

BUCKINGHAM TOWNSHIP

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PLANNING COMMISSION

AGENDA

JUNE 5, 2019

Call to Order 7:30 p.m.

1. Annual Reorganization of Planning Commission
 - Appoint Chairman
 - Appoint Vice-Chairman
2. Consideration of approving draft Planning Commission minutes of December 5, 2018.
3. Consideration of recommending Preliminary Approval of the **“Covenant Church – New Parking Lot”** Land Development plan dated May 3, 2019, Township File LD 2019-01, Tax Map Parcel #6-10-007, 4000 Route 202, proposing a new parking lot, plaza space, and associated stormwater facilities, 1.94 Acres to be developed; total parcel size 24.74 acres, located in the R-1 Zoning District, with a 90-day review period expiration date of September 3, 2019.

Buckingham Township Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes

The regular meeting of the Buckingham Township Planning Commission was held June 5, 2019 in the Township Building, 4613 Hughesian Drive, Buckingham, Pennsylvania.

Present:	Andrea Mehling	Chairperson
	Patrick Fowles	Vice Chairperson
	Rebecca Fink	Member
	Dr. Marc Sandberg	Member
	Louis Spadafora	Member
	John Ives	Bucks County Planning Commission
	Dan Gray	Township Engineer
Not Present:	Erling Salvesen, Jr.	Member
	Glenn Thomson	Member

Annual Reorganization of Planning Commission

- **Appoint Chairman**
- **Appoint Vice-Chairman**

Mrs. Fink made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fowles, to appoint Andrea Mehling as Chairman of the Buckingham Township Planning Commission for the year 2019. The motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Mehling made a motion, seconded by Mr. Spadafora, to appoint Patrick Fowles as Vice-Chairman of the Buckingham Township Planning Commission for the year 2019. The motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Mehling called the regular meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Consideration of approving Draft Planning Commission Minutes of the December 5, 2018 meeting.

Mrs. Mehling made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fowles to approve, as most recently presented, the draft Planning Commission Minutes of the December 5, 2018 Meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of recommending Preliminary Approval of the “Covenant Church – New Parking Lot” Land Development plan dated May 3, 2019, Township File LD 2019-01, Tax Map Parcel #6-10-007, 4000 Route 202, proposing a new parking lot, plaza space, and associated stormwater facilities, 1.94 Acres to be developed; total parcel size 24.74 acres, located in the R-1 Zoning District, with a 90-day review period expiration date of September 3, 2019.

Mr. Glenn Harris and Mr. Tom Knab of Renew Designs, and Mr. Joe Lanzetta, Facilities Manager for Covenant Presbyterian Church were present to discuss their proposed Land Development plan.

Mr. Harris discussed the Existing Features Plan, which displayed 401 existing parking spaces in the upper lot with access from both Mechanicsville Road and Route 202, stormwater management located in an area behind the nursery along Route 202, and the parking area proposed by this plan near the Route 202 entrance in the foreground of the building.

Mr. Harris explained this project was before the Zoning Hearing Board in 2016, with a plan for 98 parking spaces and requesting a variance to exceed impervious surface limits. He said that plan showed entrance to the parking area from the existing driveway and then turning right into a proposed “U-shaped” parking lot located between wetlands and the existing evergreen buffer along Route 202. Mr. Harris said as the church congregation grew, it was determined more parking was needed, with the main traffic times arising between services with people coming and going, and the additional vehicles are what presented a hardship.

Mr. Harris said a recent wetland delineation study gave concern that the wetlands appeared to have modified themselves since the 2016 plan was prepared. Mr. Harris said the Land Development plan submitted to the township shows the parking lot in the same general location as was indicated on the Zoning Hearing Board plan, with the wetland line redelineated in the rear 50’ from the parking lot, and modification of the parking lot itself being sculpted out and proposed closer to Route 202 than was shown on the Zoning Hearing Board plan. Mr. Harris said the original plan was 72’ from the right-of-way of Route 202, and the current plan is 56’ from the right-of-way line, and was shifted southerly 15’ to respect the modified wetlands.

Mr. Harris said the current plan is substantially the same as the Zoning Hearing Board plan, except for the 15’ modification of distance from the right-of-way of Route 202. He said the plan also shows a reduction to 88 parking spaces from the 98 spaces on the Zoning Hearing Board plan.

Mr. Harris said the stormwater for the parking lot will be addressed by the use of porous pavement with underground storm management tanks, with an outlet structure at the rear of the lot draining into a piping system running into the existing basin.

Mr. Harris said a great majority of the comments in the May 31, 2019 review by Knight Engineering, Inc., are “will comply”; they will revise and resubmit the plan to the engineer’s satisfaction. He said this evening their goal is to ask the Planning Commission how they feel about the proposed parking lot and location, and to review the waiver requests.

Mrs. Mehling said a large concern is the protection of the existing evergreen trees established as a buffer along Route 202. Mr. Harris said they were aware of the concern as the Landscape Review Consultants letter of May 14, 2019 referenced the location of the trees and instructions related to disturbance of the area. Mr. Harris explained the distance from the guardrail along Route 202 into the site to the inner edge of evergreen boughs is 65’, and the proposed plan limit of disturbance is 62’. He said there would be a tree disturbance fence installed, and they would sequence construction to access from the parking lot side and dig out towards the trees, not under the trees. Mr. Lanzetta agreed the trees are important to the church, too.

