

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES – MARCH 9, 2015

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the Township of Lower Makefield was held in the Municipal Building on March 9, 2015. Chairman Pazdera called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Those present:

Planning Commission: John Pazdera, Chairman
 Dean Dickson, Vice Chairman
 William Clark, Member
 Karen Friedman, Member

Others: Steve Ware, Keystone Municipal Services
 Justin Geonnotti, Township Engineer
 Dobby Dobson, Supervisor Liaison

Absent: John Tracey, Planning Commission Secretary

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Friedman moved, Mr. Dickson seconded and it was unanimously carried to approve the Minutes of February 9, 2015 as corrected.

INFORMAL PRESENTATION OF THE PENNSBURY MIDDLE SCHOOL RENOVATIONS AND CAMPUS MASTER PLAN

Mr. Scott Millward from the Pennsbury School District was present with Mr. Owen Hyne, engineer. Mr. Hyne stated the Pennsbury School District is looking to do some site improvements around the Middle School Campus.

Mr. Millward stated the District and School Board Directors have engaged Remington, Vernick & Beach in a construction project for renovations at the Middle School Campus. He stated they are primarily focusing on Pennwood Middle School and then moving to Charles Boehm Middle School. He stated they do not plan to do a lot of work at William Penn since that was most recent in their construction history. Mr. Millward stated they want to renovate the buildings internally including mechanical and plumbing upgrades, and to bring the buildings up to their current educational standards.

Mr. Millward stated Pennwood is the first on the list and was constructed in 1952 with a renovation in 1972. He stated it has a pool that is no longer in use. He stated the way they deliver curriculum today is very different. He stated this building was originally constructed as a High School, and it is currently being used as a Middle School. He stated with the inclusion of Special Ed and many other programs, the building is in desperate need of renovation because of the age of the building and the flow and delivery of academic instruction. He stated they are also looking to separate traffic patterns of pedestrians, vehicles, and buses. He stated there are current safety hazards as well as perpendicular parking along Makefield Road which they wish to eliminate. He stated the students are going on foot to get to the athletic fields and have to cross between the traffic patterns, and they are looking to move the traffic pattern away so that the students can reach the athletic fields and the walking paths with limited to no vehicular traffic.

Mr. Millward stated at Charles Boehm, they want to eliminate the traffic that is behind the building and make it as safe as possible and separate the traffic patterns.

Mr. Hyne stated at Pennwood Middle School in addition to the building renovations, they will also be doing site renovations. He showed where buses currently come in as well as the location of teacher parking and where buses are making internal loops. He stated there are also gym and after school activities behind the School with students moving from the School to the athletic fields that are common to all three of the Middle Schools. He stated this happens at Charles Boehm as well where there is the crossing by students where currently there is traffic, and they want to try to protect these areas. He noted where the bus traffic will be moved to and where passenger vehicles and teacher parking will be located. He noted the location of a gate to keep out the vehicles from behind the School, although it could be opened for emergency or a specific event. Mr. Hyne stated this will keep the buses away from the passenger vehicles as well.

Mr. Hyne noted the intersection between Roelofs and Makefield Roads where there is currently a single shared left hand turn/right turn lane onto Makefield Road, and they are proposing right and left turning lanes which will help avoid bus queuing.

Mr. Hyne stated currently there are ninety-three parking stalls in front of Pennwood Middle School, and parents are dropping off students and then backing out onto Makefield Road which is not an ideal condition. He stated they are proposing to eliminate that parking, and he showed a larger lot where they can accommodate that same number of spaces. He stated the Administration area is in the front portion of the building on Makefield so they need provision for visitors to enter at

that location, and they therefore created a small parking area in the front that accesses off of Roelofs to keep the turns off of Makefield Road. Mr. Hyne stated currently the Administrative offices are not actually off of the front door, and you have to walk down the hallway to get to them; and since this is not a secure environment, they are going to move the Administrative offices right up front.

Mr. Hyne noted the Boehm Middle School, and he showed how buses will travel in this area, showed the parking stalls, and the loading/unloading area.

Ms. Friedman noted an area on the Plan where she is concerned that parents will go after School hours to get their children from the fields after their sports activities and avoid the light at the corner. Mr. Hyne stated there will be signage and there will be School District instructions to parents; however, he agreed that what Ms. Friedman is concerned about is still a possibility. Mr. Hyne noted one area where there will be a gate which parents would not be able to access.

