

**Planning Commission
Minutes
December 2, 2024
7:00 PM**

Present:

Brett MacKay, Chairman
Nancy Becker
Joseph Vavra
Ed Buonocore
Dennis McGeehan
Pat Younce
Michael Main
Rich Marino
Craig Brown

Staff:

Mary Stover, Township Engineer CKS

Supervisor Mr. Kofi Osei was present.
Supervisor Mr. Charles Wilson was present

Introduction of New Members

Mr. MacKay called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM and introduced new members, Mr. Robert “Craig” Brown and Mr. Rich Marino

Approval of the November 12, 2024 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

Ms. Becker made a motion to approve the November 12, 2024 meeting minutes, and Mr. Vavra seconded. Ms. Younce and Mr. Main abstain. The motion carries.

New Business

SLD 837 – NPSD HS Campus Additions and Site Improvements (Preliminary Plan)

Presented by Mr. Alex Glassman, attorney with Clarke, Gallagher, Barbiero, Amuso and Glassman, Mr. Pete Nicholson Ed.D, Administrator of Secondary Education and Renovations from North Penn High School, and Mr. Barry Stingel, PLA with T & M Associates.

Mr. Glassman introduced himself, Dr. Nicholson and Mr. Stingel. He noted that all the comments are not back at this time, but that they wanted to present an overview of the plan to get the Planning Commission’s initial feedback. He introduced Mr. Stingel to discuss the plan in greater detail, starting with the recently acquired radio station site which he explained would be converted to two multi-purpose athletic fields. The four existing towers will be removed, and a new single tower will be added with the existing cell tower remaining.

Mr. Stingel explained that the existing transportation center would be replaced with a newer building with 3,000 square feet of the building reserved for Buildings and Grounds/Maintenance Equipment. The existing bus parking lot will be reconfigured for bus and bus operator parking and the existing athletic field between the current bus area and the football stadium will be reconfigured. The Receiving area and courtyard at the back of the school will be reconfigured to allow for additional parking, a second small drop-off/pick-up area and some outside classroom space. Additional sidewalks will be added to better access the athletic fields, the old radio station site and parallel to Sumneytown Pike. The existing band practice field will be reconfigured to allow for two additional tennis courts. Mr. Stingel stated that this work would require additional storm water management which he outlined for the group. He said landscape buffering would be added, in particular along Snyder Road and Sumneytown Pike. He also noted that several areas in the school would be renovated including the auditorium and some smaller areas. Ingress and egress to the school will not change.

At this point, Mr. MacKay asked for questions from the PC. In response to questions from Ms. Becker and Mr. Brown, Mr. Stingel said that the landscaping plan did include street trees along Sumneytown Pike, and that buffering was included around the transportation center.

Mr. Brown suggested the addition of striping the tennis courts for pickle ball due to the current popularity of the sport. Dr. Nicholson noted that this had not been discussed but could be further examined. Dr. Nicholson replied to another question from Mr. Brown that the school would consider adding sidewalks along Valley Forge Road that would connect to the existing sidewalks around the school parking lot. He stated that there is currently no pedestrian access at the Valley Forge Road entrance which necessitates walking through the grass or along the road which is a safety concern. Dr. Nicholson indicated that this is something that they would look into as the plans are finalized. In response to a question about work disrupting the normal school day, Dr. Nicholson said that work was anticipated to take place during the summer months to avoid disruption to the normal flow of traffic.

Mr. Marino asked if the plan was phased and for a projected timeline. Mr. Stingel replied that there were currently two phases but that the second phase would eventually be broken down into additional sub-phases. It is anticipated that some demolition and utility work will commence the summer of 2025 with initial interior renovation beginning in the Fall of 2025. Dr. Nicholson noted that final completion is projected for December of 2030.

There was additional discussion regarding the sidewalk along Sumneytown Pike and the possible tie-in to a cross walk accessing Bridle Path Road. Mr. Stingel agreed that there were some logistical and safety issues with some steep slopes and in tying into Bridle Path.