Mrs. Fink said the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance requires a 75' setback, and she is not comfortable with a 56' setback. Mrs. Fink said she feels the 15' difference is very significant.

Mr. Fowles asked why it was necessary to squeeze the parking lot between wetlands and a mature tree line that the township wants to maintain, when there are other areas on the property where they could put a parking lot. He said this is the worst place on the property. Mr. Harris explained the middle of the property is already developed with a parking lot, the upper area is a septic field with parking beside it, and the remaining open space along Mechanicsville Road is designated as a field for youth programs, which leaves this area for a new parking lot.

Mr. Lanzetta explained that the 2nd parking lot was installed in the location that had previously been used as their ball field. He said they now intend to use the empty area by Mechanicsville Road for the new ball field. Mr. Lanzetta said if the empty area by Mechanicsville Road was used for parking, they would need a shuttle service to get people to the church. He said the only spot left to add parking is adjacent to the lower level of the new addition to be convenient for families with children to enter and access their classrooms for children's Sunday services, and then the parents with children could also park in that lower lot. Dr. Sandberg said in his opinion they should use the ball field area by Mechanicsville Road if they want additional parking spaces, without making the excuse that it is too far to walk.

Mrs. Fink explained the original approved church plan was for something smaller, and the Planning Commissions responsibility is to the township, neighbors and the original plan. She said the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance provides good planning, tree line protection and water resource care, and the township is not responsible to keep opening up that document and zoning so that the growing church fits on the property. Mr. Lanzetta said they went to the Zoning Hearing Board to request a variance for impervious surface limits. He said the church had hoped to grow, but is growing beyond its limits, and they wouldn't have built the addition to the building without a plan to also build this parking area.

Mrs. Mehling asked if the parking could be split, with 50 spaces in the new location and 50 spaces elsewhere on the property. She said 98 spaces are a lot in the proposed area.

Mrs. Fink proposed they widen the gap of time between services to lessen the number of cars. Mr. Lanzetta replied they had studied this, and there are over 75 volunteers on a Sunday morning and there may be 3 cars for one family due to them needing to be at the church at different times. Mr. Lanzetta said they currently have 2 services on Sunday morning, and 1 on Saturday evening.

Mr. Gray asked about capacity, and Mr. Lanzetta said they have 450-500 persons currently in the sanctuary at each service, with 250 kids in classes in the lower level. Mr. Gray asked if when they double the size of the sanctuary, would they continue 2 services with 900 seats or only have 1 service. Mr. Lanzetta said they would continue to have 2 services as many people preferred to attend the later service.

Mr. Harris said a waiver being requested is to allow the parking in the "front yard" of the site. He asked if they could achieve the 75' setback by taking out the landscaped island down the middle of

the proposed parking lot and respect the wetlands, would the Planning Commission be in favor. Mrs. Fink asked for the opinion of the Landscape Review Committee.

Ms. Manicone, Landscape Review Committee, said she needs to physically see exactly where the tree line is, the extent of the canopy from the trees and root zone, and take measurements from a defined location from the guardrail out front and see a stakeout of the limit of disturbance. Mr. Harris said they would schedule a field meeting.

Mr. Gray asked if they really needed 98 parking spaces in the lower area, questioning if they would be used only by families going to the classrooms or for general parking. Mr. Lanzetta said there are formulas designed especially for churches, and that is the number of spaces that has been determined for their needs.

Mr. Gray said the Bucks County Planning Commission had recommended a one-way direction with angled parking spots, which could help to reduce the dimension. He suggested some design options that could potentially come closer to the Zoning Hearing Board decision as a proposed compromise.

Mr. Spadafora said he was uncomfortable making a recommendation before hearing that all of the township engineers' comments were "will comply". He was also concerned that the neighbors had not been notified of this plan. Mr. Harris said they had not been aware of the neighbor notification requirement, but they are now.

Mrs. Mehling agreed that the township engineer's comments needed to be addressed.

Mr. Fowles said that there needs to be zero potential damage to the existing tree line, and the Planning Commission will be guided by the township's Landscape Consultant. Mr. Fowles had concerns that dumping water into the ground near the trees may not be a good idea. Ms. Manicone said she had concerns about the excavation process, and the fact that water may be piped to the basin and also towards the trees.

Mrs. Mehling thanked Mr. Harris and Mr. Lanzetta for presenting and explaining the project, and said that Ms. Manicone will advise the Planning Commission of what is happening on the site after her site visit is completed. Mr. Harris asked to be on the next Planning Commission agenda to present a revised sketch of a design as the church has an immediate need for this parking lot. Mr. Gray said the deadline for a sketch plan submission would be June 21st.

Mr. Lanzetta said their timeline was to complete construction of the building addition and the new parking lot at the same time. He said the project has been designed in multiple phases, with completion of the addition followed by a temporary Certificate of Occupancy to use the new space while renovating the existing space, hopefully in August or September.

Mrs. Mehling made a motion, seconded by Mr. Fowles, to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 8:50 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Lori Wicen.