

East Whiteland Township
Planning Commission
Wednesday – February 23, 2022

*This meeting will be held in-person (not virtually) at the East Whiteland Township Building.
Masks are required for all in-person attendees regardless of vaccination status.*

Minutes

(agenda items [linked](#) to online documents)

Members Present:

Todd Asousa, Vice-Chair; Jeff Broadbelt, John Laumer; Tim Kelly; and Dante Bradley.

Members Absent: Deb Abel

Also Present:

Zachary Barner, Director of Planning & Development; Bernadette Kearney, Township Solicitor; Darrell Becker, Township Engineer; and Chris Williams, Township Traffic Engineer.

Call to Order:

Mr. Bradley called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes:

Mr. Broadbelt made a motion, seconded by Mr. Kelly, to approve the **January 26, 2022** meeting minutes.

The motion carried unanimously **(4-0)** Mr. Asousa was not present for this vote.

Condition Use Applications:

1. [CU-03-2022 for Great Valley School District Outdoor Recreation](#) (Great Valley School District) – Conditional Use application to allow both passive and active recreation facilities in a residential district. The plan proposes outdoor play areas, relocated garden/greenhouse facilities, and a multi-use recreational trail adjacent to the existing KD Markley Elementary School and proposed 5/6th Grade Center. The property, located at 348 Swedesford Road, is within the R-1 (Residential) Zoning District.

Chris Jensen of T&M associates presented on behalf of the School District. The district was able to purchase a 7-acre parcel (348 Swedesford Road) directly adjacent to the existing KD Markley Elementary School and is planning on using the additional land area for both passive and active recreation. The property at 348 Swedesford Road is currently a single-family home which will be demolished during construction. The land development plan submitted by the school district originally showed the multi-use trail running from the PECO right of way along the property line to Swedesford Road; however, the new plan shows the multi-use trail located further away from the school and the schools play areas.

GVSD will maintain the vegetation to the east along the shared property line with the adjacent residential development. Discussion about vegetation between the trail and the homes to the east ensued. GVSD is considering installation of a fence that would enclose the play area, separating it from the multi-use trail. The trail would be owned and maintained by the School District. Mr. Kelly asked about lighting, Mr. Jensen stated there are no proposed lights for the recreation area.

Public Comment:

Public comments were made regarding vegetation and buffering on the property as well as the possibility of a fence.

Action: Mr. Broadbelt made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bradley to recommend Conditional Use approval to the Board of Supervisors.

The motion carried unanimously (5-0)

Development Applications:

2. [LD-07-2021 for Great Valley School District 5/6 Grade Center](#) (Great Valley School District) – Final Subdivision & Land Development application to construct a new 172,000 square foot 5th and 6th Grade School along with associated improvements for vehicular parking and circulation, playfields, a multi-use trail, sanitary sewer, and stormwater management. The plan also calls for the consolidation of four (4) existing lots into two (2) lots. The property, located at 354 Swedesford Road, is within the NS (Neighborhood School) and OS (Open Space) Zoning Districts.

Chris Jensen, the Applicant's Civil Engineer, presented on behalf of the School District. Mr. Jensen began by addressing each of the consultant review letters. At this moment there are a few requests from ARRO that must be addressed, primarily administrative items such as signage.

The District is requesting a number of waivers. A partial waiver regarding tree placement is being requested, as well as a waiver for street trees, the applicant meets the number of replacement trees however the caliber of trees is not being replaced. Discussion concerning tree replacement on and near athletic fields continued. Staff, Landconcepts, and the Applicant will meet to further discuss tree replacement.

Guy DiMartino, the Applicant's Traffic Engineer discussed the McMahon review letter and the overall traffic plan. Site distance at the Mill Road and Swedesford Road intersection was examined. After construction, site distance would be increased by 60 feet to the left at the intersection and increased by 100 feet to the right. PennDOT has been encouraging the applicant to make intersection improvements.

Mr. Broadbelt asked if the school zone speed limit could be extended, as it is difficult for people coming over the crest to slow down in time. Chris Williams agreed he believes the school zone should be extended however there are limitations on how far a school zone can be from the property line. PennDOT school zone limitations will be further researched.

A possible flashing light at the cross walk for the proposed trail across Swedesford will be evaluated once construction is complete.

The intersection at Swedesford Road and Church Road is proposed to be signalized by the District, the applicant is working with PennDOT to navigate that process. Traffic flow and past accidents at the Swedesford and Church intersection were discussed.

Traffic generation as discussed. In total there are 603 at A.M peak hour and 306 in the afternoon peak hour trips. All buses for the existing KD Markley school will use Swedesford Road to enter and all buses going to the new 5/6 Center will use the Church Road entrance. Approximately 30 buses will access the new 5/6 Center.

Mr. Asousa asked if the improvements at Mill Lane would be completed first. Mr. DiMartino acknowledged how important that improvement is but that he could not guarantee which of the improvements would be completed first.

Bernadette Kearney, Solicitor for the Township, asked if the bell timing for each school would be affected by having or not having a signalized light at the Swedesford and Church Road intersection. The signal is a factor in the bell schedule but the larger consideration is the ability to manage the traffic at the entrances to the site and the routing of the buses throughout the District to the various schools.

Sidewalks along the property were discussed. The District would like the sidewalks along Church Road and Swedesford Road to be deferred until given notice by the Township. Mr. Barner explained that if the Township could find a way to extend sidewalks in either direction it would trigger the need for the School District to construct sidewalks on their property. The School District would like to go out to bid in April. As a result, a recommendation for final plan approval is being requested.

