

**LOWER GWYNEDD TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION – VIA ZOOM
Minutes of June 16, 2021**

Present: Michael Twersky, Vice-Chair
Danielle Porreca
Rich Valiga
Rusty Beardsley
Stephen Paccione
Maureen Nunn

Ken Amey, Zoning Officer
Patty Furber, B&Z Administrator
Ed Brown, Gilmore & Associates
Brian Jones, McMahon & Assoc.

Absent: Craig Melograno, Chairman, Joel Mayor, Michael Rashid

Call to Order:

The meeting of the Lower Gwynedd Township Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 PM.

Approval of Minutes: January 20, 2021

A motion was made by Mr. Paccione and seconded by Ms. Nunn to approve the minutes of the Lower Gwynedd Township Planning Commission meeting of January 20, 2021. The motion carried unanimously.

Subdivision/Land Development:

Introduction:

**820 N. Bethlehem Pike
Goddard School**

#21-01LD

Present for the land development application was Ms. Catherine Harper from Timothy Knox, Mr. Joel Comanda from Inland Design, Mr. David Goldstein, owner of the property, Mr. Peter Philips, Architect and Mr. Mike Thompson, owner of the Goddard School in Horsham. Ms. Harper started by explaining to the board the use for the site, which would include a Goddard School daycare center on the Bethlehem Pike frontage, and a professional office in the existing building at the rear of the property. On June 10, the ZHB granted approval for Goddard School; the professional office is a permitted use.

Mr. Phillips showed renderings of the proposed development to the board. Mr. Twersky had concerns regarding the ingress/egress of the site especially north bound traffic, trying to make a left out of the center onto Bethlehem Pike and its close proximity to the Gwynedd Center. Mr. Comanda said they would look to address that concern and are currently working with their traffic engineer and PennDOT regarding the driveways. He explained there will be two entrances, one at the southern entrance of the site, which would be ingress only, and one at the northern access of the site, which would be full movement. He explained the southern entrance has poor visibility to Bethlehem Pike, so trying to make it a full access drive wouldn't be a safe option. Mr. Comanda feels that the proposed site design provides the safest layout for site. Mr. Amey suggested that their traffic engineer meet with Mr. Dixon from McMahan to come up with a solution to the safest point for the access. Mr. Comanda agreed.

Mr. Twersky asked about pick up and drop off at the site. Mr. Thompson explained that there is no set drop off time, and that children are accompanied into the school by their parents. Ms. Porreca expressed concern regarding traffic backup on Bethlehem Pike during rush hour. Mr. Thompson did not think the Goddard School would contribute significantly to the existing traffic. This is something that the traffic engineers will look into.

Mr. Twersky asked about the phasing of the demolition and construction of the office in the back of the site. Mr. Goldstein explained that office in back of the site would be only a minor renovation and will look for a tenant after the approvals. He said it would probably be a professional tenant with a small practice. Mr. Twersky had concerns regarding the renovations going on while the Goddard School is operating. He would like the phasing to be addressed. Mr. Goldstein, agreed and said he would take this into account.

Mr. Twersky asked about stormwater management. Mr. Comanda explained that there will be two stormwater infiltration beds, one located between the two buildings in the rear parking lot the other located in front of Goddard School. Both underground facilities will drain to a level spreader in front of the building that will discharge onto Bethlehem Pike. Mr. Brown stated he would like to see other options for the stormwater and Mr. Comanda said he would look into. Mr. Twersky stated that is something that needs to be discussed at the next meeting.

Mr. Valiga noted that it would be helpful to have responses to the township staff review letters prior to the next meeting.

Ms. Harper explained that the current parking on the site includes an easement in favor of the Gwynedd Center for 12 spaces. Mr. Comanda said that the design provides the required parking for the site in addition to the 12 spaces for the Gwynedd Center. Mr.

Twersky wanted to know the purpose of the easement. Mr. Amey stated that the 12 spaces have to be provided due to a Zoning Hearing Board decision. Mr. Twersky brought up an issue from McMahon’s letter regarding the two spaces near the southern entrance. Mr. Comanda is looking at options to relocate these spaces.

Mr. Twersky asked if there were any audience questions and there was one regarding protective barriers for the outdoor play areas. Mr. Thompson stated that the state requires a fence that is gated and alarmed. He stated that they have an emergency preparedness drill and an emergency plan in place that is also state required. Mr. Twersky asked if the fire marshal had any issues. Mr. Comly stated that everything was addressed in his letter regarding driveway concerns and access for emergency vehicles.

Mr. Twersky said that it would be helpful to receive written responses to the review letters. Ms. Harper agreed and said they hope to be back in front of the board next month.



