

**LOWER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
Minutes of September 20, 2017**

**Present:** Craig Melograno, Chairman  
Herb Levy, Vice-Chair  
Rich Valiga  
Patricia Latimer  
Joel Mayor

**Staff:**  
Ken Amey, Zoning Officer  
Jamie Worman, Assistant Manager

**Absent:** Rusty Beardsley & Michael Twersky

**Call to Order:**

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

**Approval of Minutes: July 19, 2017**

A motion was made by Ms. Latimer and seconded by Mr. Mayor to approve the minutes of the Lower Gwynedd Township Planning Commission meeting of July 19, 2017. The motion carried unanimously.

**Subdivision/Land Development:**

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| <b>a. 500 Houston Rd.<br/>Wissahickon Middle School-Addition</b> | <b>#17-06LD<br/>Land Development</b> |
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Mr. Gerry Moore, Facilities Director from Wissahickon School District, introduced himself and gave a brief introduction of the proposed project, which is the addition of an auditorium at the Wissahickon Middle School. He explained that at the current time neither the high school nor the middle school has an auditorium. They are proposing to remove the existing pool and construct the auditorium in this location. He then introduced both the architect and engineer for the project, Mr. Robert Breslin and Mr. Mark Buchvalt.

Mr. Mark Buchvalt of T&M Associates went through the basic site plan for the 468 seat auditorium. Mr. Amey, Lower Gwynedd Township Zoning Officer, added that the school district had received a variance from the Zoning Hearing Board to permit encroachment into the side yard setback to accommodate an addition in the proposed location. Mr. Buchvalt confirmed this and noted that the project is a small site

development that will include grading work, landscaping, sidewalk and curbing, a new entry, and the installation of stormwater management facilities. Mr. Melograno questioned whether additional parking spaces were required. Mr. Buchvalt replied that the parking regulation requires three parking stalls for every new seat. He continued that they currently have 103 spaces but according to that calculation they would be required to have 153 spaces. He explained that the school does have access to over 400 spaces within reasonable walking distance to the facility and narrative to that effect has been placed on the plan. Mr. Melograno replied that it would only take one other event to deplete the parking. Mr. Moore added that they work diligently to make sure there are minimal or no conflicts with event scheduling to avoid a parking issue. Ms. Latimer agreed and added that 75% of the usage is student driven.

Mr. Robert Breslin went over the floor plan of the building. He explained that a new lobby will be constructed along with the 468-seat auditorium that will have 27 removable seats and an elevated stage, small storage and mechanic room, connecting hallway to the locker room and gym, control booth in the rear, and two restroom facilities off of the lobby. There is a curved wall and a wood ceiling designed for the space. In addition they will be replicating a small picnic area outside of the building. The total new construction is 13,000 square feet. There is 1,200 square feet of existing space and the pool will be removed. Mr. Breslin showed a rendering of the exterior of the building noting the new entrance and the materials that will tie the existing building to the new building. Mr. Melograno asked if there will be any recladding of the existing building. Mr. Breslin replied that they looked into that but it was very costly. Mr. Levy questioned the roof height. Mr. Breslin explained that in order to deal with things such as snow load they made the lobby a two-story lobby with an entrance feature to marry the old with the new. They needed a significant scale for the lobby.

Mr. Melograno asked what waivers would be requested. Mr. Buchvalt replied that at this time they were not aware of any but were waiting for the Township Engineer's letter. Mr. Amey added that most likely landscaping waivers would be requested. Mr. Melograno revisited the parking issue and circulation concerns. Mr. Melograno concluded that the parking needs to be contemplated as part of this project. Mr. Buchvalt agreed and explained that they have performed a parking analysis like they did when the natatorium was before the Township. Mr. Amey suggested that the engineer meet with Township Staff to discuss the parking in greater detail and bring the results of that meeting back before the Planning Commission next month. Everyone agreed. There was no further discussion on this application.



**b. 604 Dekalb Pk.  
Prospect Acquisitions, LP**

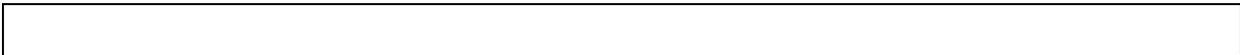
**#17-05RZ  
Rezone Request**

Mr. Chris Canavan of W.B. Homes Inc. was present to discuss the rezone application that was filed for the property referred to as the "Lynch Tract". Mr. Canavan gave an overview of the site. He explained that the Lynch Home was a non-conforming institutional use. The parcel has a split zoning that includes both E-1 Residential and A Residential. He continued that W.B. Homes had made an application to the Board of Supervisors requesting that the entire parcel be rezoned to the E-1 Residential classification. If the zoning change is granted they will move forward with their plans to develop the tract into a 17-unit carriage home community. Mr. Canavan also pointed out that there is a conservation easement along the rear portion of the property in favor of the Wissahickon Valley Watershed Association. The easement was established to provide for the conservation of natural resources and an area to extend the Green Ribbon Trail. Mr. Canavan explained that the proposed plan would honor the conservation easement along with the zoning requirements under the E-1 Residential District. Mr. Canavan also noted that the rezoning of the property would make it consistent with the adjacent property where Greycliffe Manor is located.

Mr. Canavan then showed a rendering of how they envision the carriage home development could look. He added that they will propose high-end carriage homes with two-car garages and two-car driveways with one overflow space per unit. Mr. Canavan concluded that he was before the Planning Commission to request consideration of the rezone application and a recommendation of support to the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Melograno questioned whether fire truck circulation had been considered. Mr. Canavan explained that they had made the cart-way wider at the point of curvature to accommodate fire trucks and larger vehicles. The width at these points is 24 feet and the straight away portion is 20 feet. Mr. Levy expressed his concerns with the location of the four units off of the entry road and where the overflow parking would be located for these homes. Mr. Canavan explained that he is fully aware that the issue before the Planning Commission this evening is to support or not support the application requesting a rezone of the parcel and that, in no way, constitutes an approval of the plan he is showing.

Mr. Canavan reported that he has been in touch with PennDot regarding the Route 202 construction in conjunction with this project. Construction of the roadway would be ongoing during the potential construction of this project. He added that W.B. Homes will need to consider a "right in" and "right out" restriction at the entrance to the development. He also added that utility work within the easement will be necessary in order to extend sewer. A question was raised about possible trail connections. Mr. Canavan replied that it is too premature to consider trail connections at this point. Mr. Valiga asked what the price point will be for the homes.

Mr. Canavan replied that they will start in the \$600K-\$700K range and go up from there. Mr. Levy questioned the elevation of the highway. Mr. Canavan replied that the road is lower and the bridge replacement will raise the road. He added that they are aware of this and will be taking all of these items under consideration as they move forward. The rear yard setback and easement line were also discussed. Mr. Melograno reiterated that the recommendation Mr. Canavan was seeking was to rezone the entire parcel to the E-1 Residential. Mr. Canavan confirmed. Mr. Amey added that typically from a zoning perspective you don't like to see a split-zoned property. Mr. Mayor made a motion to recommend support of the proposed rezone application to the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Levy seconded the motion. The motion passed with a 5-0 vote.



**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 P.M. until the next regularly scheduled meeting on Wednesday, October 18, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jamie Worman,  
Assistant Township Manager