

**Planning Commission
Minutes
March 3, 2025
7:00 PM**

Present:

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

Absent:

Patricia Younce
Rich Marino

Staff:

Mary Stover, Township Engineer CKS
Will Brugger, Director Planning, Zoning and Code Enforcement
Douglas Leach, Assistant Zoning and Planning Officer

Supervisor Mr. Kofi Osei was present.

Approval of the January 13, 2025 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

A motion was made to approve the January 13, 2025 minutes, by Mr. Vavra. Mrs. Becker seconded. All were in favor with Mr. McGeehan abstaining.

New Business

WB Homes – Proposed Development at 1780 Kriebel Road

Presented by Mr. Chris Canavan, President and Mr. Justin Strahorn, Project Manager for land approvals. Mr. Canavan introduced Mr. Strahorn and explained that the 33-acre development was at the corner of Kriebel and Anders Roads also known as the Walton Farm. After presenting an overview of the property, Mr. Canavan noted that the project was in the R-175 zoning district and showed a slide of a proposed site plan with 33 single family homes on 30,000+ square foot lots. The one exception to be the lot containing the original homestead. This design would contain all the property and would meet current zoning requirements. Mr. Canavan noted that the Township may want to consider a text amendment allowing the development to be a cluster development yielding 34 small lot single family homes on 14,000 square foot lots (the text amendment calls for a minimum of 12,000 square foot lots) allowing for side-entry garages and still retain the existing family farm. This would allow approximately 13 acres of open space which would retain the current heavily wooded area and provide a buffer to the Pennsylvania

Turnpike. He said that there are no sound walls on the Kriebel Road side of the turnpike. This design would also allow for future access to any future development of the Freddy Hill Farm property. Mr. Canavan said the property would be serviced with public water and sewer and that capacity has been confirmed by the water and sewer authorities. The general zoning designation that WB is suggesting is under the mixed residential district (MRC) with the creation of a R-14 cluster single family-detached dwelling use and making it a use by-right in the residential R-175 district. Mr. Canavan said that this plan had been shown to the Board and that they supported presenting it to the PC. He asked that the PC review this request and hopefully be able to make a recommendation at the April meeting following review by the Township's consultants and the Montgomery County Planning Commission.

At this point, Mr. Canavan asked for questions from the PC. Mr. Brown asked about pedestrian access to the property, particularly from the existing Walton farm to Anders Road. Mr. Canavan answered that WB would work closely with the Township to provide walking access to Anders and perhaps the Seipt (Freddy Hill) property in the future. Mrs. Becker asked about sidewalk connectivity and was assured that WB would make appropriate connections. She then asked if small lots like those in Grist Mill had been considered. Mr. Canavan answered that they were not applicable in this case, because they would only be allowed on sites of 100 acres or more.

Mr. MacKay voiced his support for the plan and said he felt that the process was going in the right direction.

Mr. Main noted his concern regarding Section 3-H-2 of the proposed amendment with the word "may." He felt that a stronger definition was needed. Mr. Canavan replied that the purpose had been to keep the ordinance broad enough so it could be used in other conditions, but that they were open to discussion. Mr. Main asked if a playground or recreational space just for the community would count as open space and Mr. Canavan answered that it usually varies from property to property.

Mr. Buonocore asked about safety measures regarding the turnpike, particularly for children. Mr. Canavan responded that there is a fence that was installed by the Turnpike Commission.

Mr. Brown asked if the neighbors had been shown the plan and added that perhaps a berm or a landscaping buffer would be appropriate.

Supervisor Osei asked about the possibility of townhomes in the central area of the plan due to the shape of the lots. Mr. Canavan answered that R-175 has always been for single-family.

At this point, Mr. MacKay asked for comments from the public.

Mr. Tim Shafer, 1885 Rampart Lane expressed concern about the site line from Kriebel to the access of the community due to the hill on Kriebel and noted that Kriebel needed to be widened.

Old Business

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

Presented by Superintendent Dr. Todd Bauer, Mr. David Schrader, Schrader Group Architects, and Mr. Barry Stingel, T & M Associates. Dr. Bauer introduced himself and told the PC that they were here to keep them updated on progress. He gave a brief history of the NPHS and a summary of the proposed additions and improvements. He then introduced Mr. David Schrader, managing partner of the Schrader Group. Mr. Schrader explained that they would briefly discuss the site as it now exists, then discuss basic additions and the construction phasing. At the end of the presentation, the group will address comments received from various Township consultants. Mr. Schrader explained the orientation of the site plan and then continued on to highlighting “K-Pod” the main entrance to the school, the existing bus parking area and finally the athletic fields. He noted that one objective of the new plan was to reduce the number of dead ends and circulation problems within the building to lesson congestion and choke points. He explained that “A-Pod” would access the gymnasium area by way of an addition. He went on to explain how the “F-Pod” would be enlarged to accommodate more room for the music program and connect to “C-Pod.” The courtyard in the rear will be redone to allow for more circulation and a more attractive gathering area as well as a secondary entrance to the school and closer access to the playing fields.

