

**LOWER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes of January 17, 2024**

Present: Craig Melograno, Chairman
Rich Valiga, Vice-Chair
Maureen Nunn
Rusty Beardsley
Danielle Porreca
Craig Adams
Michael Mrozinski

Patty Furber, B&Z Administrator
Ed Brown, Gilmore & Associates
Chad Dixson, Bowman
Cindy VanHise, CKS Engineers

Absent:

Call to Order:

The meeting of the Lower Gwynedd Township Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 PM.

Approval of Minutes: September 20, 2023

A motion was made by Ms. Porreca and seconded by Mr. Beardsley to approve the minutes of the Lower Gwynedd Township Planning Commission meeting of September 20, 2023. The motion carried unanimously.

Reorganization of Planning Commission:

- Chairman: A motion was made by Mr. Beardsley and seconded by Ms. Porreca to re-elect Mr. Melograno as the Chairman. The motion passed 7-0 vote.
- Vice Chair: A motion was made by Mr. Beardsley and seconded by Ms. Porreca to re-elect Mr. Valiga as Vice-Chair. The motion passed 7-0 vote.
- Secretary: A motion was made by Ms. Porreca to re-elect Ms. Furber as Secretary and seconded by Mr. Valiga. The motion passed 7-0 vote.
- Vice Secretary: A motion was made by Ms. Porreca to re-elect Ms. Worman as Vice-Secretary and seconded by Mr. Valiga. The motion passed 7-0 vote.

Subdivision/Land Development:

**Janssen Permanent Parking - Amended Plan
1400 McKean Rd.**

#20-01 LD

Janssen was represented by Mr. Kevin Selger from Gilmore Associates and Mr. Jim Lilly from the Spring House Janssen campus. Ms. Cindy VanHise from CKS Engineers was present for the Township. Mr. Selger informed the board that back in August of 2020 the applicant was approved for three parking lots which added 297 spaces to the campus. Mr. Selger stated that the applicant would like to request to amend their approved plan by deleting the B East Parking Lot. They would like to move the permanent parking lot to an area behind Building 29, which currently has a temporary parking lot. Mr. Selger stated the reason for the change was that during construction they ran into a lot of unsuitable soil onsite and numerous conflicts with underground utilities. Mr. Selger stated that the temporary parking lot needs to be removed anyway and is already prepared.

Mr. Selger explained to the PC that they received two review letters, CKS Engineers dated January 12, 2024, and the Township's traffic engineer, Bowman, dated January 10, 2024. Mr. Selger stated that he had discussed the review letters with both consultants prior to tonight's meeting. Mr. Selger stated they made some designs for the plans to address the fire truck turn-around issue. Revised plans were submitted to the Fire Marshal, Al Comly, but there was no feedback prior to tonight's meeting. Mr. Selger stated that the amended plan shows some landscaping that includes some planting of trees, but on the side that has the underground utilities, shrubs will be planted instead. Mr. Melgrano wanted to know if any handicapped parking would be eliminated. Mr. Selger stated that the ADA parking would be increased because they gained parking spaces by moving the lot. Mr. Melgrano wanted to know, since there's no entrance into the building, how do employees get to where they need to go from the parking lot? Mr. Selger stated the current parking lot is used by the maintenance staff and they enter through the central plant. Mr. Lilly stated that they have access to an entrance with a sidewalk that is close to the building.

Mr. Adams wanted to know why they couldn't include more plantings where the underground utilities were located. Mr. Adams suggested that they should add more robust plantings around that whole area as opposed to trying to get away from the underground utilities. Mr. Lilly stated they would take that under their advisement.