Public Comment:

Tom Curran of 51 Church Road: Doesn't see how a turning lane could be added to church road with how close existing property owners are to the road, eminent domain would be needed. Mr. Curran believes the traffic study is invalid. Mr. Curran stated that an Act 34 hearing for the public is scheduled for March 3rd, he encourages the Planning Commission to delay approval until then. Mr. Curran believes the traffic backup will be north bound on church. Mr. Curran is concerned about the minimum time differential between the two schools.

Mr. Asousa asked Mr. Williams to address the possibility of a traffic signal at the church road intersection. Mr. Williams stated this intersection does not experience the same volume of traffic as some of the other intersections in the Township. Mr. Asousa asked Mr. DiMartino to address the public comment. Mr. DiMartino explained that once the applicant is acquiring their HOP permit, increased study of the intersection will be made to decide the traffic signal design. Turning lanes are not anticipated at this time.

Ms. Kearney addressed the Act 34 hearing, stating that the hearing is to discuss funds and not the planning process, but she does understand the importance of the planning related issues. Ms. Kearney

also addressed the two schools bell schedules, offering that the township is requiring the District to operate both schools on different schedules.

Ms. Kearney suggested that the Planning Commission could condition the district to a 70-minute starting gap between the two schools starting for the day. Chuck Peterson, Director of Business Affairs for the district, explained there are not enough buses, bus drivers, or funds to purchase additional buses. With the shortage, kids from various age groups and schools in the District will take shuttle buses from the Great Valley Middle School/High School campus to their respective school.

Mr. Peterson advised that the school schedules and bell schedules was a School Board decision. Ms. Kearney stated that a 70-minute gap is described in the traffic study and was part of the Preliminary Plan approval. Mr. DiMartino agreed that the study does state that there will be a 70-minute gap between the bell schedule of the two schools, however those staggered bells time have not been analyzed yet - 70 minutes was the most conservative. Mr. Laumer suggested a gap possibly between 40-70 minutes to be decided by the District.

Mr. Williams explained that the School Districts study has always presented a worst-case scenario; he would like to see the traffic study updated to show existing conditions. Mr. Williams explained intersections must meet the need for a traffic signal. The Church and Swedesford intersection has historically never met the need for a signal. According to the study the traffic volume is north bound on church road and east bound on Swedesford road.

Mr. Broadbelt asked if the school district was open to identifying a minimum differential time bell schedule. Ms. Kearney stated any modifications could be offered to the Township to be vetted by the police chief and traffic engineer. Mr. Barner asked if the school district would be open to having any changes in bell times reviewed by the township engineer and police. Dr. Goffredo the superintendent of the school district identified that the site is just not set up in a way that the two schools could ever operate on the same schedule.

Mr. Peterson addressed the Act 34 hearing and emphasized everyone is invited and welcome to make comments. It is important to progress to the next step, enrollment has continued to increase rapidly. The overall project is a 2-year project, it is imperative that demolition and site work begin this summer while kids are off the campus.

Action: Mr. Bradley made a motion, seconded by Mr. Kelly to recommend Final Land Development approval along with waivers and deferral of the sidewalk to the Board of Supervisors contingent upon compliance of consultant review letters.

The motion carried unanimously (5-0)

Zoning Applications:

3. Zoning Hearing Board application(s) seeking [dimensional variances](#) from §200-42 (and corresponding Table of Development Standards within §200 Attachment 9) to allow a reduction

in the required minimum setbacks from the adjoining residentially-zoned tract. Relief is requesting in conjunction with the following development applications as outlined below:

- a. [LD-12-2021 for 9 Malin Road Office / Flex Building](#) (Evergreen Landscaping) – Preliminary Land Development Application to construct an 8,490 square foot office / flex building. The property, located at 9 (S) Malin Road, is within the I (Industrial) Zoning District.
 - i. building setback from the adjoining northern residential a parcel, to permit the required 200' setback to be reduced to 142'.
 - ii. driveway setback from the adjoining northern residential a parcel, to permit the required 100' setback to be reduced to 20'.

- b. [LD-02-2022 for 10 Malin Road Office / Flex Building](#) (10 Malin Road Associates, LP) – Preliminary Land Development Application to construct an 11,000 square foot office / flex building, parking, and associated improvements. The property, located at 9 (S) Malin Road, is within the I (Industrial) Zoning District.
 - i. building setback from the adjoining eastern residential a parcel, to permit the required 200' setback to be reduced to 104'.
 - ii. driveway setback from the adjoining northern residential a parcel, to permit the required 100' setback to be reduced to 20'.

Scott Deisher from JMR engineering presented on behalf of the Applicant for both 9 and 10 Malin Road. Mr. Deisher explained the relief needed from the zoning hearing board to proceed with the land development application.

Mr. Barner explained that any variance that will result in a land development application must attend the planning commission. Mr. Barner explained that the applicant must receive zoning approval prior to receiving Preliminary Land Development approval. In addition to the setback variances, the Applicant is also seeking a special exception to permit outdoor storage.

There will be an 8-foot retaining wall as well as landscaping to be planted to provide a buffer. Currently the existing building on 10 Malin is 140 feet from the proposed homes at the Bishop Tube site. The applicant is proposing their building to be 200 feet to the proposed homes. Uses permitted on the site were discussed. The accessory building is large however there are no dimensional requirements or parameters for accessory buildings.

Action: Mr. Kelly made a motion, seconded by Mr. Laumer to recommend both variance and special exception approval to the Zoning Hearing Board. The motion carried unanimously (5-0)

Adjournment:

Meeting Adjourned at 10:00 PM

~ Next Meeting ~
Wednesday – March 23, 2022