Mr. Stingel discussed the changes to the site starting with the new bus area which will include additional parking and 3,000 square feet of additional space for buildings and grounds as well as bus parking and maintenance. A new parking lot will be added between the football stadium and the transportation area. More landscape islands will also be added. Two multi-purpose fields will be built on the old radio station property. The band practice field will be re-oriented to allow for two additional tennis courts. Mr. Stingel explained pedestrian improvements which will include tying the Snyder Road cross walk directly to the existing interior sidewalk; sidewalk will be added on Valley Forge Road as well as Sumneytown Pike. Access from Bridle Path to the school is currently in the feasibility study phase. Lastly, Mr. Stingel showed the group two new above-ground stormwater management basins and explained that there would also be an underground stormwater management area.

Mr. Stingel then introduced Mr. Jamie Lynch from CHA to explain the phasing of the project. Mr. Lynch noted that the project is anticipated to take four years. He said that the phasing has been designed with the safety of students, staff and visitors as a top priority. The plan is to proceed in a clockwise direction starting at “A-Pod” the transportation facility, courtyard area and terminating with “J-Pod” including the gymnasium. “K-Pod” and “L-Pod” will be undergoing renovation this summer. The radio station site will serve as a secure location for construction staging. Mr. Lynch stated that as much work as possible will be done during summer months, but there will be work going on through-out the schoolyear as well. He said he would be available daily to work through any issues that may come up with surrounding neighbors, etc.

Prior to discussing consultant letters, Mr. MacKay asked for questions from the PC. Mr. Brown asked if the addition of the radio station site would require the expansion of the school zone along Snyder Road. Mr. Stingel answered that it would be addressed by Township consultants

during their plan review. Mr. Brown voiced his concern about the congestion around the bus garage and whether there would be access to the Tech School. Dr. Bauer noted that the only connection was for buses, but the walkway would remain between the high school and the tech school. Mr. Brown then asked if the Snyder Road crosswalk would have flashing lights or just striping and was told that there would be striping, with signs and ADA compliant ramps but no flashing lights.

Mr. Vavra asked if the crosswalk would be like the one at the Walton Farm School in the district and was told that it would be.

Mrs. Becker raised the issue of storm water run-off, in particular increased flooding across Sumneytown Pike and in Chatham Village since the athletic fields have been renovated. Mr. Stingel answered that the three new basins should alleviate the problem due to more water being retained on the site.

Mr. Buonocore asked about the location of crosswalks and Mr. Stingel replied that the one on Snyder Road would remain, but it would be altered to line-up with pedestrian sidewalk in on school property. He reiterated that the crosswalk at Bridle Path was still under study.

Mr. Stingel explained the waiver requests outlined in his letter of January 24, 2025 not stormwater related and then introduced Mr. Zach Ranstead, Stormwater Engineer with T and M Associates, to discuss the stormwater waiver requests. Mr. Ranstead reviewed the process followed given actual and planned improvements and noted that a NDPS application is already in front of the Conservation District. He then moved on to discuss waivers in respect to storm sewer, noting that a lot of viable infrastructure is already in place which hopefully will be able to be incorporated into the new system. Mr. Stingel added that they are in receipt of review letters from CKS, Bowman and Gilmore and intend to comply with the exceptions of the waivers already discussed.

Dr. Bauer thanked the PC and Township Staff for their assistance and noted how supportive the collaboration has been in the process.

Mr. MacKay asked for questions/comments from the PC. Mrs. Becker suggested that rather than asking for waivers for the curbs and sidewalk along Sumneytown Pike, they ask for deferrals because the curbs and sidewalks are required to be installed. Mr. Peter Simone, Simone Collins stated that the widening of Sumneytown Pike may never happen and suggested not approving the waiver.

Township Comprehensive Plan – Meeting #6, Simone Collins

Mr. Peter Simone and Mr. Pankaj Jobanputra presented the update. Mr. Simone said that he has received comments from members of the PC and would like a consensus opinion from the PC as soon as time allows. He noted that they would be meeting with the Board of Supervisors on the 26th of March and there would also be a final public meeting. Mr. MacKay suggested that rather than going through each recommendation, Mr. Simone answers any questions and hit on the key recommendations. Mr. Simone said that he felt it was very important for the Township to adopt an official map allowing the Township to identify areas planned to be designated “open space”

and to add the connectivity improvements. Mr. Simone briefly went through the recommendations in the plan. Mr. Brown asked how best to encourage the developer (PSDC) to move forward with the development of Towamencin Village (item 5-7 in the plan). Mr. Simone said that continuing the conversation with PSDC was the best way to keep things moving forward, perhaps by agreeing on some changes to the ordinance. Mr. Brown asked who was responsible for updating the strategic plan (item M-3 in the plan) and Mr. Simone answered that it was usually township staff but that it was not required.

Mr. MacKay asked the group to send questions/comments regarding the plan through Mr. Brugger. He then asked for questions/comments from the public.

Supervisor Osei asked for an update on the Chicken Ordinance previously considered last year considering his getting more requests from the public. He then mentioned his concern over the pressure for additional housing and how best to maintain a balance with the PC's concerns over maintaining open space.

Ms. Tiffany Stanton, Resident, expressed her concern regarding the property known as the Bird Farm on Old Forty-Foot Road and the possibility of any zoning changes to allow for the development of the property.

Mr. Vavra made a motion to adjourn, Ms. Becker seconded. All were in favor – 8:25 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas Leach

Doug Leach
Assistant Zoning and Code Enforcement Officer