

**LOWER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
Minutes of February 15, 2023**

Present: Rich Valiga, Vice-Chair
Danielle Porreca
Joel Mayor
Maureen Nunn
Stephen Paccione
Rusty Beardsley

Patty Furber, B&Z Administrator
Ed Brown, Gilmore & Associates
Chad Dixson, McMahon & Assoc.

Absent: Craig Melograno, Chairman

Call to Order:

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

Approval of Minutes: January 18, 2023

A motion was made by Ms. Porreca and seconded by Mr. Mayor to approve the minutes of the Lower Gwynedd Township Planning Commission meeting of January 18, 2023. The motion carried unanimously.

**1345 Sunneytown Pike
Building Addition
Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School**

#22-07LD

Present for the continuation of the applicant was Mr. Tim Woodrow from Woodrow & Associates, Ms. Christen Pionzio from HRMM&L, Ms. Shannon Abraham from KCBA Architects and Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School President, Ms. Denise Marbach.

Ms. Pionzio stated that during their last appearance in front of the board, she left with a list and wanted to inform the board of their progress. They consolidated the street improvements along Sunneytown Pike which consisted of the curbing along Sunneytown Pike & Evans Rd. which was submitted. Ms. Pionzio explained that their landscape architect went out to the site, calculated the required trees versus the existing street trees and found that they do comply with the required number and quantity, but

spacing was an issue. Ms. Pionzio stated that they submitted a landscaping chart with Mr. Woodrow's latest submission. Ms. Pionzio stated that she met with both the Fire Marshal, Mr. Al Comly and Mr. Dixon from McMahon & Associates.

Ms. Pionzio stated that during the site meeting, they decided that the construction entrance would be moved to avoid headlights shining into the adjacent neighboring houses. Ms. Pionzio stated that they have been in touch with one neighbor and that Ms. Marbach would be in touch with the rest of the neighbors on Evans Rd. Mr. Valiga wanted to know more about moving the construction entrance. Mr. Woodrow explained that during his walk with Mr. Dixon that they found it would be more appropriate to slide the construction entrance down due to sight distance issues and the impact on the adjacent neighbors. Mr. Woodrow stated that the placement of the revised entrance would utilize the existing softball field for the construction staging area, and parking for the contractors.

Ms. Pionzio wanted to discuss the environmentally friendly list that was submitted by KCBA's letter dated February 6, 2023. Ms. Pionzio went through the list that included all sustainable strategies that would be implemented with the new building addition. Ms. Pionzio stated that the school will be adding five EV charging stations and could possibly add fifteen more in the future (if the demand is needed). Ms. Nunn stated that the list was very well received by the members of the EAC (Environmental Advisory Council).

Ms. Pionzio stated that they met with Mr. Comly on January 24th and they came up with a sprinkler plan. Mr. Woodrow stated that the phasing plan would include a trunk line that would set up the rest of the building for future sprinklers. This work is to be completed by 2034. Mr. Woodrow stated that Mr. Comly felt comfortable with the proposed plan and that they are making good progress. Mr. Woodrow stated that Mr. Comly requested to extend the sidewalk to make sure there was a safe passageway for escape if needed. Mr. Mayor wanted to know how much of the building is sprinklered? Ms. Marbach stated around 20%, Mr. Woodrow stated once the addition is completed more than half the building would be sprinklered. Mr. Beardsley wanted to know why would this take so long to complete? Ms. Pionzio stated that this is all cost-driven, and funds need to be raised in order to do this in phases.

Mr. Woodrow explained to the board members that they had a site meeting with Mr. Dixon regarding sight distance. Mr. Woodrow explained about the existing drive off of Evans Rd., there was a concern regarding the sight distance from the driveway to the signal on Sumneytown Rd. Mr. Woodrow stated that to make sure this is a safe drive, McMahon went out and conducted sight distance measurements and found the sight distance sufficient for the driveway. Mr. Woodrow stated they discussed circulation patterns through the parking lots and EMS access and felt comfortable that everything is generally in order. Mr. Dixon stated that they did go out and the concern was if someone

was sitting at the drive looking to exit to the left, there was a slight change on the vertical grade. He stated they did measurements and it does meet PennDOT's minimum criteria for safe sight distance. Mr. Dixon stated that there are still a few outstanding issues with internal circulation, flows and signage, but felt comfortable that they would be able to work it out.