Mr. Melgrano requested that Ms. VanHise discuss the waivers in her review letter dated January 12. Ms. VanHise stated that they were under the maximum amount of impervious coverage but wanted clarification as there was a discrepancy with their stormwater management narrative. Ms. VanHise requested a note be added to the plan regarding the maximum number of employees per shift, the applicant made her aware that there are no shifts, they refer to them as seats. Mr. Selger stated that there are 2,074 employees, which equates to seats onsite. Mr. Melgrano wanted to clarify that the building is so large and if everyone showed up, there would be enough parking, is that correct? Mr. Selger stated that was correct. Ms. VanHise stated that there was a comment regarding the exterior lighting on site. She stated that the ordinance states that the exterior lighting maximum height may exceed 14' and go up to 25', so there is no issue with what was proposed. Ms. VanHise wasn't sure how Lower Gwynedd handled waivers if they would need to be reinstated with the amended approval. Mr. Selger stated that the waivers are the same, except one waiver would be added regarding swapping out some of the area drains. He stated that would be bubbled on the plan. Ms. VanHise informed the PC she was not aware

that the doors in building 29 were not ingress, but egress. Mr. Melograno wanted to know what would happen if that changed? Mr. Selger stated that it wouldn't change. Ms. VanHise stated that a crosswalk was proposed across the service walk that should be eliminated. Mr. Melograno wanted to know if the amended plan shows that deletion? Mr. Selger stated that he did not receive their review letter in time to delete that from their plan but would be shown on the revised amended plan. Ms. VanHise stated that the Fire Marshal should review the one-way drive fire apparatus circulation and approach to the building. Ms. VanHise stated if the Fire Marshal approves it, CKS is fine with the parking layout. Mr. Valiga wanted to know if the orientation of the parking spaces would change. Mr. Selger stated that the parking is somewhat oriented perpendicular to the entrance, given the small location that they must get the quantity of parking to fit the amount of parking maximum that was approved. He stated that this would not be a main parking lot, but a secondary parking lot. Mr. Valiga wanted to know if a waiver would be required. Ms. VanHise stated that this should require a waiver. Mr. Selger agreed. Ms. VanHise brought up the brightness and intensity of the lighting. Mr. Selger agreed to look at the lighting and bring down the intensity, that there was a calculation error. Mr. Selger stated that they intend on using the same lighting as with their original approved plan. Ms. VanHise stated that a curb taper would be provided. Ms. VanHise stated that she suggested an alternate species of tree to be planted along with a diversity of plantings. Mr. Valiga wanted to know what the alternate tree species would be. Mr. Selger stated red sunset maples, something native. Mr. Selger stated that the landscaping was fairly extensive with the other parking lots. Mr. Valiga wanted to know what diversity meant. Mr. Selger stated around two to three different types of trees. Ms. VanHise stated that there is a current NPDES permit, and that the applicant has applied for an amendment to it. Ms. VanHise stated that a letter was received from the Montgomery County Conversation District, and they will be resubmitting back to them. Mr. Valiga wanted to know if the permitted amendment could change any requirements. Ms. VanHise stated they would have to come back to the PC, but there would have to be significant changes in order for that to happen. Mr. Selger stated they have a NPDES permit for the entire campus that expires on December 7, 2024. Ms. VanHise stated that they could file for an extension if needed. Ms. VanHise stated she wanted clarification regarding the type of inlet, type "M" or type "C". Mr. Selger stated there is an existing inlet, type "M" and the existing curbing is built around that inlet. They intend to rebuild and install a "C" inlet and repour the curbing. Ms. VanHise stated that comments 3, 4, and 5 were drafting errors and will comply. Ms. VanHise stated that drainage infrastructure would remain in place. Mr. Selger stated that there are two existing inlets that existed prior that will remain. Mr. Selger stated that everything internal to the main campus loop road flows into the onsite pond. Ms. VanHise requested no parking signs to be installed along the northwest and southeast curb lines. The applicant will comply.

Mr. Melograno requested Mr. Dixon discuss his review letter. Mr. Dixon stated that Bowman's comments are very minor, he stated that there are a couple crosswalks along the circulation road through the campus, those were put in for the temporary parking lot, he wants to make sure all the pavement markings and signage are removed to avoid driver confusion. Mr. Dixon stated that there is no net increase in what is being proposed from the original plan, so there is no additional traffic generated from the amended plan. Mr. Dixon stated that back in 2020 there were conditions that were deferred, a traffic study for the McKean Road driveway to look at potential peak-hour restrictions for certain turning movements and a pedestrian crossing on McKean Road near the Wooded Pond Road intersection. Mr. Dixon recommends that these

continue to be deferred until the Township does some further planning for the McKean Road corridor to see if these improvements would fit into the overall plan. Mr. Selger stated he would comply with both review letters. Mr. Melograno asked if the applicant would comply with the Fire Marshal comments when received. Mr. Selger agreed they would. Ms. Nunn wanted to make sure Mr. Selger was aware that they have Welsh Road listed on both sides of the campus on the plans. Mr. Selger thanked Ms. Nunn for making him aware of the error.

