

**Lower Salford Township  
Planning Commission Meeting  
February 23, 2022**

Planning Commission Chair Manus McHugh called to order the Lower Salford Township Planning Commission meeting at 7:30pm. Other Planning Commission members in attendance were John Kennedy, David Bowe, Brad Landis, David Goodman, and Andy Shields. Also in attendance was Mike Beuke, Director of Building and Zoning; Michele Fountain, P.E. of CKS, the Township Engineer's office Stephanie Butler, P.E. of McMahan Associates, the Township Traffic Engineer's office, and Claire Warner of the Montgomery County Planning Commission. Excused from the meeting was Planning Commission member Joe Harwanko.

**Minutes**

The minutes from the January 26, 2022, meeting were reviewed. Mr. Kennedy made a motion to accept the minutes as recorded and Mr. Landis seconded the motion. Mr. McHugh and Mr. Shields abstained due to being excused from the January meeting.

**Motion 4 Yes; 0 No; 2 Abstain**

**Plan Reviews**

**931 Harleysville Pike – Preliminary/Final Plan for four lot subdivision on 10.95 acres.  
Applicant, Zafar & Bushra Inc.**

Present to review the application on behalf of the applicant was Michael Tulio. Two letters were prepared, one from Michele Fountain, P.E. of CKS Engineers, dated 2/18/2022 and one from Stephanie Butler, P.E. of McMahan Associates dated 2/18/2022.

Mr. Tulio addressed the CKS comment regarding relocating utility pole #1179; he stated that he would prefer to shift the driveway to the north in lieu of moving the pole. Ms. Butler noted that a PennDOT HOP will be needed and that PennDOT will have the final say on the subject. A discussion ensued regarding relocation of the pole, road shoulder and the required 50' radii; Ms. Butler prefers to have the 50' radii and the driveway tie-in to the required shoulder.

Mr. McHugh suggested that the applicant align the lots and consider the relocation of lot 4.

Mr. Tulio addressed the CKS comment regarding a required streetlight at the subdivision entrance on Harleysville Pike; Mr. McHugh suggested that a light will be appreciated at night by those who are trying to find the location.

Ms. Fountain noted that the township will not be taking dedication.

Mr. Tulio inquired about waivers for the depth of lots 2 & 3 and on the front yard setbacks as noted in the CKS letter. Mr. McHugh stated that the Planning Commission does not feel enthusiastic about confirming these waivers.

An inquiry was made by Mr. Tulio regarding a waiver for the CKS required specimen tree summary. Mr. McHugh addressed the CKS comment regarding the grading associated with the rain garden as addressed in the CKS letter. The applicant is proposing 3:1 slope; 4:1 is required, and Mr. McHugh is standing firm with 4:1. Mr. McHugh instructed the applicant to reconfigure lot 4 so that the front

yard setback is parallel to Harleysville Pike and the species of the trees that are 24” or greater must be shown on the plans.

As instructed, the applicant will address the comments and return to the Planning Commission with a revised plan.

**Proposed Vernfield Rezoning**

Mr. Beuke addressed the Planning Commission stating that rezoning the 17 lots in the area of Rt.63 and Morwood Road known as the Village of Vernfield would make the area more consistent with the Village Commercial District. The proposed change in zoning is part of a comprehensive rezoning study along Main Street. A separate request was brought to the township by Vernfield resident, Mike Hart.

Mr. Kennedy asked if the Morwood Road lots will conform, as they are small lots. It was noted that the minimum lot size for the VC District is 10,000sf and the smallest Morwood Road lot in the Village is 11,000sf. Mr. Beuke pointed out the Morwood Road lots conform more to the VC district than R1A district due to their size; minimum lot size for the R1A District is 80,000sf.

Mr. Goodman asked if there was a downside to the rezoning.

Mr. Kennedy remarked that several of the lots could be joined and then a non-residential use or mixed-use could then be proposed. The Planning Commission thought that it was better to offer a commercial development in this area which isn’t allowed in the R1A. The rezoning would bring all 17 lots into conformity in regards to lot size where only two are in conformance with the minimum lot size.

Mr. McHugh inquired about the timeline for notifying affected property owners; Mr. Beuke outlined the timeline and noted that the properties will need to be posted and an application will be sent to the Montgomery County Planning Commission. Mr. Kennedy said, if needed, he would notify the Indian Valley Regional Planning Commission.

Mr. McHugh asked for a motion to recommend that the Board of Supervisors authorize the advertisement of the rezoning; Mr. Shields made a motion and Mr. Bowe seconded that motion.

**Motion 6 Yes; 0 No**

**565 Freeman School Road – Louis J. Mascaro Foundation/New Life Farm School Sewage Facilities Planning Module Review**

Present to review the application on behalf of the applicant was Albert DeGennaro, Esquire, attorney for the applicant, also Andrew Hood, P.E. and Karen DeFazio, P.E. of Keystone Engineering Group. One review letter was prepared by Michele Fountain, P.E. of CKS Engineers, dated 2/18/2022. Mr. DeGennaro stated that the foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and their intent is to operate a school on the property.