Introduction:

**776 Johns Lane
6-lot subdivision**

#21-02SUBD

Present for the introduction of the 6-lot subdivision application was Ms. Christen Pionzio from HRMM&L, Mr. Tim Woodrow from Woodrow & Associates and the applicant Mr. Martin Hughes.

Mr. Paccione recused himself due to a conflict.

Ms. Pionzio explained to the board that Mr. & Mrs. Hughes bought the property 14 years ago. They went to the Zoning Hearing Board three years ago for a special exception to allow the property to be developed under the standards for Historic Resource Protection. Ms. Pionzio explained that the neighboring property had opposed the application and that it went on for an additional 5 hearings, then to the court of common pleas and to the commonwealth court; ultimately Mr. & Mrs. Hughes prevailed.

Ms. Pionzio informed the board that they met with township staff twice regarding stormwater and decided to reduce the subdivision by one lot. The result is much larger lots, the smallest of which is over 47,000 square feet in area. Ms. Pionzio stated that by eliminating one lot that it would reduce the environmental impact on the site. Ms.

Pionzio stated they went through all the review letters, will comply on all and will focus on the waivers.

Mr. Twersky asked about the impact of the waiver to increase the grade at the turnaround from 4% to 5% and Mr. Brown stated that waiver would have no impact. Ms. Pionzio discussed the waivers regarding widening, curb and sidewalks on all frontages. Mr. Woodrow explained that any widening would change the character of the Johns Lane community, and that widening, curb, and sidewalks would potentially increase problems with cut through traffic as well. Mr. Twersky stated he wanted to be consistent with the curbing and asked Mr. Brown to look into this issue further. Ms. Pionzio stated this would be a private street.

Mr. Twersky was concerned with the amount of tree removal proposed. Ms. Pionzio stated they just received the report from their arborist. She said that the report notes 62 dead trees and that they intend to remove 2,090 caliber inches. Mr. Twersky asked that they forward a copy of the arborist report.

Ms. Pionzio stated that a historic resource study report is also required and that has been drafted. The narrative about improvements on property can't be finalized yet, but will comply.

Mr. Twersky wanted to know if they found a builder yet. Mr. Woodrow stated that they have not found one. Ms. Pionzio stated that Mr. Hughes wants the unique features of the property to stay intact. Mr. Twersky stated how are we to grant the waivers if we don't know what the development is going to look like, what is the exterior going to look like? Ms. Porreca wanted to know the sq. footage of the houses? Ms. Pionzio stated that they would range from 3,800- 4,000 sq. feet. An example of the future site would be very similar to Gypsy Way.

Ms. Pionzio discussed the issue with a trail through the property, and she and Mr. Woodrow explained that providing a trail would be virtually impossible. Ms. Pionzio stated that they would be willing to do some sort of equivalent trail improvement elsewhere in the township.

Mr. Twersky asked about the ingress/egress from the site. Mr. Woodrow stated that they can propose a stop sign, stop bar or a three way stop. Mr. Twersky said he would like to see this examined. Mr. Woodrow stated that he would drive by with Mr. Brown and Mr. Dixon after their meeting on Monday to look at the site line issue.

Mr. Woodrow informed the board that there will be an HOA that would take care of the roadway, snow, detention basin and rain gardens. Ms. Porreca asked about street lighting. Mr. Woodrow stated that there would be lamp posts in each driveway. Ms.

Porreca asked who would maintain these lamp posts. Mr. Woodrow stated that would be the responsibility of each homeowner, but the HOA would take responsibility if the homeowners do not. Mr. Valiga asked if there are any curbing waivers on private lanes within the township? Mr. Amey stated that he didn't recall any with this many homes. Mr. Valiga asked if this could be researched prior to the next meeting. Mr. Comly had issues regarding this being a private street and parking on one side. He stated that it must be enforced. Mr. Woodrow said there would be 'no parking' signs on one side of the street. Ms. Pionzio stated that they would give permission for the police to issue tickets on the private street if necessary.

Mr. Twersky asked that prior to the next meeting the following be addressed:

- 1. Ms. Pionzio to distribute arborist report;
- 2. Mr. Woodrow to distribute the historic impact report;
- 3. Ms. Pionzio & Mr. Woodrow to meet with staff regarding an alternative to the trail;
- 4. Ken to determine prior curbing waivers on private streets within the township;
- 5. Mr. Dixson and Mr. Woodrow to discuss the possibility of installing a 3-way stop at the new private drive.

Once these issues are addressed, the applicants will return.



ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Patty Furber, Secretary