

**EAST BRANDYWINE TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR SESSION
Wednesday, February 2, 2005 - 7:30 PM**

Those in Attendance:

Mr. Bruce Rawlings, Chairman
Mr. Stephen Cushman, Vice-Chairman
Mr. Michael Corbin, Member
Mr. Charles Giordano, Member
Mrs. Deborah Marshman, Member
Mrs. Sandra Moser, Member
Mr. Mervin Thomas, Member
Mrs. Beth Valocchi, Ex Officio Member
Mr. Scott T. Piersol, Township Manager
Mr. Albert Giannantonio, Township Engineer
Mr. John Spangler, Planning Commission Solicitor
Mrs. Mary Beth Smedley, Township Secretary/Treasurer

Mr. Rawlings opened the meeting at 7:30 P.M.

Planning Commission Minutes – January 5, 2004

Mr. Rawlings asked if there were additions or corrections to the above minutes. There were none. Mrs. Moser made a motion to approve the above minutes as submitted. Mrs. Marshman seconded the motion, with all voting Aye.

Brandywine Wallace Elementary School

The property owner and applicant is the Downingtown Area School District. The property is located on the east side of Dilworth Road between School Lane and Keller Way North and is within the R-2 Residential Zoning District. Access to the site is from Dilworth Road. The existing gross property area is 19.179 acres and the lot contains an existing 52,719 s.f. school building, paved driveway, paved parking areas, on-site sewer and water, lawn and woodland areas. The plan proposes to construct a new 58,612 s.f. two story school building, driveway and parking area. The maximum student capacity for the new building will be 650. The school proposes to be connected to public water and the applicant will request connection to the sewer system at the February 8, 2005 Municipal Authority Meeting. The existing school, parking areas and accessory facilities are to be demolished. At the request of residents living nearby, the school location was changed from the original design. Mr. Gil Lappano, Director of Facilities, Planning and Management for the School District, Mr. Michael Dirks, Engineer, Mr. Michael Strohecker, architect, and attorney Guy Donatelli discussed the revised plan.

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The building design will also be used at the Pickering Valley Elementary School site in Upper Uwchlan Township. Both schools will remain in use while the site and building construction occur. The applicant will construct a separate entrance for construction vehicles to use while school is in session. The construction area will be fenced. Mr. Lappano stated that some playground equipment would be moved during construction. The applicant will provide a construction phasing plan for the Township's review and approval.

The school will be two stories in height, with the kindergarten, first and second grades in the rear of the front-facing ground level, and the public spaces, including the gym, cafeteria and administration areas in the front of the building. The public spaces are proposed to be open for public use after school hours. The third, fourth and fifth grades will be located on the lower level. This level will also exit at ground level from the rear toward School Lane. The plan is to construct a long building with a curved central hallway to take advantage of the topography of the existing site.

The Township would like the applicant to install a sidewalk as part of the trail extension to interconnect with the trail easement in the Highland Pointe Development off of Corner Ketch Road. The applicant agreed to provide and install an asphalt trail and provide an easement. Mr. Piersol provided a copy of the Highland Pointe Subdivision for the applicant's engineer to review. This will be addressed on subsequent submissions.

Mr. Rawlings stated that although the Planning Commission was reviewing the revised plans at the request of the Township, there is not a formal land development application submitted at this time.

Mr. Lappano stated that this is the first time the School District has been in front of the Planning Commission since July of 2004. He stated that their engineers are revising the plan and hope to move the process along since the School District feels there is some urgency to complete the project as quickly as possible.

Mr. Donatelli stated that the School District will request several variances and special exceptions from the Zoning Ordinance. He expects those applications to be submitted shortly.

The plans have been revised in response to the Yerkes review letter dated July 2, 2004. The Township Engineer offered the following comments on the January 27, 2005 Yerkes review letter.

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Zoning Comments

3. Section 399-28.A. A(5) – A variance has been requested from this section to allow the existing non-conforming impervious coverage of 17.5% to be increased to 26.6%. Mr. Giannantonio has no objection to this request.

