

**MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2022**

PRESENT:

Tom Tosti, Chair

Tom Piacentino, Vice Chair

Rich Nuttall

Keith Auerswald

Joseph Antonelli

Jim Ennis – Building and Zoning Director

Jim Esposito, Township Solicitor – Curtin & Heefner

Isaac Kessler, Township Engineer – Remington & Vernick, RVE

ABSENT

Holly Cunningham, Secretary

Jacqueline Ratner

1. Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call

Mr. Tosti called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Mr. Piacentino took roll call with five members present.

Mr. Tosti announced to the audience of the postponed appearance for the Popeyes at 1791 E. Lincoln Highway and the addition at 2462 Trenton Road applications in case anyone was in attendance for those Land Developments.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Tosti made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 5, 2022 Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Auerswald seconded and the motion passed 4-0. Mr. Nuttall abstained from participating due to not attending the January 5, 2022 meeting.

3. Discussion of Application for Preliminary and Final Land Development for Neshaminy High School Athletic Facility Renovations, S/LD #21-08, TMP #s 22-011-002, 22-011-002.001, and 22-012-358

Dr. Rob McGee, Superintendent for the Neshaminy School District, John Allen, Neshaminy School Board President, Jason Bowman, Assistant to the Superintendent and Director of Secondary Education, Don Irwin, Business Administrator, John Torrente, Solicitor for the School District, and Hugh Cadzow, Design Professional for the ELA Group, Inc., were all in attendance to represent the land development application.

The application was presented during the January 5, 2022 Planning Commission meeting. The purpose of the January 5th presentation was to only cover the project

with the School District's knowledge that some aspects need to be resolved with the Township Engineer before requesting a recommendation from the Planning Commission.

John Torrente briefly summarized the changes to the Plan from the January 5, 2022 meeting. He covered the more recent comments from the Township's Civil and Traffic Engineers and the School District will comply to all of the provided review comments from the Township. Mr. Torrente stated the three waivers requested are minor and reasonable waivers. Both Mr. Torrente and Dr. Rob McGee emphasized the project is consistent with the goals of the Township's Climate Action Plan by incorporating such improvements to the property's stormwater management system and installing LED lighting.

Dr. McGee covered how the improvements have been in development for roughly a decade and originated from the need for synthetic turf fields. Grass doesn't recover as well as turf and other school districts, as well as members of the school district, don't want their kids playing on grass as the seasons get further into the colder months. The improvements are long overdue.

Mr. Tosti stated he was a little disappointed the football stadium will no longer contain grass, but understood the issues.

Mr. Nuttall asked on the phasing of the improvements. Dr. McGee answered the phasing is uncertain at the present time, because everything has to be put out to bid. Additionally, the stormwater installation dictates everything afterwards.

Mr. Piacentino also expressed he will miss the dirt and asked if turf helps reduce injuries. Jason Bowman answered there are requirements for athletic programs that do not allow playing on dirt as certain team sports go deeper into their seasons. Mr. Bowman provided an example of the issues related to field hockey and parents of players expressing concerns about playing on grass.

Mr. Nuttall asked if any supply chain issues are anticipated. Dr. McGee answered that could be a possibility and informed how the improvements are dependent on the sports seasons and how everything could be a multi-year endeavor because of supply chain issues. He further informed some teams will have to play at away locations at times. Hugh Cadzow described the issues with field maintenance for grass and the staffing issues required for the upkeep.

Mr. Cadzow did a rehash presentation of the overall improvements and specifically focused on the minor changes from the time everything was presented during the January 5, 2022 meeting, which included:

- The locations of the shotput, javelin, and softball field have slightly shifted with the current plan revisions.
- The locations of signage throughout the facility will serve as directional and safety purposes.
- The details of the security fencing surrounding the multipurpose field.
- The multipurpose field is now better connected to the amenities provided at the stadium.
- The landscaping and tree planting design. Mr. Cadzow informed of the issue of planting medium trees and issues with larger tree plantings and how the root system does not grow well near synthetic turf.
- The LED lighting will have a sharp cutoff and prevents glare.
- Construction of a centralized stormwater facility that is designed to handle the entire athletic fields area.
- The project has gained NPDES approval since the January 5, 2022 meeting.

Mr. Piacentino requested further clarification on the concrete monument waiver. Mr. Cadzow answered monuments were already in existence at the property for survey purposes and new ones aren't necessary.

Mr. Nuttall asked if there was going to be any access off Fairhill Avenue. Dr. McGee answered that there will not be any access from Fairhill Avenue. There is currently a transportation access gate at the end of Fairhill but will not be used for access to the athletic facility. Dr. McGee made it clear there will only be one access drive to the athletic facility. Mr. Kessler, the Township Engineer, stated the confusion about access from Fairhill Avenue was probably generated from the installation of ADA ramps at that area of the Township.

Mr. Nuttall made a motion to recommend approval of the application, which was:

Recommendation of approval of S/LD #21-8 - Application for Construction, Improvements, and Renovations to the Neshaminy High School Athletic Facility at 2001 Old Lincoln Highway. Recommendation is based on Plan entitled "Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan for Neshaminy High School Athletic Facility Renovations," comprising 65 sheets and dated November 22, 2021, and last revised January 14, 2022. Plan is prepared by ELA Sport, Lititz, PA. Recommendation is further based on comments provided in the following:

- January 27, 2022 letter from Isaac E. Kessler, P.E., of Remington and Vernick Engineers, Middletown Township Engineer*

- b. *December 28, 2021 letter from Phil Wursta, P.E., of TPD, Inc., Middletown Township Traffic and Transportation Engineer*
- c. *January 19, 2022 letter from Ronald B. Smith, Senior Engineer for Suburban Lighting Consultants, Middletown Township Lighting Consultant*
- d. *January 5, 2022 review letter from the Bucks County Planning Commission*
- e. *January 11, 2022 and January 13, 2022 letters from the Bucks County Conservation District*
- f. *December 4, 2021 letter from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission*

The Recommendation is further based on the responses and waivers requested in the January 14, 2022 letter prepared by Hugh D. Cadzow, RLA, of ELA Sport.

Mr. Piacentino seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

4. Review of Zoning Hearing Board Advertisement.

Mr. Ennis provided an overview of pending appeals before the Zoning Hearing Board. He made aware of the issues with a few of the applications scheduled for the February 23, 2022 meeting agenda. The Planning Commission briefly discussed the issues with allowing storage containers on a residential property, as well as trying to construct a home on a very undersized lot. .

5. Adjournment

Mr. Tosti made a motion for adjournment at 7:50 P.M. and Mr. Antonelli seconded the motion which carried on a 5-0 vote.