

**LOWER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes of September 18, 2019**

<u>Present:</u>	Craig Melograno, Chairman	Ken Amey, Zoning Officer
	Patricia Latimer	Jim Hersh, Gilmore & Associates
	Rich Valiga	Patty Furber, B&Z Administrator
	Danielle Porreca	Chad Dixon, McMahan Associates

Absent: Michael Twersky, Joel Mayor, Rusty Beardsley

Call to Order:

The meeting of the Lower Gwynedd Township Planning Commission was called to order at 7:05 PM.

Approval of Minutes: August 21, 2019

A motion was made by Mr. Valiga and seconded by Ms. Porreca to approve the revised minutes of the Lower Gwynedd Township Planning Commission meeting of August 21, 2019. The motion carried unanimously.

Continued from the August 21, 2019 P.C. Meeting

**727 Norristown Rd.
Land Development Application
MRA Group**

#19-05LD

The MRA Group was represented by Dan Fuchs, Vice President of Development, Nate Fox, Esq., Matt Hammond, P.E. and Eric Britz, P.E.

Mr. Melograno asked the applicants if they wished to review the minutes from the last meeting of August 21, 2019. The applicants reviewed the minutes and had one minor change, which was revised as requested. The board approved this revision with a 4-0 vote.

Mr. Melograno started by asking the audience for comments and/or concerns regarding the application. Several audience members had questions regarding plans for future townhomes on the property. Mr. Fuchs explained to the audience that MRA would

ultimately like the campus to contain a mix of uses, including townhomes, but noted that they are not part of the current application. This application is only for a hotel, conference center, fitness center and restaurant, as described at the August meeting. There were also audience concerns that the proposed Norristown Rd. improvements would reduce the width of the existing shoulder for pedestrians, and asked if sidewalks could be considered on the south side of Norristown Road. Several residents asked if the agenda could be posted on the township website earlier than the day of the meeting; there was also a request that review letters be made available prior to the meeting.

There was a question regarding a proposed crosswalk at Norristown Rd. and the Spring House Estates entrance. Mr. Hammond explained that MRA is proposing a pedestrian crosswalk with appropriate pedestrian signage, and will install a paved walkway from the crossing to the existing trail system on the MRA campus. He explained that along McKean Road they are proposing a crosswalk at Stone House Road and another near the YMCA, both with flashing caution lights.

Mr. Melograno suggested that the roadwork on Norristown Road extend to the west and connect with the township's work at the Bethlehem Pike intersection. In particular, Mr. Melograno asked if they would extend the center turn lane to the Spector's house at 813 Norristown Road. Mr. Fuchs said that may be possible but would need to wait until PennDOT approves the design. There is a meeting with PennDOT next Thursday to talk about coordination of the two projects. Mr. Melograno wanted to know if the final decision was up to PennDOT and Mr. Dixson replied "yes".

Mr. Melograno asked about changes to the driveway access on McKean Road. Mr. Hammond responded that by restricting access to the driveway, the dedicated left turn lane on McKean Road, which was a concern for some neighbors, can be eliminated. As part of any new construction on the property, the applicant agreed to address potential improvements along McKean Road approaching Norristown Road.

Mr. Melograno raised the issue of a connection from the existing trail at the unsignalized drive on Norristown Road to the right-of-way at the Route 309 Expressway. Mr. Fuchs explained that MRA would not want to install the trail connection until it could be linked to a trail on the east side of 309. Mr. Melograno stated that it would ultimately be up to the Supervisors, but he would like to see the trail installed at this time.

An audience member asked if the township will ever put a sidewalk along Norristown Rd. since it has been an ongoing problem. Mr. Hersh explained that recently Gwynedd Estates had completed their trail to the Berkadia property and that the township has a plan to put in a trail to connect to MRA, with the overpass being the biggest obstacle. The developer was asked about design of a basin to control stormwater flow onto McKean Road. Mr. Fuchs stated that the plan shows a basin in the location suggested by

Mr. Hersh. Although the basin has not been fully engineered, the applicant has provided calculations that show significant reductions of flow to McKean Road. Final design will need to be submitted and reviewed by Mr. Hersh. Mr. Fox said that this improvement should be a condition of any conditional use approval by the Board of Supervisors, and Mr. Hersh agreed. Mr. Hersh confirmed that a future land development project could use any excess capacity in this basin; however, all requirements of the stormwater management ordinance, including volume control and water quality would need to be met. Mr. Valiga said the basin should be fully designed at this time and Mr. Melograno said this would be one of the planning commission's recommendations.

Mr. Melograno asked if MRA had scheduled a meeting with Spring House Estates to discuss a potential connection between Radcliff Lane and Spring House Estates. Mr. Fuchs stated they would be happy to talk to them but at this time nothing has been done.

There was a brief discussion of the lighting plan. The applicants explained that the existing light standards are being replaced to allow a conversion to LED lights with full cut-off which will prevent glare off of the property.

Mr. Melograno repeated his concern that by reducing traffic using the driveway at McKean Road, more traffic will go through the light at McKean and Norristown, which may require lengthening the left turn lane onto Norristown Road. Mr. Hammond acknowledged that some lengthening of the turn lane may be needed but suggested that this could be deferred to a later development phase. Mr. Dixon feels that this lane should be extended and widened as necessary during this first phase.

At the close of this discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Valiga and seconded by Ms. Latimer to recommend final land development approval to the Board of Supervisors conditioned on the following:

- Basin final design is subject to approval of the township engineer – the basin can be incorporated into future plans so long as it complies with NPDES requirements and doesn't negate its current proposed use.
- A waiver of curbing and widening on McKean Rd is acceptable to the planning commission; however this waiver should not apply to any widening needed to increase the length of the turn lane onto Norristown Road if required by the Board of Supervisors or PennDOT.
- The planning commission agrees with comment #9 in the 8/8/19 McMahon review letter suggesting that the left turn lane from southbound McKean Road be lengthened.

- Fire marshal comments need to be satisfied.
- MRA understands that they may need to extend the center turning lane along Norristown Rd pending the outcome of the PennDOT meeting on 9/26 and a final determination of the line of demarcation between the two projects.
- MRA understands and agrees to coordinate with both PennDOT and the township as to the extent of both MRA's improvements and the Township's proposed improvements along Norristown Road.
- The board is agreeable to MRA being able occupy and receive a building permit for restaurant and fitness center prior to completion of all land development requirements, including construction of the basin. No occupancy may take place without approval of all appropriate township officials.

The motion passed with a 4-0 vote.

**Lower Gwynedd Township
Sign Ordinance**

Mr. Amey explained to the board that there are changes that need to be made to the draft based on the MCPC letter dated August 29, 2019. The revised draft will be circulated and discussed at a future planning commission meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 P.M. until the next regularly scheduled meeting on Wednesday, October 16, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Patty Furber,
Secretary