

PROFESSIONAL LAND PLANNER

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PLANNER-IN-CHARGE PENNSYLVANIA
REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL PLANNER - NJ

VIA E-MAIL

December 9, 2019

TO: Whitpain Township Planning Commission
FROM: E. Van Rieker, Township Planning Consultant
RE: Township Planning Commission Meeting – December 10, 2019

Regular Session – 7:30 P.M.

1. Approval of Minutes

2. Review of a land development application for Stony Creek Elementary School Building Expansion & Alterations (LD-7-19). This land development involves the construction of a new 26,905 SF building addition, new parking areas and access driveways located at 1721 Yost Road. The property is zoned IN Institutional Zoning District.

Comment:

- *See Attached Memo dated Monday, December 09, 2019.*

3. Review Current Zoning Hearing Board Applications:

1. ZHB #2203-19	Ronald & Holly Flaherty (588 Bolton Place)	Floodplain
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Comments:

- *Applicant is requesting a special exception and/or is appealing a Zoning Enforcement Notice regarding a request for regrading and replacement of a retaining wall within a floodplain. The nature of this appeal is very fact specific and will require expert testimony relative to the continuation of a nonconforming activity and a demonstration of no adverse impact upon the designated floodplain. As such, this is the type of application where the Planning Commission could remain neutral and defer to the evidence submitted to the Zoning Hearing Board.*

- *I would note that the aerial image exhibits appear to be very helpful in determining a decision from the Zoning Hearing Board.*

storage facility. Historically, these types of facilities have very low traffic impacts associated with their operation, including low vehicle operation during peak periods..

- *A sign variance to permit a 50 sf identification sign is also required given that the existing zoning districts do not permit such an operation.*
- *For the above reasons I would recommend support for the zoning relief subject to the review and approval of the Township Engineering Department.*

In addition, the application has been revised to request a variance for 300 sf. of internally illuminated signage located on different areas of the building, including directional signage.

Comment:

- *In order to comment further on this request applicant should provide a sign package exhibit to quantify the number and size of these additional signs as well as their proposed location and purpose.*

4. Review pertinent planning issues.

cc: Jim Blanch Courtney Miller John O'Hara
Kent Conway Joe Habboush Roman Pronzak
Ken Corti Otis Hightower Richard Shorin
Joseph Fay Cathy McGowan Jen Gallagher
Kurt Zintner John Miller

Applicants Attorneys:

- ZHB #2203-19: Marc Davis, Esquire
- ZHB #2209-19: Mark Harris, Esquire
- ZHB #2224-19: Craig R. Lewis, Esquire
- ZHB #2225-19: Walter J. Timby III, Esquire
- ZHB #2221.19: Bernadette Kearney, Esquire

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TO: Whitpain Township Planning Commission

FROM: E. Van Rieker, Township Planning Consultant 

CC: Mark J. Buchvalt, PE -- Applicants Engineer

RE: Stony Creek Elementary School Land Development (LD-7-19)

1. External Impacts

a. Proposed second driveway intersection with Yost Road

- A second driveway to the Elementary School site is a good idea particularly when you consider that the current property is serviced by one driveway access which includes the combination of both bus traffic and automobile traffic.
- The new plan proposes internal circulation revisions which facilitate bus stacking requirements. In so doing it raises the question of whether bus traffic should be confined to only the redesigned main driveway which is to be widened to provide an additional turn lane (two exit movements and one ingress movement).
- The new driveway proposed opposite Whitwood Drive is identified for two way movement. The interior design suggests however that this drive would basically be limited to the use of the 23 existing parking lot spaces. It makes one wonder whether this separate parking lot should be expanded in size to accommodate possible future needs.

b. Offsite draining runoff in the direction of Creek View Lane

- All of the new internal easterly driveway and most of the new easterly parking lot are proposed on that part of the site which drains in the direction of Creek View Lane. The house pads for the homes situated along Creek View Lane are

substantially lower in elevation than some of the new impervious surfaces associated with the new construction.

- It is noted that a very sophisticated storm water management system is proposed including an extensive subsurface storm water collection tile field. It appears that virtually all of the storm water runoff emanating from the new construction in the easterly portion of the property will be captured and drain to the underground storm water management system. Naturally, the Township Engineer will need to carefully evaluate this proposal.

2. Internal Planning Considerations

a. Internal driveway circulation

- As mentioned above the arrangement of the interior driveway is being “stretched” in order to accommodate daily vehicle stacking. For an active school site this is a good thing. I’ll leave the actual design and turning radiuses to the Township and Design Engineers. Overall, with the possible exception of the parallel parking contemplated along the exterior of the easterly driveway the new arrangement seems well considered.
- It is assumed that the proposed concrete paver interconnect between the easterly and westerly driveways is intended only for emergency or occasional use. Additional signage may be required to assist the driver on the use of the interconnection.

b. Landscaping

- The existing frontage along Yost Road is comprised of a handsome stretch of pine trees, some of which will be removed as part of the new construction. It is suggested that replacement trees of a deciduous variety be considered.
- With the above comment the landscape plan (sheet 15 of 24) includes a large number of trees and shrubs consistent with the landscape requirements and will result in a general upgrade to the site subject to the following noted exception. It should be noted that Pennsylvania DCNR has placed the species of Winged Euonymus on the invasive species list of plant material. Because of this, it is suggested that applicant consider alternative shrubs in order to accomplish the perimeter buffering around the parking lots.