

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING FEBRUARY 23, 2016

Attendees: Peter Cornog, James Hoban, Dave Shula, Sherri Patchen, Scott Quitel, Terry Lefco, Vince Manuele, Charles L. Guttenplan, AICP, Director of Planning & Zoning, Amy Grossman (BOS Liaison), Jim Sullivan, T&M Associates, Township Engineer

1. Call to order: 7:00 PM by Chair Patchen

2. Announcements & Correspondence: None

3. Approval of Minutes:

- Mr. Shula moved to approve the meeting minutes from January 26, 2106, seconded by Mr. Hoban. Vote 4-0-1 (Mr. Lefco was not present for the vote and Mr. Manuele abstained – not at that meeting.)

4. Zoning Hearing Board Appeals:

- None

5. Subdivision & Land Development Applications:

- SLD#07-08 Germantown Academy, 340 Morris Road; Expansion to the field house, turf field and parking for a final plan approval for Phase 2A of the school's Master Plan. Present were Greg Davis, Attorney – Saul Ewing, LLC, Mike Ruffo, Project Manager for Germantown Academy and Rick Stoneback, Project Engineer – Charles E. Shoemaker, Inc. Mr. Ruffo provided some historical background. The Preliminary Plan was approved by the Township in November, 2009 and the final plan approval for Phase 1 was granted in April, 2010 and has since been completed. The first phase consisted of a new middle/upper school, reconfiguring the athletic complex, restoring portions of the Wissahickon Creek floodplain area, and additional site improvements. The current plan is a minor modification to Phase 2 as it appeared on the approved Preliminary Plan (Master Plan) for both phases. Phase 2A will consist of an addition to the field house, the construction of one turf field, and the addition of 32 new parking spaces along the Lafayette Avenue frontage. The Phase 2A improvements are consistent with the general layout of the approved Master Plan. The applicant met with Township staff and are in receipt of review letters and they are confident they can address and comply with all comments. Montgomery County Planning Commission recommended adding internal crosswalks and a Bio Retention Basin which the applicant stated they will do what they can, but the recommendation for sidewalks on Lafayette Avenue make no sense as they will not come nor go anywhere; there are internal sidewalks that lead to the pedestrian crossing of Morris Road which leads to a sidewalk allowing students to walk safely to the train station. It was mentioned that they will be in front of Shade Tree Commission on March 1 to discuss landscaping and specifically how they are addressing the preservation of a heritage tree in the area of the proposed parking. Planning Commission Concerns and Comments consisted of the parking issues on Sheaff Lane which the applicant is not aware of any complaints but will look into it; avoiding similar issue along Lafayette Avenue; general questions about adequacy of parking; and future use of the fields and lighting which is not part of today's plans but cannot be ruled out. No Public Comment. Mr. Hoban moved to recommend approval of Phase 2A final plans; seconded by Mr. Lefco. Vote 7-0.

6. Conditional Use Applications:

- CU#01-16 James M. Victor & Marie E. Pelton; 201 Cedar Grove Road, Conshohocken; Front Facing Solar Panels. Representing the applicant was Courtney Schallhorn from SolarCity. The applicant is

proposing to install a 4.68 KW system with 18 front-facing solar panels on their shed. Ms. Schallhorn handed out pictures of what the system would look like installed. The Township Engineer has reviewed it and found it to be an effective use of solar energy for this property. A Public Hearing for this application will be held by the Board of Supervisors on March 10th. Planning Commission Comments and Concerns consisted of why the placement of the panels are not on the rear of the building, in response there is significant shading from the trees and the system would not be efficient and the current construction (The Oaks at Lafayette Hill) will not be removing tree cover here; will the system produce more energy than needed by the consumer; in response they do not install systems more than 100% of annual use, there may be times where the system will back feed into the grid but over the course of a year, it will even out; what type of structure will the system be mounted on, in response the structure is a pole barn that was built in 2011 for which the roof's structural integrity will be reviewed by the Director of Building & Codes as part of the permitting process; and where are the closest neighbors, in response, right now around the corner along Joshua Road. No Public Comment. Mr. Quitel moved to recommend the Conditional Use be granted; seconded by Mr. Manuele. Vote 7-0.

7. Old Business: None

8. New Business:

- Grant Applications for Miles Park Improvements; Confirmation of Consistency with Township Plans. Jim Sullivan, Whitemarsh Township Engineer, stated they are going to apply for grants to rework, reconstruct and rehabilitate 3 of the fields at Miles Park to resolve drainage, access and playing condition issues. They are proposing to rotate the Little League field 180 degrees, raise the softball field 4 feet, add a rain garden adjacent to the outfield, a retaining wall with seating incorporated in it near the softball field, walking trails, add handicap accessibility (part of the grant application) and inlets to redirect the stormwater. The construction will cost \$560,000 and they would like to have it ready for Spring 2017. Mr. Sullivan stated the purpose of this proposal is to make the fields usable at all times. The projects are consistent with the Township's overall goals for recreation and specific goals for Miles Park identified in the 2003 Whitemarsh Township Comprehensive Plan, the 2007 Whitemarsh Township Parks and Recreation Plan, the 2007 Whitemarsh Township Greenway Plan, and the 2009 Whitemarsh Township Pedestrian & Bicycle Network Plan. Mr. Hoban moved that Ms. Patchen sign the requested letters of support showing the proposed improvements and confirmation of consistency with Township plans; seconded by Mr. Lefco. Vote 7-0.

9. Public Comment: None

10. Adjournment:

- There being no further business, meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles L. Guttenplan, AICP, Director of Planning & Zoning

The Planning Commission is appointed as an advisory group to the Board of Supervisors and the Zoning Hearing Board with respect to comprehensive land use planning, existing land use, and various land use and zoning applications in Whitemarsh Township. No formal decisions are rendered by the Planning Commission. Formal decisions are rendered by the Board of Supervisors or Zoning Hearing Board, as prescribed by law, based on the type of application.