



Township of Northampton
55 Township Road
Richboro, PA 18954

**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING OF
OCTOBER 1, 2019
MINUTES**

Members Present

Edward Ingle
Patrick McGuigan
Mark Shapiro

Excused

Steve Saddlemire
Dr. Arthur Friedman
Michelle Druding
Andrew Gannon

Others Present

Barry Moore, BOS Liaison
Joe Pizzo, Esq., Township Solicitor
Amanda Fuller, PE, Township Engineer
Craig Bryson, PLA, Township Planner

Mr. Ingle called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance. There was also a moment of silence for those in our armed forces.

Minutes

A motion (Shapiro/McGuigan) was made to approve the minutes from the September 10, 2019 meeting.

Approved - 3-0

Mr. Ingle noted that there is no quorum for tonight's meeting. As a result, no vote will be taken on any of the agenda items.

Consideration of Conditional Use Application - Council Rock School District, STAR/Sloan School, CU 19-6, 98 Upper Holland Road **Consideration of Preliminary/Final Plan of Land Development, STAR/Sloan School, SLD 19-3, 98 Upper Holland Road**

Mike Carr, Esq., was present on behalf of the School District. He was present along with representatives of the district and well as the design team.

Mr. Lambert, Special Services for the district, provided an overview of the STAR School program.

Adjacent to the existing Richboro Middle School, the applicant noted that the new project will encompass construction of a new 27,000 square foot building with additional parking spaces. Mr. DeGroot, project engineer, provided details on the plan and noted that there will be a new driveway adjacent to Township Road. He added that there will be a parking lot in front of the proposed building.

At this point, he discussed the drop-off patterns and bus circulation. In response to Mr. McGuigan, the location of the existing driveway was clarified.

Mr. Bell, architect, provided an overview of the design of the proposed building. He added that safety for circulation was a primary concern as well as minimizing the impact on existing fields. He also presented a simulation of the proposed project, including the location with respect to the Township's Village Overlay District.

At this point, Mr. Carr discussed the Gilmore & Associates review letter. He noted that a variance is required for impervious surface and that the Zoning Hearing Board hearing has been scheduled in November.

Mr. Carr discussed conditional use requirement in addition to the buffering requirements as outlined in the review letters. In response to Mr. Ingle, Mr. DeGroot clarified bus circulation within the property. Mr. Carr added that the parking that is proposed will exceed existing parking on the site. He also discussed the requested waivers and noted the items that the district will comply with as outlined in the review letters.

Parking lot circulation and layout was also discussed. With respect to the Village Overlay Requirements, it was noted that parking is to be located in the front of the building. He added that there are many technical items in the review letters with which the applicant will comply. In response to Mr. Bryson, the type of buses to utilize the site were clarified. Mr. Moore noted that the Township wishes to be responsive to the School District and the timing of the proposed project was discussed by Mr. Taylor. Mr. Taylor noted the overall cost of the project in response to Mr. Ingle.

Mr. Ingle noted that sidewalks on the property could be used for multi-use purposes. At this point, the Pennoni & Associates review letter was discussed. Mr. Carr noted that there is one use on the property, which is an educational use.

Mr. Carr noted that the district will comply with the comments raised in the traffic engineer's review letter. He added that there are no new comments raised in the Bucks County Planning Commission review letter.

Mr. Carr noted that the conditional use criteria are subjective. Mr. Bryson requested that the applicant document, in writing, compliance with these criteria.

In response to Mr. Shapiro, Mr. DeGroot noted that the fields will be reduced by two, however, additional parking is being proposed thereby improving the existing conditions.

Mr. DeGroot noted that the School District is looking for direction based on the plan at this point. Mr. Moore noted the benefit of the project and added that he would like to seek input from residents as well as increase awareness. With respect to the Village Overlay, Mr. Bryson noted that there should be further evaluation of the relationship between the school and the fields.

In response to Mr. McGuigan, Mr. Taylor noted that the design does allow flexibility for growth.

At this point, the meeting was open to public comment.

Jay Abovitz, 54 Carmelita Drive, stated that the School District should explore other sites. He is not opposed to the program, however, the proposed project does back up to several houses. Mr. Bryson noted that the applicant will submit a written response to the conditional use requirements as to why this site was selected.

