

**Buckingham Township Planning Commission**  
**Approved Meeting Minutes**

The regular meeting of the Buckingham Township Planning Commission was held **Wednesday, June 4, 2008** in the Township Building, 4613 Hughesian Drive, Buckingham, Pennsylvania.

Present:	Andrea Mehling	Chairperson
	Patrick Fowles	Vice-Chairman
	Glynnis Stone-Tihansky	Member
	Marc Sandberg	Member
	Ann Sutphin	Member
	Rebecca Fink	Member
	Tom Baldwin	Member
	Daniel Gray	Township Engineer
	Lynn Bush	Bucks County Planning Commission

Ms. Mehling called the regular meeting to order at 7:40p.m.

**1. Consideration of Approving Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of May 7, 2008.**

*Ms. Fink made a motion, seconded by Dr. Sandberg to approve the minutes of the May 7, 2008 meeting. The motion carried unanimously with Mr. Fowles and Ms. Sutphin abstaining.*

**2. Consideration of a Modification to the Zoning Ordinance.**

Ms. Bush explained that the modifications to the zoning ordinance would make special provisions in the way of an overlay district for certain developments (Windsor Square, Devonshire Estates, Upper Mountain Estates and Buckingham Forest) to accommodate impervious surface. She explained that the developments were built under zoning regulations that no longer exist in the zoning ordinance therefore the Township was having difficulty regulating additions for things like decks and patios. This ordinance addresses those problems. Ms. Bush noted that these additions have been accounted for in stormwater management.

Mr. Fowles commented that he would vote for this modification with reluctance as he was concerned that this after-the-fact change could set a precedent for the future. Mr. Fowles added that the only reason he was voting for this modification was because he had been assured that the net addition of impervious surface did not exceed what could have been built on the site originally, taking into account open space. Mr. Baldwin, Ms. Mehling, Ms. Sutphin and Ms. Fink agreed with Mr. Fowles. Dr. Sandberg and Ms. Stone-Tihansky commented that they felt the modification was a corrective action for a misdeed.

*Mr. Baldwin made a motion, seconded by Ms. Sutphin to approve the modification to the zoning ordinance. The motion carried unanimously.*

**3. Sketch plan submitted by Central Bucks School District for building addition and renovations to existing high school. Parking lot modifications to accommodate building addition.**

Representing the Central Bucks School District was Mr. Mark Marella, Architect, Mr. Tom Hanna, Project Engineer and Mr. Kenneth Rodemer, Assistant Director of Operations Central Bucks School District.

Mr. Marella provided an overview of the plans for the building additions and renovations to Central Bucks East High School. The plans included:

- The addition of a science and technology wing, a faculty dining area and a fitness area (approximately 35,000 square feet)
- Improvements to the entrance at Holicong Road
- The office areas will be improved to deal with security issues.
- A lobby will be created in front of the auditorium area.
- Improvements to corridor circulation.
- Replacement of many of the mechanical, ventilation and electrical systems
- Bathrooms brought up to Americans with Disabilities (ADA) standards
- Increasing daylight to building because it has few windows
- Adding sprinkler system to areas of building where it does not currently exist
- Various other changes to bring building up to current standards

Mr. Marella noted that they were investigating the use of green technology (living roof, wind or solar energy, etc.) so that the building could serve as a living classroom.

Dr. Sandberg asked the cost of the project and if it was being funded by taxpayer money. Mr. Marella responded that it was being funded with taxpayer money and that the projected cost was \$30-35 million.

Mr. Fowles commented that he liked the idea of the green roof but asked how they reconciled the increase in impervious surface to make a more inviting entry. Mr. Marella responded that the area needed to be functional and able to accommodate 35 buses and that there was really a shift of impervious surface because part of the 20' sidewalk was being reduced to 10'.

Ms. Fink commented that the Planning Commission would not like to see the grass eliminated from the front entrance. Mr. Marella responded that they would minimize the overall loss of grass.

Ms. Sutphin suggested that in the new plan the waiting area for students at the front entrance should be no larger than it is now.

Ms. Lynn Bush suggested that the carbon footprint could be reduced by reducing the student parking area.

Mr. Fowles asked if the applicant was serious about pursuing the living roof to which Mr. Marella responded they were very serious. Discussion followed about the merits of the living roof: absorbs rainwater, prevents sun from beating on black roof (so helps with insulation) and extends lifespan of the roof. Mr. Rodemer added that they were serious enough about the green

roof that the plan showed a stairway to the roof so that students could access the roof for environmental education.