A motion was made by Mr. Adams and seconded by Mr. Beardsley to recommend the amended land development plan for approval by the Board of Supervisors based on the following conditions:

1. The applicant will comply with the review letters from CKS dated January 12, 2024, Bowman dated January 10, 2024. Since the PC did not receive any comments from the Fire Marshal, the applicant agreed that they would work with the Fire Marshal, Al Comly, to address any forthcoming comments.

The motion passed with a 7-0 vote.



1325 Sunneytown Pike
Gwynedd Mercy University
Frances M. Maguire Healthcare Innovation Center

#23-03LD

Present for the land development application was Ms. Christen Pionzio from HRMM&L, Mr. Steven Freeman, Director of Campus Projects and Construction, Mr. George Hartman, Mr. Griffin Anderson and Mr. Travis North from Bohler Engineering.

Ms. Pionzio explained since they were here back in August they have revised and resubmitted plans. She explained they received cleaner review letters with no new waivers. Ms. Pionzio stated that they left last time knowing that they owed a whole lot of replacement trees, and the question was left with them, do they want to be environmentalists or just write a check, what do we really care about in Lower Gwynedd. Ms. Pionzio stated that they took this to heart, she stated that the PC wanted to try and figure out the massive tree replacement issue and wanted a trail plan, which was all part of the resubmission. Ms. Pionzio stated that they reduced the size of the building, it was 70,181 sq. feet, reduced to 62,608 sq. feet. Ms. Pionzio stated that they hired an arborist, gave him the limits of disturbance, he then evaluated and tagged all the dead, dying and healthy trees. Ms. Pionzio stated that that after that the replacement number was drastically reduced. They started at 7,031 caliper inches (503 trees) only 122 trees are healthy which now equals 1,457 caliper inches. They can replace 1,127 caliper inches; they are short 330 caliper inches. Ms. Pionzio stated that they spent around \$30K on the arborist to get the study done. Ms. Pionzio stated that they found that it was a good investment, they were pleased that dying trees are in the line of disturbance and that the healthy trees are out of the line of disturbance. Ms. Pionzio stated they have used as much of the existing basin, so not to disturb more trees than necessary for the new basin. Ms. Pionzio stated the parking lot will consist of 290 spaces, 132 are existing. Ms. Pionzio stated that this would be a joint parking lot, the parking would be between a shared

area. Ms. Pionzio stated the Fire Marshal wanted better access to the Triplex area. They will be widening the fire access area and have stopped students from using that area.

Mr. North stated that the tree replacement would consist of around six or seven different types of species...American hornbeam, skyline thornless honey locust, sweetgum seedless, sour gum, American sycamore, swamp white oak, pin oak, white fur, white cedar, sweet bay, Australian serviceberry, all with no long-term irrigation. Mr. North stated that after the first year they won't have to be irrigated anymore. Mr. Melograno asked if they felt they were jamming a bunch of trees onto the plan? Mr. North stated they are trying to avoid packing in too many trees to give them space to grow and thrive. Mr. Beardsley wanted to know about the deer population and its impact. Mr. North stated that is why they chose the list because they are generally a very resilient species of trees. Mr. Beardsley wanted to know the height of the proposed trees. Mr. North stated they are proposing larger trees, the trees would be around 4" caliper, which would equal about 15' - 18' in height once matured. Mr. Melograno stated that back in August he did request larger trees, so he was happy to see that they listened to his request. Mr. Valiga wanted to know what the lifespan is of a tree that is in poor condition. Mr. North stated around 5 years. Ms. Pionzio stated that it's really a 0-5-year life expectancy for dying/poor conditioned trees. Mr. Brown stated that dead or dying trees are not usually listed within the tree replacement category. Mr. Beardsley stated that they need to remove the dying trees to make room for the new trees. Ms. Pionzio stated they wanted to make sure not to overplant to avoid the trees growing too closely together. Mr. Melograno wanted to know why they wouldn't look at other parts of the campus, not part of the disturbance area. Ms. Pionzio stated it's due to the costs, they don't have the funds to walk around the campus and do an evaluation. Mr. Freeman stated that they have removed dangerous dying trees along campus. Ms. Pionzio stated that with what they are proposing to plant, they are shy of 19.71 metric tons of carbon removal. She continued to explain how they plan to make that up. Ms. Pionzio stated that they looked at increasing the roof steel to support the load of solar panels. She said that they cannot afford to do that now, but for future installation. Mr. Adams wanted to know the reluctance to install the solar panels? Mr. Freeman stated that they looked at installing solar on their tennis courts that aren't being used right now, but that wouldn't work out because it wasn't sustainable enough and the cost was overwhelming. Ms. Nunn wanted to know what the circumstances in the future are that they might install the solar panels? Mr. Freeman stated the costs would have to go down and efficiency would have to be greater. Mr. Freeman stated that the panels were designed into the proposed building, and they don't intend to back out of that.

