

**WESTTOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
STOKES ASSEMBLY HALL, 1039 WILMINGTON PIKE
MAY 7, 2003 7:30PM**

DRAFT

Present: Chairman Donald L. Verdiani noted the following members present; Commissioners Elaine L. Adler, Carol DeWolf, Kevin Flynn, Mark Purcell and Domenico Bibbo; **Absent:** Mary Paumen. Also in attendance Township Manger Robert Layman; Township Engineer Angelo M. Capuzzi; Township Consultants Frank Zabawski and John Snook. There were twelve guests in attendance.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Verdiani led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and called the meeting to order.

Agriculture Security Area Committee Joint Session.

In Attendance for the Agriculture Security Area (“ASA”) Committee were Eva Foster, Dr. Kenton Stokes, and Peter Flynn.

Mr. Verdiani advised those present that the County requires the Township to review its ASA every seven years. The Agriculture Security Area Committee and the Planning Commission must make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors as to whether the ASA is to be modified or retained at its present acreage.

Dr. Stokes asked with Crebilly withdrawing are there enough acres to continue the ASA. Mrs. Foster responded that there are. Mrs. Adler stated that there are 588.52 acres in the ASA which is above the minimum required. She also stated that a letter was received from the Crebilly Family Association asking that all its parcels be removed from the ASA.

Mrs. Foster made a motion, seconded by Dr. Stokes to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that the Agriculture Security Area be modified with the deletion of the Crebilly parcels and remain with 588.52 acres. Mr. Verdiani asked for public comment. There was no public comment at this time. The ASA Committee and the Planning Commission unanimously approved the recommendation for the Agriculture Security Area to the Board of Supervisors.

Adoption of Agenda.

The Agenda was adopted as presented. The petition presented by the residents of Dunning Drive will be heard during the West Chester Area School District’s (“WCASD”) preliminary plan review.

Approval of Minutes (January 22, 2003).

Mr. Flynn made a motion, seconded by Mr. Purcell (abstain Verdiani) to approve the minutes of April 23, 2003 as corrected. (Page 1 Announcements paragraph 3 change “loose” to “lose”; and delete “Tigue Road”; Page 3 paragraph 1 add “motion unanimously approved”).

Mr. Verdiani stated that the name of the road between Route 202 and S. New Street has been clarified as the “Access Road” and is not Tigue Road.

Announcements.

Mrs. Adler stated that the Board of Supervisors accepted tract 2003-3 McCool Land Development plan at the May 5, 2003 meeting. The Planning Commission will review the plan at the May 21, 2003 meeting.

Mr. Verdiani announced a seminar on housing for the aging “Under One Roof” will be held at West Chester University on June 12th anyone interested may attend.

Mrs. Adler reported on the Board of Supervisors May 5th meeting. She said Mr. McCawley presented his request for a financial subdivision of the Jefferson Bank/Office tract. She stated that revised plans reflecting the final plan approval given in April 2002 have not been received. Mrs. Adler stated that per the Township Solicitor the original

plans must be submitted, signed and recorded before the financial subdivision can be approved and recorded. She stated that the Board of Supervisors expressed concerns with the traffic circulation. They do not want vehicles exiting through Kindercare. Mr. Bibbo asked if the Board of Supervisors had concerns about the landscaping of the office tract. Mrs. Adler stated that the Board agreed with the Planning Commission recommendation that the office tract be graded, seeded, and some landscaping installed if the bank building is completed before the office project starts.

Mr. Layman reported that the opening of the Westtown Road Bridge does not look promising. He stated the Township needs to respond to PennDOT concerning the type of replacement bridge they would like to have. He also stated that the Township will be discussing the bridge with Westtown School. Mr. Verdiani asked that this issue be re-visited at a future meeting.

Old Business:

Tract 2003-5, Westminster Presbyterian Church – Revised Sketch Plan.

In attendance for the Church were Ed McFalls, Tom Snyder and Barbara Fordsland.