8. c – Section 399-82C (2) – According to the Ordinance, dead-end fire lane easements shall not exceed 400 feet and shall be terminated with an unobstructed vehicle turnaround or cul-de-sac with a minimum radius of 35 feet. The fire access lane is approximately 1,000 feet in length. A turnaround area with a minimum radius of 35-feet should be provided. Mr. Giannantonio recommends granting the variance if the circulation is acceptable to the Township Fire Marshall. Mr. Piersol has given recommendations that the engineer will incorporate this into the plan. Mr. Giannantonio did say that the length was unavoidable on this plan.

8. c – Section 399-82.C(1) – Mr. Piersol will review how access for emergency fire and rescue vehicles will be kept free and clear at all times. Emergency access will be provided off the main entrance drive, rather than directly from Dilworth Road. The width of the access will be 20 feet in most areas, with a wider 30 foot section so that two vehicles can pass near the northwestern corner of the building. There will be a fire sprinkler connection at the back of the building.

Stormwater Management Plan

Mr. Dirks reviewed the plan with the Commission and indicated where stormwater would drain from the property. Stormwater management is focused on basins in the northeast and western portions of the property. The applicant will construct a recharge system along the back of the building with an underground pipe conveyance system. The emergency access won't be affected by the stormwater management plan. The Planning Commission wants to ensure that recharge will be maximized on the site. Mr. Dirks stated that the next submission to Yerkes will contain much more detailed information regarding the stormwater management plan since the stormwater calculations are now complete.

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18. b – Section 35-52.D (1) – The applicant is requesting a waiver from this section which requires reduction of the post-development 10-year storm peak discharge to less than the pre-development 2-year storm for the watersheds draining from the south, west and northeast. The Township Engineer would like to see the revised stormwater calculations before any recommendations are made. Mr. Dirks stated that the new plan actually improves 10 year to 2 year discharge from what currently exists on the site.

The applicant will revise the plan according to the Yerkes review letter of January 27th, so that it can be discussed at the March Planning Commission Meeting.

Traffic Engineer's Review Letter

Mr. Michael Strohecker discussed the Heinrich and Klein Associates, Inc. review letter of January 28, 2005. A yellow blinking light signaling 15 mph during specified school hours will be installed.

3. The applicant has agreed to provide a pathway from Keller Way and a crosswalk across Dilworth Road. The plans still need to be finalized.
6. Mr. Heinrich stated that the orientation of the parking bays in the west parking lot may be better aligned to be perpendicular to the school and the playfields so that pedestrians do not have to traverse the parking field between parked vehicles. The 15-foot wide median that separates the parking lot from the main access road results in multiple adjacent intersections with deficient stacking areas at the STOP bars and in the outermost circulation aisle. The curved travel aisle at the northwest corner of the lot is better designed to fit into the parking lot configuration with a single curve rather than two smaller curves. Mr. Strohecker will have the applicant's traffic engineer discuss this with Mr. Heinrich.

Mr. Strohecker did say that access to the school is one-way and there are crosswalks with signs and stripes to access the sports field. Children can access the sports field only under the supervision of an adult. The Planning Commission asked that the applicant consider providing fencing to block the fields from Dilworth Road and the school entry road, in addition to providing vegetative screening or buffering.

The overflow parking area of the new school will also be used as a recess area for students. It will be controlled by a gate so that vehicles can't enter when children are playing.

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7. Mr. Heinrich suggested that the last row of nine parking spaces near the loading area should be eliminated, or flipped to the other side of the aisle, to provide direct access to the loading area. He said it may be desirable to construct a concrete median at least five feet wide to separate the aisle, as it takes a more north-south direction from the parking field. Mr. Strohecker stated that this area of the parking lot will be used for deliveries or vehicle overflow. It will not be used for both at the same time. School deliveries will be scheduled either before school starts or after the school day ends.
8. In the west parking lot, one or two parking spaces at the end of all but the first row of parking spaces should be eliminated in favor of a painted concrete island so that vehicles do not maneuver into/out of the end parking space into the main isle. Mr. Strohecker stated that this configuration does meet the ordinance requirements. The parking space sizes are 9' by 18'. Mr. Rawlings stated that the ordinance would be changing so parking spaces would need to be 10' by 20'.