Mr. Valiga wanted to know about the trees. Mr. Woodrow stated that after the sight walk with their landscape architect, they feel comfortable that they can comply with everything in Gilmore's review letter. Mr. Valiga brought up the MCPC review letter that stated the health and quality of the existing trees, he wanted to know if anyone assessed the existing trees? Mr. Woodrow stated that they didn't see many dead or dying trees, but some of the parking lot trees should be replaced. Their landscape architect would work with Gilmore's office regarding what trees should be replaced and they would come up with a parking lot landscaping plan. Mr. Woodrow stated that they are not removing any trees and that even if they did take down a few, there would be plenty of area for replacement trees. Mr. Woodrow stated that the only requirement would be for the parking lot landscaping. Mr. Woodrow stated that this would be part of the revised plans. Mr. Valiga wanted to know more about native and non-native species. Mr. Woodrow stated there are not required to plant any major trees but will plant native species and the new plantings will be 75% native. Ms. Pionzio stated that there are 31 existing trees but are unaware if they are native. Mr. Valiga stated that he wanted to make sure that the trees that are removed are identified and that they are in compliance with the 75% minimum of native species. Mr. Brown stated that he would work with their landscape architect to make sure they are in compliance.

Ms. Nunn wanted to discuss sidewalks. Ms. Nunn explained that she drove out to the site, drove around and there are no sidewalks. She explained that she would like more walkability within the township and that there is no safe way to walk along Sumneytown Pike and Evans Rd. Ms. Nunn stated that it would be nice to have a connection to the Parsons Ln. trail and to see the connections continue. Ms. Pionzio stated there are no sidewalks for a purpose, due to safety concerns for the students. Ms. Pionzio stated that this is a private institution and they do not want to encourage people to walk on their property. Ms. Pionzio stated that there is a big difference between the university and high school, the university has more of an opportunity for the trail connections. Ms. Jamie Worman, Assistant Township Manager and Director of Building & Zoning, was in the audience and stated that the county also identified the same issue with pedestrian connectivity in their review letter. Ms. Worman stated that the township would like them to revisit this issue. Ms. Pionzio stated that she would explain the same security issue to the county. Mr. Paccione stated that he would rather see the funds be spent on sprinklers for the remainder of the building.

Mr. Valiga wanted to know more about the stormwater. Mr. Woodrow stated that the vast majority of all the stormwater runoff from the new building would be directed to the new basin that would be discharged through the channel that bisects the property. Mr. Woodrow stated that they had meetings with the county conservation district and that they will soon apply for an NPDES permit. Mr. Brown stated he had no issue with the waiver. Mr. Brown wanted to know about the manhole (D9) for the stormwater pipe if the location could be shifted from the outfield of the softball field. Mr. Woodrow replied that the manhole would be relocated.

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

- 1) The PC recommends approval of the following waivers regarding:
 - a. Not providing curbing, dedications, tree plantings and sidewalks along Sunneytown Pike and Evans Rd.;
 - b. Storm piping at a minimum of 18" and reinforced concrete material.
- 2) There should be a determination after an evaluation of the health of existing trees and replacement trees to ensure they comply with the 75% requirement of native species;
- 3) Applicant is to comply with the Gilmore review letter dated January 12, 2023, and McMahan's review letter dated January 12, 2023 (Ms. Pionzio stated that some of the comments would go away since they have met with Mr. Dixon and requested this condition be to the extent required by McMahan's next review letter);
- 4) Applicant to follow the recommendation letter from KCBA Architects dated February 6, 2023 and Fire Marshal, Al Comly's review letter dated February 13, 2023.

The motion passed with a 6-0 vote.



Lower Gwynedd Township:

1. Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment - Flag Lots:

There were no comments from the board members regarding the proposed ordinance.

A motion was made by Mr. Paccione and seconded by Mr. Beardsley to recommend the Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment - Flag Lots for final approval to the Board of Supervisors. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Proposed Ordinance SALDO Amendment – Tree Preservation, Maintenance & Replacement:

The board members found that Section 2 paragraph (j), specifically “any tree lost or destroyed within (5) years prior to the submission of a subdivision” was confusing and that it should be rewritten for more clarification.

A motion was made by Mr. Paccione and seconded by Mr. Beardsley to recommend Section 2; paragraph (j) be rewritten.

The motion passed with 6-0 vote.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Patty Furber, Secretary