Mr. McFalls stated the sketch plan was presented to the Board of Supervisors at their March 17th meeting. A Zoning Hearing was held on April 28th, and the Church received relief for impervious coverage. He reviewed the revised sketch plan with the Commission. He stated they have increased the parking spaces to 179. He also stated that they have a source for fill and will use the fill to make the new parking area level with the existing parking lot. Mr. McFalls said islands have been added to the plan and that drainage will go to the existing basin. They proposed an “exit only” drive to West Pleasant Grove Road. Ms. DeWolf asked if right turns and left turns will still be made from the main exit. Mr. McFalls responded yes because of the congestion problems on Route 202. Ms. DeWolf said she felt more problems were being created by adding the additional exit. She stated that a road is proposed on the North Side of W. Pleasant Grove Road which will add to the problems. Ms. DeWolf said she does not support an extra entrance. Mr. Flynn asked about the parking on the ramp to Route 202. Mr. McFalls stated that the Church will do everything it its power to alleviate this problem. Mr. Verdiani said the proposed new road creates a different traffic situation for the Church and asked if they have had this reviewed by a traffic engineer. Mr. McFalls said they will review this further. Mr. Bibbo asked about pedestrian traffic. Mr. McFalls said there are sidewalks, and crosswalks along with stop signs for the pedestrian traffic. Mr. Capuzzi mentioned that anyone parking in the back lot will have to walk down the driveway and this should be addressed.

Tract 2002-5, Jefferson Center Bank and Office Building. Update.

This item was covered previously in the meeting.

Mr. Capuzzi stated that he received revised plans on Friday which he will be reviewing.

Tract 2002-6 WCASD, Rustin High School, First Review of Preliminary Plan, Chester Valley Engineers, FAZ Associates memo of 5/1/03, John Snook Environmental Management Center.

In attendance for the WCASD were Mark Groves, Hugh Cadzow, EIA project manager, and Theo Claypool, Unrah, Turner, Burke and Frees.

Mr. Verdiani stated that this is the first review by the Planning Commission on the preliminary plan. The plan has been reviewed by the Angelo Capuzzi Township Engineer, Frank Zabawski FAZ Associates and John Snook Brandywine Conservancy. He asked Mr. Groves to give a short summary of the preliminary plan.

Mr. Groves stated that they had just received Mr. Snook’s letter today and did not have time to review. He stated they are addressing Mr. Capuzzi’s comments and will wait for all comments before they make changes to the plan. He also stated that they have not received the review from URS pertaining to the sanitary sewer system.

Mr. Groves referred to item 4 of the letter from FAZ Associates pertaining to maintenance of the flashing signals for the school. He said that the District currently has an agreement with the Township for the flashing signals at Westtown-Thornbury Elementary and assumes that would carry through to the high school. He next reviewed item five concerning the left turn signal phasing at the intersection of Route 926 and Shiloh Road as an additional left turn arrow would benefit the school traffic flow. Mr. Groves stated this has been discussed with PennDOT but does not meet their warrants at this time but they are willing to discuss this again with PennDOT. Mr. Groves stated they will discuss item 8, the use of tunnel visors for pedestrian signals with Mr. Zabawski.

Mr. Bibbo questioned the need for pedestrian crossing at this intersection. Mr. Zabawski stated that they are not encouraging pedestrian crossing but it needs to be accommodated. Mr. Bibbo expressed his concerns that this is not a safe intersection for pedestrian crossing. Mr. Verdiani asked if the District had standards for pedestrian crossing around schools. Mr. Groves stated that the District has policies relating to this issue.

Mr. Zabawski reviewed his memo. He stated that the 926 corridor study and the proposed improvements for the Westrum project have been expanded upon for the high school access and road improvements. He stated that the access plan has been updated with additional turning lanes on Shiloh Road. The study has been presented to PennDOT as part of the plan relates to PennDOT's Highway Occupancy Permit. Mr. Zabawski said he feels the proposed traffic improvements are responsive to the needs of the Township and will provide safe and efficient access to the school. The traffic study has been submitted to Westtown-Thornbury as many of the improvements will require easements from property owners on the south side of Route 926. Improvements are also planned for the intersections of Westbourne and Route 926 and Shiloh Road and Little Shiloh Road. Flashing signals will be installed at Dunning Drive and 15m school zone signs at Farm Lane. Mr. Zabawski stated that PennDOT would like to phase the road improvements for the school with the "Singing Bridge" reconstruction. Mr. Groves said PennDOT has discussed this with the District and they are planning to coordinate both projects.

Mr. Verdiani asked about improvements to the dangerous section at the north end of Shiloh Road. Mr. Zabawski said the school district will not be doing improvements in this area but they would be addressed by the Township at another time. He stated he feels by not doing a total upgrade at the present time it will help to control the speed on Shiloh Road. Mr. Verdiani asked if any improvements to the intersection of S. Concord and Route 926 have been planned. Mr. Zabawski said at the minimum changes could be made to the timing of the traffic signals with more green time for S. Concord Road.

