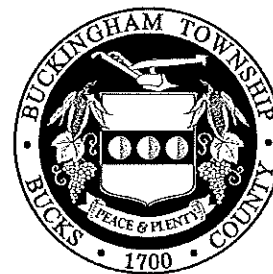


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PLANNING COMMISSION

AGENDA

JUNE 1, 2022

Call to Order 7:30 p.m.

1. Consideration of approving draft Planning Commission minutes of April 6, 2022.
2. Consideration of recommending Preliminary/Final Approval of the “**Buckingham Friends School – Gymnasium & Science Center**”, Land Development, 1 Lot, Township File LD 2022-01, TMP# 6-14-58, 5684 Route 202, Zoned I / VC-2 / VC-3, with a 90-day review period expiration date of August 30, 2022.

Buckingham Township Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes

The regular meeting of the Buckingham Township Planning Commission was held June 1, 2022 in the Township Building, 4613 Hughesian Drive, Buckingham, Pennsylvania.

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

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

Consideration of approving the draft Planning Commission minutes of the April 6, 2022 meeting.

Mr. Fowles made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Mehling, to approve, as most recently presented, the draft Planning Commission meeting minutes of the April 6, 2022 Meeting.

Mr. Spadafora and Mr. Thomson abstained from the vote, as they were not present at the April 6, 2022 meeting.

The item was tabled.

Consideration of recommending Preliminary/Final Approval of the “Buckingham Friends School – Gymnasium & Science Center”, Land Development, 1 Lot, Township File LD 2022-01, TMP# 6-14-58, 5684 Route 202, Zoned I / VC-2 / VC-3, with a 90-day review period expiration date of August 30, 2022.

Edward Murphy, Esquire, Greg Glitzer and Sharon Dotts of Gilmore & Associates, Paul Lindenmaier, Buckingham Friends School Head of School, and Elizabeth Heddy of Centerbrook Architects and Planners LLP, were present to discuss the proposed plan.

Mr. Murphy explained they were present to discuss a plan for expansion of the Buckingham Friends School Campus which was introduced to the Board of Supervisor’s as a concept last October, and was well received and encouraged to move forward.

Mr. Lindenmaier introduced himself as the Head of Buckingham Friends School for 4 years, with the school completing its 227th year. Mr. Lindenmaier said they are not growing the school, but were excited to be over 170 students, up from 130 students five years ago.

Mr. Lindenmaier said the school was following a master facilities plan made with Centerbrook Architects in 2020 as a guidepost. He explained the plan being presented includes the replacement of the current gym, which will be connected to the existing arts building with an elevator added for accessibility.

Mr. Lindenmaier said they also plan to renovate and expand classrooms inside the main school building footprint, which was added onto the original 1794 school house.

Mr. Lindenmaier said a driving interest in science was pushing the science classroom moving to its own building on the edge of the woods on the 44 acre campus.

Mr. Lindenmaier said the plan also includes installing a single roof bus canopy where their eleven buses queue up to collect and drop off the students.

Mr. Lindenmaier explained that the plan also includes a future renovation of the art studio, adding a small bump out for the music room. He said this will allow a larger art studio and a wood shop in the basement. Mrs. Mehling asked if that will be a two story building, and Mr. Lindenmaier said yes, the elevator will access both floors and take one down to the gym. He explained the gym is two stories tall for height, but will flow at the same level as the arts building.

Mr. Thomson asked if the science facility will include laboratory activities, as he had concerns about effluent impacting the septic system. Mr. Lindenmaier said it will have large multi-purpose tables and a small restroom, and will be used for introductory life science, with no toxic chemicals in use. He said there will be small sinks for washing up, and an outdoor teaching porch. Mr. Glitzer said this building will connect to the existing drip irrigation treatment system currently used for the upper school. Mr. Lindenmaier added they also do not use chemicals on the property for lawn maintenance. Mr. Thomson requested a statement that the science facility effluent will not include chemicals.

Mr. Murphy said all items in the June 1, 2022 Knight Engineering review are will comply or will be worked out to the township engineer's satisfaction.

