

**SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
February 6, 2024**

The Springfield Township Planning Commission met for their regularly scheduled meeting at 7:00 P.M., in the Boardroom of the Springfield Township Administration Building, located at 1510 Paper Mill Road, Wyndmoor, PA 19038. Present at the meeting were Mr. Sands, Mr. Devine, Mr. Schaefer, Ms. Blankin, Mr. Quill, and Mr. Harbison. Also in attendance were Mr. Narcowich, Montgomery County Planning Commission, Commissioner Peter Wilson and Mark Penecale, Director of Planning & Zoning.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with Mr. David Sands serving as the Chairperson of the Planning Commission.

Approval of the Minutes:

The Planning Commission approved the minutes from their meeting held on Tuesday, January 2, 2024.

Commissioner's Report:

Commissioner Wilson informed the Planning Commission of the final action taken by the Board of Commissioners on the Land Development Applications for the properties located at 1301 Mermaid Lane, 902 Pleasant Avenue, and 310 Roesch Avenue. He informed the Planning Commission on the extensions granted for the applications involving 40 & 42 Grove Avenue and 120 W Wissahickon Avenue. He discussed progress on the bidding of Walnut Lane Walking Trail and the improvements to Cisco Park. He informed everyone of Baird Standish's appointment to the Historical Commission and that Commissioner Jim Lee will serve another term as President of the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Susanna Ratsavong has been elected to serve as the Vice-Chairperson of the Board of Commissioners.

New Business:

The Planning Commission reviewed the Sketch Plan submitted by Springfield School District for the proposed improvements to the Springfield Middle School. The school is located at 1901 Paper Mill Road, Orelan Pa. 19075. The property is zoned within the Institutional District of Ward #4 of the Township. The proposed improvements include a re-design of the student drop-off and pick-up lanes, as well as several small infill additions and one 15,000 square foot addition to be used as a Performing Arts Center. This addition is proposed to be located over the existing outdoor basketball courts. It was explained that the redesign of the student drop-off and pick-up lanes will include new curbing, lane gates, signage, and pavement markings. The purpose of the changes is to eliminate the vehicle stacking on Bergan Road. The School District had their

attorney, project engineer, project architect, project manager and the Facilities Directors present to answer any questions raised by the Planning Commission and/or the residents in attendance.

Mr. Harbison asked for the applicant to show on the plans where the proposed expansion would be and to provide a description of what the added space would be used for.

The project engineer discussed small in-fill development, crosswalks, and lane changes. The in-fill development and crosswalks are proposed to allow greater access to the building and improve ADA compliance. The large addition will be used as a Performing Arts Area, with a stage, that will also be used for music classes, a storage area and other performing art classes. The stage will also have 650 seats.

Mr. Devine asked the applicant to review the increase in on-site parking.

The project engineer stated that there are 24 new on-site parking stalls being added, but with what is being lost with the redesign of the drive lanes, the increase is only 8 parking stalls. The existing parking on-site is currently 158 stalls, post renovations that number will increase to 166 parking stalls on-site.

Mr. Quill asked the applicant why these improvements were not addressed when the building was constructed or the last time the building was renovated.

The Facilities Director stated that the Middle School was constructed in the 1950's and the last renovation was in 2010 and that was limited to the thermal field that was added to the site.

Ms. Blankin stated that she loves the idea of adding a Performing Arts Space to the Middle School but was not sure the design of the parking lot would reduce vehicle conflicts on-site.

Mr. Penecale asked if the plan was to include signage and pavement markings within the drive lanes to assist drivers once on-site.

The answer was yes signage and pavement markings would be included, but that plan is still in design at this time.

There was a question concerning the exterior of the building and the project manager and project architect approached the Planning Commission members directly. There were several conversations going on at the same time. I was unable to take notes during this period.

Mr. Wilson asked about on-site stormwater management. The project engineer stated that there is a 22,000 square foot addition in impervious coverage being added to the site and that they will design a system that complies with state, county, and local requirements.

Ms. Blankin asked about the use of the existing stage within the Middle School and was informed that that area is planned to be converted into a fitness center space.

Mr. Wilson asked if there was a timeline in place for this project. The project manager stated that he hopes to have all the approvals in place by September of this year and have the project completed in 2026.

Mr. Quill asked if there is a price tag for this project. The project manager stated this work would be in the neighborhood of \$31,000,000.00.

Ms. Blankin asked about the impact of the existing steep slope on this property. The project engineer stated that post construction, the grades would be softened and that exterior walls of the building would act as a retaining wall.

Mr. Wilson asked if PENNDOT has a setback that the proposed building was required to be from the existing highway. The project engineer stated that the closest part of the building would be 52 feet from the property line that adjoins the 309 rights-of-way. The project attorney committed to research the question and have an answer for the Commissioner when this project returns for Land Development approval.

Mr. Sands asked if there were any additional comments for the Planning Commission Members. He then asked if there were any questions from those in attendance. There was none. This portion of tonight's meeting was closed.

Mark Henderson, Eng. was in attendance to present Morris Arboretum's request for a waiver from the requirements for the submission of a Land Development Application for the addition of an 1,800 square foot modular building for use as laboratory space. The plan was presented, showed the modular building being placed behind the existing Horticultural Center. The proposed lab would be staffed by existing staff and would not require any additional parking.

Mr. Harbison asked if the proposed building would be Energy Star Certified. The answer was no. The existing Horticultural Center Building is 5 Star Rated, but the prefabricated building would not be.

Ms. Caitlin Daley RA, the project architect, stated that the property is 75 acres in size and the proposed addition equals a total of 3,500 square feet of new coverage or .0003% new impervious coverage.

Mr. Sands asked if there would be any additional paving and the answer was no. There is an existing driveway that also serves as a walkway from the existing parking lot to the proposed new building site.

Mr. Wilson asked if stormwater run-off would be addressed? The answer was yes. The applicant will be submitting a stormwater management report to the Township Engineer for his review and approval.

Mr. Quill asked a question about funding for the project. That question was addressed by William Cullina, Executive Director of Morris Arboretum.

Mr. Sands asked if there were any additional questions or comments from those in attendance. There were none. Mr. Sands called for a motion.

Mr. Devine made a motion that the waiver requested for the submission of a Land Development Plan be approved, with the condition that on-site stormwater management be installed to the satisfaction of the Township Engineer. The motion was seconded by Mr. Harbison and approved unanimously with a vote of 6 in favor and 0 opposed.

The final application for the evening was the subdivision application submitted for the lot line adjustment between 1500 and 1506 Willow Grove Avenue, Wyndmoor, Pa. 19038. The applicant failed to attend the meeting.

Mr. Penecale offered two solutions to the issue. The Planning Commission could pass the application on to the Board of Commissioners with no recommendation, or the Planning Commission could make a recommendation based on the information submitted with the application.

Mr. Harbison stated he was not comfortable offering a recommendation without having the property owners present at the meeting. That opinion was shared by several of the other Planning Commission Members.

The Planning Commission made no formal recommendation, however, the Planning Commission instructed Mr. Penecale to inform the Township Manager that the Planning Commission has no opposition to the application being approved. This direction was approved unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted
Mark A. Penecale
Director of Planning & Zoning