Mr. Fowles asked whether the psychological problems caused by a lack of windows were due to the lack of sunlight or the lack of a view of the outdoors. Mr. Hanna responded that it was natural sunlight that was needed. Mr. Fowles asked if they had considered light tubes. Mr. Marella responded that each tube costs about \$4,000 so it was cost prohibitive. Mr. Rodemer noted that they would be creating an atrium with natural light coming through.

Ms. Fink asked about timing for the construction to which Mr. Marella responded that they hoped to start construction by next summer.

Ms. Mehling asked if they were planning any skylights for areas of the building like the math area. Mr. Marella responded that they had not looked specifically at that area, but that it could be considered. Ms. Mehling asked if they were going to keep the greenhouse to which Mr. Rodemer answered probably not in its current form.

Mr. Marella reviewed the variances requests.

1. The impervious surface will exceed the 35% limit by 3% to 38%.
2. The stair tower will exceed the 35' height limit. Mr. Marella noted that the stair tower would be a maximum of 40' and that it would not exceed any existing height of the building.
3. Mr. Marella explained that in order to provide adequate lighting for the buses using the full cut-off fixtures, they had to use 24-25' light fixtures. Ms. Fink asked about the problem with the glowing sky over CB East. Mr. Rodemer responded that those lights would be removed. Mr. Gray explained that in order to have a sufficient throw, they would need to have a larger number of lights at lower altitude. Mr. Marella commented that it still would not provide sufficient lighting. Regarding light schedules, Mr. Rodemer explained that lights shining down on the building would be on all night as well as some lights in the parking lot for security reasons and other lights would be on depending on the activity at the school. Mr. Baldwin commented that while he was concerned about the lights, he had talked to neighbors in that area and they felt better about the new plan than what was there now. Mr. Gray commented that the tall light fixtures could not be placed too close to the road. Mr. Rodemer noted that the lighting would be more like Buckingham Elementary than Cold Spring Elementary.

Dr. Sandberg asked if a study was done to determine how many parking spaces were needed. Mr. Gray responded that the traffic study showed that they needed that many spaces if not more. Dr. Sandberg noted that future plans show a stadium and expressed concern about how much impervious surface they could give up now and still accommodate future plans for the site. Mr. Hanna responded that the stadium was not part of this conversation (as it was something that may or may not be built in the future) but noted that the Board of Education had asked the engineers to size the stormwater basin with the potential future stadium in mind. Mr. Gray commented that the stadium would come in under a different zoning ordinance that has a change in calculations for impervious surface. Mr. Gray commented that it did not make sense to go to the Zoning Hearing Board (ZHB) and ask for more than what they needed for this plan.

Ms. Mehling asked if they were keeping the sidewalk that connects CB East to Holicong Road. Mr. Hanna responded that it would remain.

4. The manmade >25% steep slope disturbance was in excess of the 15% allowed.

Waivers were requested:

1. from widening Anderson Road.
2. to permit 10'x20' parking spaces. Ms. Mehling asked how many parking spaces were being added to which Mr. Marella responded one and two additional bus stalls.
3. from providing a sidewalk/bike path along Anderson Road. Ms. Mehling commented that a path on Holicong Road from the school toward Route 202 would be appropriate.
4. from providing additional street trees along Holicong Road. The Landscape Designers felt they would be overplanting the area. Mr. Fowles commented that there were areas that could accommodate street trees. Mr. Hanna responded that they would ask for a partial waiver and agreed that they would put trees where they fit.
5. to allow parking within the type 1 buffer. The parking is 27' from right-of-way and 60' from the existing curb line.
6. from providing the specified type 1 buffer plantings because they do not work for maintenance and safety reasons. Mr. Marella noted that they came to a compromise with Ms. Manicone at Buckingham Elementary and they expected to do the same here.
7. from providing the specified parking area landscape requirements for security reasons.
8. from providing a transportation impact study.

Discussion followed about greenery at the entrance and problems with previous plantings being killed by vandalism and snow plows.

Mr. Hanna summarized that their plan was to proceed with their zoning and land development applications.

No action was taken on the sketch plan review.

#### **4. Comprehensive Plan**

Ms. Bush reported that she had done a land use plan for the Township, she was updating the inventory of historic resources with the Supervisors and researching basic demographic data available. Ms. Bush agreed to have material available to review for the next meeting.

**Mrs. Mehling made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fowles to adjourn the meeting at 8:55p.m. The motion carried unanimously.**

*Minutes respectfully submitted by Suzanne Safran*