Mr. Bibbo asked what rationale was used for determining the amount of parking needed for students who drive. He asked if the District had a policy for student drivers. Mr. Groves stated that this has been addressed by using trip generation rates calibrated on existing school traffic. He said this does vary by seasons and weather conditions but all access points are designed to handle any additional traffic. Mr. Bibbo said his concern is with the parking when there are sports events at the school. Mr. Groves said the worse scenario would be if there was a football game at the same time as an event in the auditorium. He stated reinforced shoulders will be installed on the roads to be used as overflow parking. He stated they will be able to park 1066 cars. Mrs. DeWolf asked how many people can the stadium hold. Mr. Groves responded 1750 and the auditorium holds 800. Mr. Zabawski said this issue was discussed at numerous meetings and is a reason for the shoulder parking. He stated this is a situation that might only happen twice a year.

Ms. DeWolf asked what the fields on the north west corner of Shiloh Road will be used for. Mr. Groves responded that they are satellite fields that will be used only for soccer practice. There will also be a small comfort station at that location.

Mr. Verdiani, at this time, asked the residents from Dunning Drive to state their concerns.

Mr. Garrett Forysthe, 1005 Dunning Drive, said his main concern is safety and why was the plan designed to make it possible for children to walk across Shiloh Road. He feels that land preservation has taken precedent over safety and feels the entire school complex should be on one side of Shiloh Road. Mr. Groves stated that the District has purchased land across from East for fields. The students may not drive to practice and crossing guards are available for all practices. He said an overpass or underpass over Shiloh was considered but would not be practical for handicap access and would be an area hard to police. He again said the fields would be for practice only.

Mr. Flynn asked if the fields would be available for use by groups other than the high school. Mr. Groves said this is possible and stated that the Planning Commission might consider stipulations on the field use.

Mr. Forysthe said he feels the area where the fields are should be retained as open space. He also asked what is the risk management level for accidents at this intersection that the District is willing to tolerate.

Mr. Bibbo suggested that the field area should be used for equipment storage instead of practice fields. Mr. Groves stated the District equipment is not kept on site but stored at a central location.

Mr. Forysthe said his other concerns are that students will park on Dunning Drive before and after school or during practice time. He said as Dunning is a cul-de-sac the school bus has problems turning and now stops on

Shiloh Road. He also feels that Dunning Drive will now become an unsightly entrance with the only view being the flat fields across the road.

Mr. Michael Graham, 1002 Dunning Drive, said Dunning Drive will no longer be a private street but incorporated into the school complex and will be a staging area for students after school. He also would like the fields moved to the open area north of the school site. He stated the original plan did not align Dunning Drive with Shiloh Road. Mr. Groves advised Mr. Graham that this has been the plan since last July which was submitted to the Zoning Hearing Board and is part of the Intergovernmental Agreement between the District and the Township. Mr. Graham asked Mr. Groves if he feels the residents concerns are not valid. Mr. Groves said we feel that these concerns have been mitigated.

Ms. DeWolf advised Mr. Groves that the District is now in the development plan process and part of that process is through a whole series of approvals that you have not been through yet so the location of the school, neighbors concerns, and the road location is still up for decision making. Ms. DeWolf stated she would like to tell the neighbors, for the record, that we are in a planning process and it is not complete.

Mr. Bibbo said unfortunately the Township is saddled with the school and are trying to make the school as safe and as good as possible for the community. He said the residents have a valid point but we cannot always please everyone.

Mrs. Lois Berger, 1004 Dunning Drive, advised Mr. Bibbo that he was here to represent the citizens of the Township and should not insinuate that the residents just have to accept the plan. She stated that the whole Commission should take our concerns into consideration and then give us an answer.

In order to clear up any misunderstandings Mr. Verdiani advised those present that there is an Intergovernmental Agreement ("Agreement") between the Township and the School District which is part of the Zoning Hearing Board's Special Exception Order for the School. He stated in the Agreement there are certain things that all parties have agreed to which include the site of the school, and the road improvements. The issues of the roads will have to be look at in relation to the Agreement. He advised the Dunning Road residents to obtain a copy of the Intergovernmental Agreement. Mr. Verdiani said as the Planning Commission was not involved with the agreement there might be areas of concern where they would want to make recommendations for changes to the Board of Supervisors. He stated he appreciates residents attending the meetings and making their concerns know. Mr. Verdiani explained there are some things in the Planning Commission's purview to change and some things that are not going to be negotiable. He said safety is an issue and the Commission is not dismissing what the residents have said. What the Planning Commission will do is to make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors as to whether the preliminary plan submitted by the WCASD is acceptable or not acceptable or acceptable with changes.

Mr. Verdiani asked the residents if they have more concerns to please state them for the record.

Mr. Graham asked what protection will vehicles have exiting from Dunning left onto Shiloh. Mr. Groves stated that blinking red and yellow flashing lights will be installed.