Elyse Ditlow, 38 Carmelita Drive, voiced her opposition to the project.

Bernadette Heenan, 8 Butternut Court, noted that this is a positive for the Township and noted the benefits of the program.

George Young, 32 Torresdale Drive, stated that everyone should be notified since this impacts everyone in the Township. Mr. Ingle noted that the requirement is to notify within an established distance.

Mr. Moore noted the positive aspects of the project and requested that the School District place a sign on the property.

Ed Ditlow, 8 Carmelita Drive, state that the School District should look at other sites and noted the cost of the project.

Mr. Pizzo noted the requirements with respect to notice of the proposed project. He added that the School District regulates field use, not the Township.

Angela Morrison, 62 Carmelita Drive, noted her support for the project and the program. She did raise some concern regarding the noise from the mechanicals and discussed the buffering requirements.

Bill Murphy, 7 Glenfield Drive, requested clarification on buses and vans that will utilize the property.

Rich Liccio, 42 Carmelita Drive, raised concerns regarding the security of the facility.

Mr. Moore clarified the meeting date scheduling with the School District.

Consideration of Conditional Use Application - Council Rock School District, Turf Field, CU 19-7, Rock Way/Holland Road
Consideration of Preliminary/Final Plan of Land Development, Turf Field, SLD 19-2, Rock Way/Holland Road

Mr. Carr, Esq., provided an overview of the turf field that is proposed at Council Rock South High School. Mr. Taylor noted that the project includes bleachers and lighting. He added that the field is open to community use and noted the long-term expansion plans for the facility.

In response to Mr. Ingle, Mr. Taylor noted that the life expectancy of a turf field is 10 years.

Mr. Moore noted once again that there should be awareness for the project, including the lighting that is proposed at the field. In response, Mr. Carr noted that there will be notice with respect to the variance that is requested for the lighting. Mr. Moore stated that the Township wishes to be proactive and make residents aware.

Mr. Carr and Mr. Taylor noted other projects with respect to lighting. They added that the additional height of the lights is beneficial because it allows them to be directed downward. Mr. Ingle noted that there should not be any communication gap between the Township, School District, and neighboring properties.

In response to the Gilmore & Associates review letter, the applicant presented an aerial overview of the proposed project, including parking. Bleachers, access, and circulation were also discussed. Mr. Bryson inquired regarding the full build-out of the field into a stadium, but the School District is not sure of the timing. Mr. Taylor noted that the construction would likely begin in the Spring of next year.

Mr. Carr noted that conditional use should not be necessary as a field is accessory to the existing school. This matter will be followed up with by the Township solicitor. Once again, Mr. Carr noted that taller lights are preferable.

At this point, Mr. Carr went through many items within the review letters and noted where the applicant will comply. He added that parking currently exists on the site and there will be no conflicting use as the field will be utilized when school is not in session. He added that no trees and street lights are proposed. In addition, he noted that a waiver will be requested from the buffering requirements.

There are technical stormwater management items and the applicant will comply with these requirements. Ms. Fuller noted that stormwater management for the full build-out of the site should be accounted for now. Ms. Fuller also added that an

accessible route is likely required and she will work with the School District on this requirement.

Mr. Bryson stated that street trees should be explored. There was extensive discussion regarding the buffering requirements. In addition, there was discussion regarding pedestrian traffic at Holland Road and the adjoining neighborhood.

Mr. Bryson stated that, once again, the School District should document compliance with the conditional use requirements.

Steve Goldman, 72 Shelbourne Road, raised concerns about access on Holland Road. He had concerns with people driving into the neighborhood although he supports the field use. He also inquired about lighting.

In response to Mr. Bryson, Mr. Carr noted that the School District can be very specific with respect to events that will be held at the field. Mr. Shapiro also noted that this information should be made aware to the public.

Martin Marino, 45 Shelbourne Road, raised concerns regarding parking on Holland Road. There was discussion regarding the full build-out of the field into a stadium.

Ms. Fuller noted that now is the time for discussion on the overall build-out of the project. Mr. Bryson added that his greatest concern is the smaller events that are not controlled by the School District.

Mr. Taylor noted that the turf field is the only area that is currently proposed to be fenced.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted:

Michael T. Solomon
Director of Planning and Zoning