

MINUTES

LOWER SWATARA TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

**REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 28, 2019 7:00 P.M.**

Meeting was called to order by Chauncey Knopp at 7:00 P.M. with the following present:

Chauncey Knopp, Chairman
Eric Breon, Vice Chairman
Dennis Fausey
James Young
Andrew Kenworthy, HRG
Ann Hursh, LST Planning & Zoning Coordinator
Tonya Condran, Recording Secretary

Absent:

Kimber Latsha
Peter Henninger, LST Solicitor

Others in attendance:

Holly R. Evans, Evans Engineering, Inc.
R. Shane Bryant, resident
Laura Hayes, Press & Journal
Bill Meiser, Middletown Area School Dist.
Lawrence Dimeler IV, New Thing UM
Lori Suski, Middletown Area School Dist.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mr. Knopp asked if there was a motion to approve the February 28, 2019 meeting minutes. Motion was made by Mr. Young to approve the minutes and seconded by Mr. Fausey. All were in favor. Minutes were approved.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

a. Preliminary/Final Subdivision/Land Development Plan for Wilsbach Distribution Facility, Planning Commission File #PC2019-02, with a time deadline of June 26, 2019. Located at the SW corner of Oberlin Road and Longview Drive, 62.75 acre, zoned Industrial Park, equitable owner Wilsbach Distributors, Inc., submitted by Evans Engineering, Inc.

Requested by applicant to be tabled until next month's meeting.

b. Sketch Plan for New Synthetic Turf Field for Middletown Area School District presented by Evans Engineering, Inc.

Holly Evans of Evans Engineering, Inc. gave a PowerPoint presentation of the proposed plan for a new synthetic turf field at the Middletown Area High School. He had with him Bill Meiser and Lori Suski of the Middletown Area School District.

Ms. Evans went on to present in slides to the Planning Commission a detailed synopsis of what they were proposing at the corner end of the property nearest where the PA Turnpike and N. Union Street intersect with each other. The field will primarily be for field hockey, soccer, and JV football, sports of less intense use so that they will not always be using the primary football field at Memorial Stadium. All PIAA events will still be held at Memorial Field.

Ms. Evans went on to show where there will be a grandstand with a seating area to hold approximately 500 people. The project also includes field lighting, bus drop-off loop, ADA parking, an athletic amenity support building (approx. 4000 sf) and associated stormwater management facilities.

Ms. Evans explained that all the stormwater will actually be collected, controlled, and maintained under the field so there will be no additional stormwater basins visible. Any stormwater that they will have in the spectator seating area will all be captured, collected and conveyed and brought into the underground stormwater system. They will maintain the existing

underground stormwater basin that was built as part of the high school parking lot project; they are not touching that at all. They will be building around it. All the stormwater piping will stay in place; she said they will build their stormwater storage in two compartmental areas on either side of that. The pipes that are there are all deep enough so that they can build over top of them and not have any impact on those pipes.

Ms. Evans said they would also be constructing a bus loop and a drop-off area. Also an additional ADA parking area. There is ample parking at the school for all school activities as it is, but in order to provide additional ADA spaces without giving up space in the existing lot, they are adding the small ADA parking lot.

Ms. Evans said the field will be lighted. They are using LED lighting.

Mr. Meiser confirmed that they will be using the LED lighting to match the rest of the campus. Currently the walkway bisects both fields, so a new walkway is proposed along the side that will take pedestrians around the field and then onto the front concourse and on to the peninsula.

Mr. Breon asked for clarification on “both” fields.

Mr. Meiser said yes, currently Field 3 and Field 4 are there, two soccer fields that are side by side.

Mr. Breon asked if they were practice fields before and now just one regulation-sized field.

Mr. Meiser said that is correct. The two fields that are there now will turn into one field and there will be a new walkway that will go around it. The walkway that is there right now will go away and that section will be shifted to where the end-zone will be.

Discussion on the existing water basin ensued.

Ms. Evans said that with the proposed design, it will reduce the watershed to that basin. The area of the field will actually be elevated. Right now it has a constant gentle slope, but they will be carrying a 404' elevation all the way across, eliminating that slope. They will be raising the height of that slope by about 5 feet. All the stormwater will be stored underneath the field; they are not proposing infiltration with this project. The soils out there are not prone to accept infiltration properly. Everything will be handled through water

quality control and will meet all the requirements of DEP and LST. When all is done, they will actually be reducing the flow to all the systems, diverting any stormwater and releasing by rate control to the point where all discharges meet under the PA Turnpike.

Ms. Evans explained that this plan, which is being presented today as a Sketch Plan, will be coming through as a Stormwater Plan not a Land Development Plan. Ms. Evans added that they wanted to make sure the Planning Commission was involved and the Board of Commissioners had a chance to review this and if there are any concerns, they are hearing those concerns and addressing those through the design process. Ms. Evans said she would like to make this a successful project both for the school district and the township.