Section 399-108.E. (3) – The plan will show 148 parking spaces. Mr. Rawlings would like to make sure there is a plan for adequate parking for vehicle overflow and special events.

9. According to Mr. Heinrich, the configuration of the passenger car pick-up/drop-off area may be adequate for a single line of vehicles, but if the 24 foot lane width is intended to provide a “by-pass lane”, the radius of the turnaround area, and perhaps the width of the center median, is deficient. Mr. Strohecker discussed vehicle circulation for children being dropped off or picked up. Parents are not allowed to leave cars unattended. Mr. Lappano stated that this has worked well in other schools including Pickering Valley, Lionville Elementary and East Ward. Mrs. Marshman suggested that Planning Commission members visit one of the schools to see how the vehicle circulation works.

Public Water Supply

On September 16, 2004, Mr. Piersol sent a letter to Aqua America stating that the East Brandywine Township Municipal Authority approved the request of the Downingtown Area School District to provide public water to the Brandywine Wallace School property with the following provisions:

1. Support is for public water supply to the school only for fire and domestic needs. Mr. Piersol requested the installation of fire hydrants along Dilworth Road on the water main route.

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2. The Authority is not supporting supplying public water for domestic consumption to other adjacent areas near the School property at the present time.
3. Aqua Pennsylvania must provide information documenting an adequate supply of water is available from existing and planned supply sources for this land use and proposed land uses in East Brandywine Township, along with West Brandywine and Caln Townships, to be served by the UGS North system.

Comments from the Audience Regarding the Brandywine Wallace School District

Mr. George Holmes asked if the school would be completed by the fall of 2006, as originally planned. Mr. Dirks stated that the timeline has been pushed back to the fall of 2007.

Mr. Jeff Camp, a resident from Wallace Township stated that he was a concerned parent and attended the meeting as part of a fact finding mission. He would like to know why there were no approvals of the plan 10 months into the process. He also stated that since the school has no sprinkler system or smoke detectors he would like to see this plan put on a fast track with the Township.

Mr. Donatelli explained that the School District hasn't applied for the needed variances or special exceptions because depending on the sewer issues, the plans for the new building could change.

Although the submission has been determined to be incomplete, the Township has reviewed the portions of the plan that have been submitted to them. Sewage Facilities, the application to the Chester County Conservation District and an NPDES permit to PADEP are some of the items needed for a complete submission.

Since the Municipal Authority has been provided with a limited sewage capacity to serve the Guthriesville Sewer District, the Authority asked the School District to investigate whether the site was suitable to construct an on-lot system. Mr. Lappano contacted Mr. Piersol in January to state that after submitting the plan for an on-lot disposal system to PADEP, it has been determined that the property could not provide the required disposal capacity. The data supporting this was provided to the Township earlier in the week. In addition, since the Brandywine Wallace School is not in the designated sewer district, PADEP would need to approve any requested addition or change to the district. The applicant is planning to attend the Municipal Authority meeting on February 8th to request their support for connection to the sewer system. The Authority does not own or operate the sewage treatment plant; the Authority has a limited discharge capacity reserved at the Little Washington Wastewater Treatment Plant.

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Mrs. Lisa Smith from the Hopewell Subdivision stated that she is concerned that the existing school doesn't have a central communication system or sprinkler system, but the Township seems more concerned about fencing the sports field from the road. Mr. Piersol explained that the Township has no authority to require retrofitting an existing building with a fire sprinkler system. There are certain rules that need to be followed in the land development process. If the Township were to grant approvals and the plan changed, it might negate those approvals and put the applicant in the position of starting over in the process.