There being no comments from the public, Mr. MacKay noted that the plan would be addressed as soon as CKS completed their comments.

Old Business

Township Comprehensive Plan – Meeting #5, Simone Collins

Mr. Peter Simone representing Simone Collins and Mr. Todd Poole representing 4Ward Planning.

Mr. Simone introduced himself and Mr. Poole and provided the PC with the main themes coming out of the Planning Process so far including the questionnaire and various resident meetings. He then reviewed the reasons for preparing a Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Simone then asked Mr. Poole to go through the Market Study and the Fiscal Impact Study. Mr. Poole introduced his Company and explained that their study involved the identification of market trends. He explained that within their Supply/Demand analysis, current projects in the pipeline have been factored into the study. He indicated that between 128 and 214 new housing units can be captured by 2028, the majority being multi-family rental units and for sale townhomes. He said that while demand for Senior Housing continues to be high, Towamencin has met a lot of that demand already.

The retail side continues to work itself out with the Amazons, etc. changing the retail environment. Mr. Poole sees more small-scale offices and medical centers and boutique type stores.

Ms. Younce asked how best to address the problems that come with additional housing, such as traffic and other infrastructure issues and whether the plan should not address these types of issues. Mr. Simone replied that there was no perfect answer to the question and that this plan represents what the market will bear. Ms. Younce said that she felt that it is important that this issue be addressed in the plan. Mr. Simone stated that the plan is a best guess of what current conditions warrant moving forward, but a traffic analysis being done now would not be the best use of the Township's resources. Mr. Buonocore said that he sees this plan as a moving target where these issues would be addressed as things move along. He noted that just because a community can afford to add additional housing does not mean that it is necessarily desirable but that a balance will need to be struck between key "wants" (open space, walkability, an improved park system, etc) as identified by the residents and housing.

Mr. Main said that with the available land in the Township now, it seems to lead to more single family and apartments of 2-stories rather than 4. Mr. Poole replied that single family housing is the least efficient from an economic standpoint. Single family housing also brings more school age children, meaning more of an impact on the schools. Mr. Brown added that to bring more retail into the area will require more residents which leads back to multifamily. Mr. Simone added that the ideal mix is 71% single family and 29% multi family.

General discussion followed on what the best housing mix might be. Mr. Poole noted that housing prices have been increasing steadily and while Towamencin is relatively affordable in relation to some of the neighboring communities, more and more people can no longer afford single family homes. Along with housing, the price of land is also increasing which, in the end, dictates what type of housing will be built. Ms. Becker asked about the current PSDC proposal

which splits commercial and residential into two areas. Mr. Poole stated that is unusual, but Mr. Simone said that the purpose of the Comprehensive plan is not to analyze PSDC's plans. There was further discussion regarding how to legislate the number of bedrooms per apartment unit. Mr. Simone reminded the Commission that can be done through zoning.

Supervisor Osei noted that population projections are just that and that greater increases or decreases will result in more/less pressure on the infrastructure. He went on to remind the PC that the Turnpike generates a lot of traffic which is also a strain on infrastructure.

At this point, Mr. Simone continued with the schedule for completing the plan, noting that they would be back before the PC in February. He told the group that they were open to any "wordsmithing" or suggestions. He went on to discuss the survey results, key person interviews, and the importance of maintaining congruity between them and the Plan. After asking for any questions, Mr. Simone thanked the Planning Commission.

Mr. Mackay thanked Mr. Simone and asked for questions/comments from the floor.

Tina Gallagher, Resident expressed her concern with the way Mr. Chartrand's vacancy was filled. She noted that per the Home Rule Charter, such vacancies are to be announced to the community.

Carol Davis, Resident asked about the proposed flashing pedestrian crossing at Bridle Path and Sumneytown Pike. In particular, the type of light and how it will be activated. Ms. Stover noted that it was in the Connectivity Study and that PennDOT would have to approve it.

Mr. Vavra made a motion to adjourn, Ms. Becker seconded. All were in favor – 9:45 PM

Respectfully submitted,


Doug Leach

Assistant Director of Planning, Zoning and Code Enforcement