

Vice Chairman John Medendorp called the Regular Meeting of the Franconia Township Planning Commission to order at 7:00 pm on Monday, July 1, 2024. Planning Commission Members present included Doug Worley, Steve Barndt, Paul Nice, John Medendorp, and George Balzer. Director of Administration and Community Development Beth T. Gooch, Township Engineer Timothy Wallace and Township Solicitor Eric Wert were also present.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Vice Chairman Medendorp asked if there were any comments or corrections to be made to the minutes from June 3, 2024. Acknowledging a punctuation correction, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was made by Doug Worley and seconded by Steve Barndt. The motion carried, 5-0.

## **SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT**

### **OLD BUSINESS**

(#02-24) 640 Lower Road Land Development – Mr. Nate Fox, Esquire stated that the plan is a second submission and Gilmore and Associates have completed two reviews. The proposal is for a 208,000 square foot warehouse along Lower, Forman and Hagey Roads. In March of 2024 Zoning relief for parking was granted. Currently there is no end user and it is a speculative project. The applicant is voluntarily buffering along the entirety of the Lower Road frontage. All truck traffic will access via Hagey Road while the passenger vehicles will access on Lower Road away from the school entrance. Everything else in the review letter is will comply other than the waivers as listed in the waiver request letter.

Mr. Bill Schaefer, the engineer for the project, addressed the waivers. A waiver regarding the regrading along road frontages. Mr. Wallace added that there is no issue with this waiver as there will be road widening. Mr. Fox added another waiver to permit a detention basin within 100 feet of the building. The building will be slab on grade. Mr. Fox requested that the light fixtures be permitted to exceed the 14-foot maximum and be installed at 25 feet. Discussion took place about types of lighting and possible motion detected lights as well as hours of operation.

Mr. Schaefer reported that the berm will be 6 feet tall with plantings on top. Mr. Medendorp stated that residents will still see the lights in the air. A rendering of the buffering at ten years of growth was shown to the board. The only gap in the berm is at the vehicle entrance. Mr. Fox added a

waiver from dedicated open space lands. Discussion also took place about the audible impact of the project. It is proposed to be a dry and not a cold storage facility.

Mr. Wallace confirmed that the traffic study was done using trips for a standard warehouse and not an Amazon type facility.

Mr. Kneipp joined the meeting in progress at 7:23 p.m.

Mr. Fox suggested a paved walking trail in lieu of sidewalk. Discussion took place about the location, crosswalks, and the possibility of the walking trail being installed on the opposite side of Lower Road. The applicant agreed to pay a fee in lieu of in order for the Township to install the trail offsite. Mr. Kneipp suggested a deferral request to install sidewalk until the Board of Supervisors makes that decision.

Residents along Lower Road were present to express their concerns on the location of the passenger vehicle entrance located directly across from their homes. Following the zoning hearing board decision a bend was added to hide the car parking more. Residents requested that the entrance be moved to the top of Lower Road where the current drive is. The response of the applicant's engineer was that the infiltration testing results determined where the basin would need to be located. Overnight operations were also a concern.

Moving the drive access will be discussed further with the Board of Supervisors with a few minor modification location suggestions still along the western side of the site.

Mr. Medendorp asked for a motion to recommend conditional preliminary/final approval based on a second option to be presented to the Board for the entrance at the residential flag lot across the street, and to defer the sidewalk or pay a trail fee in lieu of. Mr. Worley made such a motion. It was seconded by Mr. Barndt, and all voted in favor, 6-0.

(#03-24) Landis Land Development – No discussion this evening.

(#04-24) SASD Athletic Fields – Mr. Hugh Cadzow from ELA Sport explained that the project is for the existing fields along Lower Road. The soil is not great from the infiltration standpoint, and they have met with DEP and the Conservation District about this project, and they required some additional testing. The plan is for a softball and multi-purpose field. Currently the baseball team plays at a separate park, not on campus. There are proposed walkways to access the facility. The proposed dugouts will be open with chain link fencing for visibility and security purposes. The foot candle plan shows zero out at the property lines. Regulations for sports do dictate a higher foot

candle for safety reasons. The fields are currently heavily overused, are hard to maintain and the plan is to allow the high school teams to have fields in all-weather situations.