Mr. Don Cotton and Mr. Matt Flynn want to know if the only obstacle was the sewer issue and who was responsible for the delays. This is just one of the issues that needs to be addressed in the land development process. Some of the other issues include traffic engineering, review of the stormwater management, and applying for the required variances. The process can be lengthy and is unavoidable. Mr. Piersol stated that the Township has an obligation to make sure the School District meets all required zoning, subdivision and land development ordinance, particularly since some of the issues in the engineering process, if not handled correctly, could have adverse consequences for residents in the vicinity of the school.

Forge Hill Conditional Use Hearing

Mr. Piersol stated that the applicant's attorney Sean O'Neill called today, asking to postpone the Conditional Use Hearing scheduled for March 3rd, to discuss public water for the Forge Hill Development along Dowlin Forge and Creek Roads.

Mrs. Smedley contacted owner John Shelton today about his appearance at the Planning Commission meeting this evening. Mr. Shelton received Mr. Giannantonio's review letter, which among other issues, questions the applicant's proposed density for this site. The applicant's engineer is preparing a response at this time. Mr. O'Neill felt it would not be productive to appear at the Planning Commission meeting to discuss their response without providing an opportunity for Mr. Giannantonio's review, and time to provide his comments to the Planning Commission for their consideration.

Comments from the Audience regarding the Forge Hill Conditional Use Hearing

Ms. Nanette Paynter from Lentz, Cantor and Massey stated she was attending the meeting to make sure the Planning Commission did not discuss the Conditional Use Application.

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DeCovny Subdivision

Extension

Mrs. Smedley reported that the applicant is granting an extension to review this subdivision application until March 31, 2005. Mr. Rawlings made a motion to recommend the Board of Supervisors accept this extension. Mrs. Moser seconded the motion, with all voting Aye.

AWI Croppers

Extension

Mrs. Smedley reported that the applicant is granting an extension to review this subdivision application until March 31, 2005. Mrs. Marshman made a motion to recommend the Board of Supervisors accept this extension. Mr. Thomas seconded the motion, with all voting Aye.

Brandywine Heights

Extension

Mrs. Smedley reported that the applicant is granting an extension to review this subdivision application until May 31, 2005. Mr. Giordano made a motion to recommend the Board of Supervisors accept this extension. Mr. Corbin seconded the motion, with all voting Aye.

Dilworth Property – T/P 30-2-55, 70.8 acres

Jonathan Penders and Steve Gallo of Rouse/Chamberlin Homes met with Mr. Piersol to discuss their possible development of the above-referenced tract, located in the 500 block of Dilworth Road, and adjacent to the Cross Keys development.

They initially discussed the availability of utility service being provided to this parcel. The tract is zoned R-2; they are presently weighing their options of conventional 1½ acre lots, or considering clustering the homes. They believe the cluster option would require public water and sewer to make the project work. Public water for domestic use and fire protection would be available through existing Aqua Pennsylvania facilities through connections to Elmwood Drive and Evergreen Drive in the Cross Keys development. For public sewer, the north border of the

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Dilworth property adjoins the proposed Hide-Away Farms development. This would likely create a need for additional plant upgrades at the Little Washington Wastewater Treatment Plant, and the need for additional disposal areas for the treated effluent.

Mr. Piersol suggested they should develop conceptual sketches of a conventional R-2 plan, and a cluster plan, and make their presentations to the Planning Commission and Municipal Authority to obtain feedback. This will not be likely to occur until March or April. He also suggested they provide copies of their plans and narrative(s) in advance of any meetings, which would allow our review prior to the meeting, so they might get more than just an immediate reaction to the plans from our Boards.

Adjournment

There being no further business Mr. Cushman made a recommendation to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Moser seconded the motion, with all voting Aye. The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Beth Smedley
Secretary/Treasurer
East Brandywine Township