Mr. Hyne showed a bus storage area for approximately twenty buses as well as the larger bus storage area on the west side of Boehm, and they propose to consolidate those in a phased approach; and he showed the one location where all the buses will be stabled.

Mr. Millward stated at Charles Boehm there are two fuel tanks, and they want to move them out of the low-lying area and move them into an area he showed on the Plan where buses can refuel. He stated there will be one fueling location.

Mr. Hyne stated at Charles Boehm they also want to separate the buses from the vehicular traffic. He stated currently there is 90 degree parking on Big Oak Road, and they propose to eliminate that. He showed where they will provide a parent drop-off loop. He stated they are looking at parking calculations to see if certain parking stalls can be eliminated. He showed on the Plan where buses will drop off the students at Charles Boehm. He stated they are also creating separate parking areas for the bus drivers and the teachers.

Mr. Millward noted an area where bicyclists and pedestrians are cutting through the traffic patterns. He noted on the Plan where they want to add a sidewalk system. A fence will be installed to keep walkers/cyclists on the right side so they are not cutting across.

Mr. Hyne stated the proposed site improvements at William Penn are minor since it is a newer school and they have less room to work with. He showed how the buses travel around the School, and they will make some improvements to help with circulation and some improvements to the pedestrian path.

Mr. Hyne stated they will do some stormwater management adjustments, and they will discuss them further with the Township as the Plans proceed.

Mr. Millward noted an area at Pennwood where they want to eliminate as much of the sidewalk system funneling into the front of the School as possible since they are eliminating the parking stalls. He stated this will decrease impervious surface and reduce the amount of maintenance required. He showed the location of the public sidewalk system on the opposite of the street, and they would maintain the crosswalks.

Ms. Friedman asked if they have been able to gain any parking spaces with the change in the parking lot configuration noting her concern with the lack of parking available during the large events. Mr. Hyne stated as proposed they are gaining possibly one or two spaces. Mr. Millward stated they did discuss the potential for temporarily removing buses from the storage area. Mr. Hyne agreed that there will be some events that exceed parking availability, but there are only a few of these events.

Mr. Dobson asked about the timeline, and Mr. Millward stated their goal is to start construction in the winter, and it will be a two-year construction project. He stated they will start with building renovations at Pennwood.

Mr. Geonnotti stated at Charles Boehm possibly they could create designated lanes for drop offs. He stated possibly they could put in a by-pass lane as well. Mr. Millward stated the crossing guard does help move the traffic along, but they can look into this. Mr. Geonnotti stated he feels what they have proposed is much improved and is a great lay out.

Mr. Hyne stated at Charles Boehm there are bleachers in the balcony which is why they use this School for Sports Night, but because they will no longer have the bleachers, they will not be using Charles Boehm for Sports Night. He stated balcony renovations would have cost \$250,000, and they cannot spend this kind of money for two days a year.

COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN UPDATE DISCUSSION AND MOTION TO RECOMMEND ADOPTION

Mr. Pazdera stated the changes have been made based on the recent discussions. Mr. Pazdera stated they did not change the date to 2015 on the maps.

Ms. Karen Friedman stated she is concerned about the placement of the map between Page 46 and 47, and she feels this interrupts the flow of that chapter. She asked if the map should be put at the end of the chapter. She asked Mr. Ware if he printed out a final copy, and Mr. Ware stated he did not. Ms. Friedman noted three other locations where this occurred, and the maps are being placed in the middle of all the verbiage rather than at the end of each section.

Ms. Friedman asked if the historic inventory was completed. She noted some items still show “insufficient information.” She stated this is 1D in the Appendix. Mr. Pazdera stated “insufficient information” may mean that there is not enough information to evaluate. Mr. Ware was asked to double check on this, and he agreed to check this with Ms. Wolff.

With regard to the maps, the Planning Commission members had difficulty making a decision on placement of some of the maps since they did not have a final printed copy to review. A short recess was taken to allow the Planning Commission members to review the document on-line.

Mr. Clark provided information which he suggested could be added regarding Police protection and Emergency Management. Mr. Friedman noted that this is already covered on Page 50.

Ms. Friedman moved, Mr. Dickson seconded and it was unanimously carried to recommend to the Board of Supervisors the adoption of the 2015 Comprehensive Master Plan with attention to placement of the maps as discussed by the Planning Commission with Mr. Ware and date change on the maps.

There being no further business, Mr. Dickson moved, Ms. Friedman seconded and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Pazdera, Chairman