Mr. Meiser added that the PA Turnpike Commission's (PTC) Bridge Replacement of 441 is in play and they are designing that at this time and they are well aware of the School District's plans. PTC did ask for right-of-way from the walkway back towards the turnpike itself, but that is all they are asking for. They initially asked if they (PTC) could put some water in the pond, but MASD told them no because they had a hard time managing their own water so they couldn't manage theirs and they understood that. Mr. Meiser said he just wanted the Planning Commission to see that the PTC understands what MASD is working with and they are aware of what MASD is proposing.

Mr. Breon wasn't aware of the 441 turnpike bridge replacement.

Mr. Meiser said they are in the design stage but he believes they are getting ready to start next year.

Ms. Evans said that schedule-wise for their plan would be to go through the intended approval process anytime between now and late summer so that it could be put out for bid by Fall. And then they would like it to be constructed and completed by the Summer of 2020.

Mr. Meiser explained that Memorial Field will remain as the high school's football field. But Middletown is one of the only schools in the area that doesn't have a synthetic turf field for their field hockey team.

Ms. Evans explained why synthetic fields are beneficial. One synthetic field can serve for multiple grass fields. Grass fields get much more wear-and-tear and fertilizers whereas the synthetic field can have multiple sports and hold

up with the wear-and-tear for years. It benefits the taxpayers and the school district in the long run.

Mr. Knopp asked what the estimated cost was for this synthetic field.

Mrs. Suski said it is roughly 3.5 million dollars and they are funding it directly through Capital Reserve Fund of the district.

Mr. Knopp then asked how long a synthetic turf field lasts.

Mr. Meiser answered that the playing surface itself will last between 8 to 12 years if it is taken good care of. At that point, replacement is about \$400,000. And that would essentially just be replacing the playing surface, nothing else would have to be upgraded.

Ms. Evans added that all the infrastructure and everything else is already there in place so you are basically peeling off that top layer and replacing the carpet and then redressing the field below that.

Mr. Young asked if there was sufficient space to add a track around it for track and field events.

Ms. Evans said no, there is not.

Mr. Meiser added that MASD does have the track that was just added about 5 years ago that sits on the campus between Reid Elementary School and the high school. That field is open to the public; however, this new proposed field will have gates and only be open during events.

Mr. Breon asked if the field would be available for the ORSA organization to use.

Mr. Meiser explained that he doesn't know that anyone is not allowed to use the field, anybody can apply to use it, but the School Board has not established the rates at this time.

Mr. Breon asked if the PTC was ok with the lighting plan of this project.

Ms. Evans said the LED lighting is very direct and very controlled. It is basically lit from the four corners of the field. It will not be an issue with the PA Turnpike.

This concluded the presentation by Holly Evans of Evans Engineering.

Mr. Knopp asked if there were any further questions from the Planning Commission.

Mr. Breon made the statement that this was probably cheaper to do than any kind of improvements at Memorial Field.

Mr. Meiser informed that Memorial Field is not wide enough to put a full-size soccer field in, although it was discussed. But the determination was to put this field out at the campus.

Mrs. Suski added that the other detriment to using Memorial Field was that the district would have to incur transportation costs to get the students down there. Being on the campus, makes it easily accessible.

Mr. Meiser informed that as far as the parking plan went, they were given a variance to have less than the required spaces. They have a management plan that works well, they have not had any complaints so far. They have managed the use of the facilities, so they will continue to do that by the scheduling of activities. They will provide different areas of parking and have parking attendants when needed. The ADA parking is tied into the campus, so no new re-striping will need to be done.

Mr. Breon asked for clarification on the seating limit.

Mr. Meiser said this would have the capacity for 500 people.

Mr. Knopp asked what the capacity was for Memorial Stadium.

Mr. Meiser said that he believed it is about 1200, but he was not sure. It may be closer to 1500.

Mr. Knopp asked HRG for any comments.

Mr. Kenworthy said that they did have the chance to look at the plan preliminarily and they would take at a more detailed look when the formal application is made. Initially, HRG had no concerns with what has been discussed already.

Mr. Knopp asked Ann Hursh if she was ok with this sketch plan.

Mrs. Hursh said yes. One of the townships concerns was the parking but they addressed that and they do have enough spaces on site.

Mr. Knopp asked for any other questions or comments. There were none. Mr. Knopp thanked Bill Meiser and Holly Evans for the good presentation.

OTHER BUSINESS:

The next Planning Commission Meeting will be held on Thursday, April 25, 2019 at 7:00 P.M.

ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Mr. Breon and seconded by Mr. Young to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:28 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann Hursh
Planning and Zoning Coordinator