The applicant is asking for clarification on a zoning determination of the impervious coverage of the fields. The current plan is for the fields to be used for school teams only. All activities need to be shut down by 10 p.m.. Mr. Wallace added that if the future the fields open to rental, then a traffic study would need to be completed and impact fees assessed. There are currently 912 plus 84 overflow parking spaces. A deferral is requested from the installation of sidewalks and a consideration for the protected resources that will be under a conservation easement be credited for the open space requirement.

Mr. Cadzow went through the list of waivers for the project. To permit a single preliminary/final submission, a waiver from the required plan scale, a waiver for providing existing surrounding features, and a waiver from the open space dedication requirement. A waiver is also being requested from installing the screen requirement and allowing the existing vegetation to fulfill the buffer requirement. A deferral is requested from the installation of sidewalk.

Mr. Ken Keith, from the School Board, was present to request clarification for a timeline and stated that an October start date is ideal to use the fields for spring sports.

Mr. Medendorp asked for a motion to recommend conditional preliminary/final approval based on the waivers discussed and the deferral for sidewalk and if the fields are to be rented then the project would go back to the Planning Commission with a traffic impact study. Mr. Barndt made the motion, and it was seconded by Mr. Balzer. All voted in favor 6-0.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

(#05-24) 434 Lower Road Minor Subdivision – Steve Barndt made the motion to formally accept the plans as submitted. Mr. Worley seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Rick Mast was present to discuss the proposed minor subdivision of property located at the corner of Lower Road and Godshall Road. It was formally the Godshall Hatchery. Moyer contractors have an office they rent in the existing building. The proposal is for one single family building lot and the removal of two former hatchery buildings. There was a former lot line or subdivision in the past that was never followed through with. That is why there is an existing septic

system that is not being used. The applicant is prepared to tie into it as no public sewer is currently available. Approval from the county will be required to be submitted.

Mr. Mast stated that the waivers include a waiver form providing the surrounding existing features, the connection to public water, a deferral from road widening from both Godshall and Lower Roads. They also include a deferral from sidewalk, curbing, and a deferral from street trees along Lower Road. A deferral from dedicating any additional right of way is requested as there are improvements already existing in that 40 foot requirement. Mr. Mast added that no stormwater management is required because the impervious coverage is being reduced.

The overall impervious cover for the site is being reduced, but the lot line location puts lot 1 at an even higher percentage than was already non-conforming and exceeding the 35% permitted. The plan is to reduce the stone area to try and comply with the zoning requirements of the impervious coverage. Mr. Wallace added that with the reduction in impervious the applicant needs to show that the parking calculations can still be met. He added that either the parking or the lot line may need to be moved to comply with the distance permitted for parking to a property line. The applicant will resubmit plans and return to a future Planning Commission meeting.

(#06-24) 302 Leidy Road Land Development - Mr. Worley motioned for acceptance, Mr. Barndt seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

## **ZONING HEARING BOARD APPLICATIONS**

Ms. Gooch reported that the application for a proposed warehouse at 24 Allentown Road has been continued at the request of the applicant again. They are working with the sellers and architects to reduce the footprint of the proposed building. The application may or may not be heard in August.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Ordinance 419-23 is an ordinance to rezone portions of property owned by Marcho Family LP. This is a revised ordinance from 2023 and is scheduled to be heard at the July 15<sup>th</sup> Board of Supervisors meeting. There were no comments or questions from the Planning Commission.

Ms. Gooch stated that 668 Lower Road is also scheduled for a hearing at the July 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. The property owners are requesting to move their land into the Agricultural Security Area. Mr. Nice commented that this in order to eventually sell their developer's rights. No other comments were made.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

The next scheduled meeting is Monday, August 5, 2024, at 7 p.m.

Mr. Barndt made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 p.m. It was seconded by Mr. Nice, and all voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth T. Gooch,

Director of Administration

and Community Development