Mr. DeGennaro asked why the Township has referenced land development being necessary, as the treatment system is existing, and his client is just improving the treatment system. In his opinion, this does not meet the definition of land development. He stated that this is an existing system that is 60 years old. The existing tanks need to be replaced with concrete tanks and a blower, his opinion is that this is not a new structure, and no new facilities are being built; however, the existing facilities cannot be used until these improvements are completed.

Mr. McHugh inquired about the use of the property and explained that this is new construction to the site.

Mr. DeGennaro stated that they need to do the improvements to find an interested tenant.

Mr. Hood stated that the applicant does not know exactly what is moving onto the site and noted that the existing sewage treatment plant was approved for a 200-person flow capacity and his client needs to fix the system to show the property. He stated that his client will not exceed capacity, which is seventy-five gallons/day/person.

Ms. Fountain asked if the flow numbers supplied are current or from the original approval; she also asked if they checked with the Lower Salford Township Authority to compare flow information, although she recognized that this is a private system.

Mr. Beuke stated that Mr. Bill Dingman will be reviewing the plan on behalf of the Lower Salford Township Authority.

Ms. Fountain gave a brief explanation of the planning module components and the process; she explained the 4A form and the 60-day response time; the application was submitted on 2/8/2022.

Ms. Fountain noted that the Planning Commission would need to make a motion for an authorized agent to sign the completed planning module. It was decided that the authorized agent would be Mr. Beuke.

Mr. Hood reviewed the site plan, stating that the steel tank no longer functions. The new system would consist of ten concrete tanks that would be recessed into the ground with approximately 8" remaining above grade level. The tanks would have grated covers. The blower would be stored in a newly constructed 10'x20' structure.

Mr. Kennedy inquired about impervious coverage. Ms. Fountain explained the townships definition of impervious coverage and sited that the tanks and necessary new driveway leading to the new structures would be considered impervious. A brief discussion on impervious coverage followed.

Ms. Fountain stated that a land development application would be necessary for this project and tonight's discussion is solely about the execution of Component 4A of the Sewage Facilities Planning Module. She also noted that a wastewater treatment plan upgrade would also be necessary. A brief discussion ensued regarding the size of the parcel and impervious coverage, grading, stormwater management and DEP review of the plan.

Mr. Hood noted that part two of the process would go through the DEP, but component 4A must be done first; he then explained the requirements and permitting process.

Mr. McHugh's opinion is that educational use of the property is a good idea; he reviewed the 4A component and voiced his concern with the lack of information and the need for more information from the applicant. He then asked for a motion for Mr. Beuke to execute the completed Component 4A.

A motion was made by Mr. Goodman and seconded by Mr. Kennedy.

**Motion 6 Yes; 0 No**

### **County – Zoning Ordinance Update**

Claire Warner of the Montgomery County Planning Commission resumed where she left off following the last update. The Mixed Use and Commercial Districts are being reviewed concurrently; the discussion included intent, community centers, shopping centers and pedestrian pathways.

Mr. Kennedy stated that these changes could be good for economic development and tax rates; it was also noted that permitted uses from the R-1 District such as medical offices have been added. A brief discussion followed regarding building coverage not exceeding 6% of the net lot area, the Main Street corridor, set-backs, beautification, consistency, and shopping centers with common spaces.

Mr. Goodman opined that common space landscaping is necessary; however, trees can block the view of tenant spaces. Allowing lower-growing greenery should also be an option and we need to be sensitive to site lines.

Mr. McHugh agreed that flexibility on the greenery should be investigated.

Ms. Fountain noted that shade trees are necessary for thermal protection.

Ms. Warner stated that she would look further into storefront landscaping and greenery surrounding shopping centers.

Regarding the Mixed-Use District, it was noted that the design standards are part of the SALDO; Mr. Kennedy explained how this came about and provided background on the subject.

Mr. McHugh discussed setbacks and the “corridor feel,” as well as maximum building height.

Mr. Kennedy suggested a limit on the height of corporate office buildings; stating that fifty feet is too high for building height. A brief discussion followed regarding the term “office” vs. “corporate office”.

Mr. Goodman shared information from other townships regarding shared drive-thru lanes for commercial buildings.

Ms. Fountain addressed the Bonus Provisions including green roofs and pervious paving; it was agreed that green roofs would be too difficult to keep in check. She then inquired about electrical vehicle charging stations being promoted or required.

Ms. Warner informed the group that she will continue with the edits.

Mr. Kennedy informed the group that the trails committee and county have done impressive work and he will bring this information to the Planning Commission in the next few months. The committee is identifying gaps and preparing itself to be ready for grant applications.

There being no further business or comments, Mr. McHugh asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Kennedy made a motion; Mr. Shields seconded. The meeting adjourned at 9:46pm.

The next regular meeting of the Planning Commission is scheduled for 7:30pm on Wednesday, March 23, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Reimel  
Administrative Assistant