Mrs. Joyce Jasinski, 1003 Dunning Drive, is concerned with the renting of the fields for other than school uses and the parking from this that will occur on Dunning Drive. Mr. Groves said the fields are public and if available when requested they can be used.

Mr. Groves advised the residents that under the Agreement the relocation of Dunning is unlikely.

Mr. Todd Jasinski, 1003 Dunning Drive, said he does not want overflow parking on his street and does not like the left turn onto Shiloh.

Mr. Snook suggested moving the athletic fields to the north end of the tract until it is determined what that area will be used for. The area where the fields are now could be held in reserve as open space and could be planted with trees to give a better appearance in that area of Shiloh Road. Ms. DeWolf asked if the School Board would be favorable to this idea. Mr. Groves responded that he does not answer for the School Board and as to the best of his knowledge that northern area is being held for future use. Ms. DeWolf said she is in favor of Mr. Snook's suggestion.

Mr. Peter Stephenson, 1093 Barnview Lane, said there are two flaws with Mr. Snook's suggestion one being he would like to see the school relocated to that area and he feels reforestation of the field area would cause a site visibility problem.

Mr. Claude Spiron, 1000 Dunning Drive, said there are already enough playing fields in Thornbury why build more. He has lived on Dunning Drive, which is a small cul-de-sac, for eighteen years and it does not make any sense to him why Dunning Drive should now go through the school grounds.

Mr. Marc Dellaporta, 1001 Dunning Drive, would like the Planning Commission to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that the fields be used for high school play only.

Mr. Graham expressed his feeling that the Intergovernmental Agreement could be changed to leave Dunning Drive as is. He feels the School District would save money by not connecting Dunning Drive to Shiloh Road.

Mr. Genzano said he would like to have Mr. Capuzzi work with the District to determine the cost of moving the fields on a temporary basis. He feels the District would save money as there are 40' slopes in the area where the fields are to be constructed. Mr. Groves stated that even without the field construction the cut for the relocation of Shiloh Road still has to be made.

Mrs. Graham presented the Dunning Drive Petition to the Commission and asked that it be part of the record.

Mrs. DeWolf said she feels the District should be responsible, as part of the overall package, to help the Township with the road improvements north of the school on Shiloh Road as the school is adding to the problems that exist in this area. Mr. Zabawski stated that the District will be doing the following improvements on the upper section of Shiloh Road: drainage improvements south of Hunt Drive; resurfacing to Ashley Road; improving radius for school buses at Oakbourne Road and at Little Shiloh Road. He stated that the "dips" in the road are pre-existing conditions and level of improvements beyond consideration of the District. He said further improvements are the responsibility of the Township.

Mr. Capuzzi reviewed his letter pertaining to the storm water management for the site. He stated there are three items in the Agreement that must be complied with. He said it appears they are in compliance with the pre-development rates required by Act 167. He stated he has questions about the recharge. Testing of the system when built is part of the Agreement. Mr. Capuzzi said he will have the land development review for the May 21st meeting. He asked that all the Planning Commission members read the Agreement as his review is bound by the terms of the Agreement. Mr. Bibbo asked who signed the Agreement. Mr. Capuzzi responded that the Agreement was signed by the Board of Supervisors and the School Board. He also stated that there was a six to eight month study of the site plan and he feels it is a basically safe plan. The Agreement does allow for modifications if approved by the Board of Supervisors

Mr. Snook gave an overview of the landscaping for the site. He stated that the master plan does not show landscaping and the landscaping is limited to what is in the Agreement. Mr. Snook said the aim of the landscaping is not only to provide the traditional buffer along neighboring properties but to enhance the scenic views by blending naturalized areas with more manicured landscaping. He stated mixes of seeds will be used along with non traditional plantings such as Dogwoods. A wet meadow mix will be used in the basin areas for a natural look. He reviewed the tree and shrub list and finds them acceptable as they are high in native species. He suggested that more trees be included in the parking areas. Mr. Groves said that would be a problem due to the height requirement for the lights in the parking areas. Mr. Snook stated in order to hide the view of the stadium he would like to see more naturalized landscaping in that area.

Mr. Bibbo asked if lowering the noise volume with landscaping was taken into consideration along with the aesthetics. Mr. Snook responded that this has been addressed.

Mr. Snook mentioned that the Township trail extension is not on the landscape plan. Mr. Groves stated that the District is working with Septa for a trail easement. A discussion of the trail was tabled until a future meeting.

Public Comment Non-Agenda Items.

There was no public comment at this time.

Adjournment.

The motion to adjourn made by Mrs. Adler, seconded by Mr. Flynn, was unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Elaine L. Adler
Secretary to the Planning Commission