Mr. Murphy said they wanted to highlight one particular issue in the Knight Engineering review letter regarding the location of the primary area for the proposed on-lot sewage system for the new gymnasium and art building, which encroaches into the 100' perimeter of the tract. Mr. Murphy argued that the zoning ordinance allows encroachment for walking trails, bike paths, swales and even a road in the 100' perimeter, but not a sewage system. He said they are proposing incorporating the septic system into the trail that would surround it as part of a teaching environment. Mr. Glitzer explained the current system is tank flow to a seepage field, which needs to be replaced, adding that the Bucks County Department of Health categorized the new system as a "repair".

Mr. Murphy said the proposed sewage system area passed perc and soil profiles, and is largely devoid of trees, making it an appropriate site for the system, however it will require the removal of a few smaller trees (Ms. Dotts said the largest tree was 14" caliber). He explained the site has steep slopes, which limits the areas for placement of the septic system. Mr. Glitzer said the site has

existing drip irrigation systems and existing septic systems, keeping the wastewater dispersed and conventional while maintenance free as much as possible. Mr. Gray asked if they would consider a drip irrigation system for the new building, and Mr. Glitzer said that would involve a more advanced permitting process and revamping the existing treatment system, which they do not want to do. Mr. Glitzer said that there were a significant number of trees in the current drip irrigation area that died; adding there were no 36" or greater trees in the proposed new area that would be disturbed. Mrs. Mehling asked how large the area would be, and Mr. Murphy said 60' x 30', not even ½ an acre.

Mr. Gray asked if they would entertain making the new system a drip irrigation, which would eliminate any tree disturbance. Mr. Murphy said no, as it would be much more maintenance intensive, and would need to be fenced off. Mr. Gray said the ordinance allows a path concept for drip irrigation systems.

Mrs. Mehling asked what would happen if the new system failed in a few years. Mr. Gray said it would go through the same review system by the Bucks County Department of Health as all others.

Mr. Gray said he would defer to the Planning Commission, as this is a unique project with unique opportunities, however he questioned if this is the way the ordinance envisioned encroachments into the perimeter vegetation. Mr. Gray said that the general public will not see the septic system as the perimeter property is deed restricted open space and won't be developed, however the Board of Supervisor's will need to make the ultimate choice if this is an acceptable use of an exception into the 100' vegetation for a septic system. Mr. Gray suggested this may be a matter for the Zoning Hearing Board to decide.

Mr. Spadafora said he was puzzled as to why the applicant did not want to go to the Zoning Hearing Board; was it due to time or money? Mr. Murphy said yes, both. Mr. Spadafora asked what would happen if the Zoning Hearing Board denied the waiver request to encroach into the 100' vegetation, and Mr. Murphy said they would have to look at an alternate type of treatment system and would have to retest. He repeated the proposed area is already cleared and is the logical area for any system. Mr. Murphy said the ordinance is oddly written to exclude obvious things but to allow more obtrusive things than they are proposing.

Mr. Fowles said he understood the desire for the request and thinks the end is correct, but the means are not. Mr. Spadafora agreed that the process is important.

Mr. Glitzer said the stormwater related waivers being requested were added in an attempt to limit the footprint on the woods, i.e., with the septic system designed in the most open area, and trying not to enter areas in the woods to create basins. Mr. Glitzer said there are stormwater facilities already built for the athletic field that has filter berms and a reservoir, with all downhill runoff entering those two facilities. Mr. Gray said they would want to be sure that in using the existing facilities, they were not conflicting with existing agreements already in place for those facilities. Mr. Gray said they would work through the details and calculations, adding there will be waivers added and removed along the way.

Ms. Heddy displayed architectural drawings showing the conceptual new gymnasium with a connector to the existing arts building. She explained they nestled the gym into the topography so from the quad you enter at the upper level, with the two-story back side of the gymnasium at grade. She said inside there is an ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant connector connection, with bathrooms serving both buildings. Mr. Heddy said the design includes the future intention to install solar panels on the roof.

Mr. Thomson asked the purpose and use of the gymnasium, and Ms. Heddy said it would primarily be used for school sports teams, instruction and events already being held, adding that it will have a correct court size and a small set of pullout bleachers. She said there is not a big change planned for capacity or intent of use.

Ms. Heddy said there will be a small warming kitchen located in the connector area, to replace the one in the existing gym.

