that electronic vehicle charging stations are being strongly considered for this project.

MEETING ADJOURNED

VEC Secretary,

**Kendralyn Cornwall**