Ms. Pionzio stated that they hired the Evolution Sustaining Group for their help on how they can improve the carbon metric tonnage for carbon reduction. They looked at lighting around the whole campus and EV charging stations. They looked at every light on campus, all metal halides will be replaced with LED (total of 3,511 fixtures) for the entire campus. They will be adding 4 dual port EV charging stations along the front of the building. There will be eight charging places. Mr. Adams wanted to know how many students drive EV cars? Ms. Pionzio stated that the charging stations are not only for students, but faculty members, and this will be an event space as well, so visitors can use the EV stations too. Mr. Freeman stated currently around 10 students/facility members drive EV cars, that he is aware of. Ms. Pionzio stated that with all the upgrades they are at 363 metric tons of carbon reduction. Mr. Melograno stated that back in August he was firm with his statement of what was expected, and he felt that they took him very

seriously. Ms. Pionzio stated that it took them four months to gather all this information and they tried their hardest.

Mr. Valiga wanted to know how many real trees will be replaced? Mr. North stated that 218 trees and 971 shrubs will be planted, which is an equivalency that is permitted by the ordinance. He stated the total caliper inches would equal 1,127. Mr. North stated that every 10 shrubs is the equivalent to one tree. Mr. Valiga wanted to know where the conversion factor came from. Mr. North stated that is located in the SALDO section 1230.41(i) outlines the equivalency table. Mr. Melograno stated that they are setting a good precedent for what they have done. Ms. Nunn stated that the PC challenged the applicant to come up with other alternatives and she was pleased with their resubmission.

Mr. Melograno wanted to know about the trail plan. Ms. Pionzio showed the trail plan, the purple is the current network of trails running through the campus. Mr. Melograno wanted to know if there was an easement along Evans Rd. for a trail connection. Ms. Pionzio stated that the high school gave an easement along that frontage a few years ago. Mr. Melograno wanted to know if that would make sense to extend that trail? Ms. Pionzio stated they could do that. Mr. Freeman stated they just went through dedication of all the trails and sidewalks on campus to become part of the Township trail system last year.

Mr. Melograno wanted to know, even though we haven't really got into the consultant review letters from October, if they would comply with those? Mr. Brown stated there was a recommendation in their review letter to add a 15' wide trail easement along Evans Rd. Mr. Melograno wanted to know about the Fire Marshal's review letter, they said they would comply with his comments regarding the fire hydrant.

A motion was made by Mr. Beardsley and seconded by Ms. Porreca to recommend this application for preliminary/final land development approval by the Board of Supervisors based on the following conditions:

1. The applicant will provide a 15' wide trail easement along Evans Rd.;
2. The applicant will comply with all review letters from Gilmore, Bowman and Lower Gwynedd Fire Marshal, Al Comly;
3. The PC recommends granting all waivers conditioned that the applicant installs 4 dual EV charging stations, increase the roof steel load capacity to support future solar panels, convert all lighting on campus to LED by 2025;
4. The PC accepts and supports the findings from the arborist report, the landscape architect design, Bohler's carbon reduction analysis and the Evolution Sustainability Group's LED Lighting & EV Charging Project Overview report.

The motion passed with a 7-0 vote.



ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Patty Furber, Secretary