Mr. Spadafora asked if there would be locker rooms, and Ms. Heddy replied no, that the bathrooms are being replaced in kind and increasing the count in the connector area.

Ms. Heddy displayed a conceptual drawing of the science classroom, being a one room schoolhouse with many windows into the forest, one large flexible space with sinks, storage and a bathroom. She said it includes a small covered area facing the raingarden.

Ms. Heddy showed the proposed canopy for the bus drop off zone, with its design light and visually unobtrusive as possible, placed over an existing walkway.

Mr. Gray said with the art center expansion sometime in the future, were they providing all improvements during the initial construction and expecting to pull building permits 5-10 years down the road, or all at one time? Mr. Glitzer explained that would be based on funding availability and be more of a staging process than phasing. He said the NPDES Permit will include all of the proposed improvements. Mr. Glitzer said the costs were hard to predict, but they plan to continue making the improvements through the various stages. Mr. Murphy said he would prefer to get preliminary/final plan approval for all of the project, including the various stages.

Ms. Dotts confirmed that stormwater management has to be in the first phase due to encroachments. Mr. Gray suggested using the term “scheduled improvements” rather than “phase”, with a construction sequence noted on the plan. He said this way the building permits and E&S Plan can follow the construction sequence.

Ms. Manicone wanted to publicly commend Val Ligget, staff arborist for Gilmore & Associates, for her detailed procedure and observations for the work preparation including the preservation of root zones. She said there is a 44” caliber Oak tree in particular to be protected.

Mr. Luke Rosanova said the Bucks County Planning Commissions issues have been largely addressed, but did question the solar axis plan. He said while the gymnasium appears to be placed to its best orientation, there is a requirement for plans to be submitted. Mr. Glitzer said they will add that to the landscape and site plan. Mr. Rosanova said the Bucks County Planning Commission

review letter would be forthcoming, adding that the Knight Engineering review letter covered most of their items.

Discussion was held on delaying a vote on the plan until the septic area is moved or the Zoning Hearing Board grants a variance for the location. Mr. Murphy suggested the Planning Commission consider recommending approval subject to Zoning Hearing Board approval as they want to keep the plan moving forward with the intent to open the gymnasium for use in the fall of 2023.

Mrs. Mehling asked if the septic system area could be adjusted to avoid the 100' perimeter, and Mr. Gray replied yes, but that would require more testing by the Bucks County Department of Health. Mr. Gray also noted the applicant needs to show the location of a replacement area, but is not required to perform testing. Mr. Murphy said in his view they should try to get zoning relief first before going to the effort of moving the system. Mr. Gray said it is likely this is the best site, and that would be their "hardship" for zoning relief. Mr. Murphy said they would plan to apply to the Zoning Hearing Board prior to their scheduled appearance for plan review by the Board of Supervisor's on June 22, 2022. Mr. Murphy said they would request that the Board of Supervisor's grant preliminary/final approval subject to Zoning Hearing Board relief, and if the relief was not granted, they would return in the future to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Murphy said another consideration is that the school has recently received its largest single donation in history and the benefactor wants to see progress. He said a favorable recommendation would provide comfort.

Mr. Fowles made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Mehling, to recommend Preliminary/Final Approval of the "Buckingham Friends School – Gymnasium & Science Center", Land Development, 1 Lot, Township File LD 2022-01, TMP# 6-14-58, 5684 Route 202, Zoned I / VC-2 / VC-3, with the proviso that:

- 1) Applicant shall receive satisfactory relief from the Zoning Hearing Board for the location of the onsite septic system replacement;*
- 2) Subject to compliance with all comments within the June 2, 3033 Knight Engineering, Inc. review letter;*
- 3) Subject to compliance with all comments within the May 27, 2022 Landscape Review Consultants review letter;*
- 4) Applicant shall eliminate all reference to phasing and include all improvements on one final plan with a Sequence of Construction note added;*
- 5) Support for all waivers supported by Knight Engineering, Inc. and others to be worked out to acceptable alternatives to the satisfaction of Knight Engineering, Inc.;*
- 6) The science center will not have a laboratory;*
- 7) Solar Panels will be installed on the gymnasium center at some time in the future.*

The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Fowles made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Mehling, to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 8:35 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Lori Wicen.

Minutes approved by Planning Commission on September 7, 2022.