

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

Planning Commission

Issue Briefing

Topic: Proposed Ordinance to Amend MUST Height Limits

Prepared by: Robert Duncan, Assistant Township Manager

Date: October 9, 2019

I. Action To Be Considered By The Board:

Authorization to advertise an amendment to the Zoning Code to reduce the height limits in the Mixed-Use Special Transportation (MUST) Overlay District.

II. Why This Issue Requires Board Consideration:

Any amendments to the Zoning Code must be adopted by the Board of Commissioners.

III. Current Policy Or Practice (If Applicable):

N/A

IV. Other Relevant Background Information:

Last month the Board of Commissioners decided to delay the adoption of the new Zoning Code, but a number of Board members expressed concern about the number of development projects in Ardmore that have been submitted seeking building heights far in excess of the three to four story predominant building height that currently exists along Lancaster Avenue. These Board members have asked staff to bring forward an amendment to the MUST Overlay District to reduce the height limits in the current Code while the final amendments to the updated Zoning Code are being considered for adoption.

The proposed ordinance will reduce the height limit to 39 feet (three-stories) with the ability to increase the height to 52 feet subject to meeting additional standards. To increase the building height a developer is required to provide 20% of the dwelling units as affordable housing units if the development includes residential units, preserve the front façade of a Class 1 building if the project includes a Class 1 building, and provide a 15 feet front setback for any portion of the building taller than 39 feet.

This ordinance is intended to maintain the existing predominant building heights along Lancaster Avenue until the new Zoning Code regulations are adopted.

At their meeting on Monday, October 7, 2019, the Planning Commission recommended approval of this proposed ordinance subject to clarification of the number of affordable housing units required to attain the building height exception.

V. Impact on Township Finances:

This ordinance will have no impact on Township finances.

VI. Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board of Commissioners authorize advertisement for a public hearing in November.