

BUCKINGHAM TOWNSHIP

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PLANNING COMMISSION

AGENDA

MARCH 6, 2024

Call to Order 7:30 p.m.

1. Consideration of approving draft Planning Commission minutes of September 6, 2023 and February 7, 2024.
2. Consideration of recommending Preliminary/Final Approval of the "Buckingham Valley Veterinary Center Expansion" Land Development Plan dated revised February 16, 2024, Township File LD 2023-03, Tax Map Parcel #06-019-011, 1 Lot, 3.38 Acres, located in the AG-1 Zoning District, with an extended review period expiration date of January 2, 2025.

Buckingham Township Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes

The regular meeting of the Buckingham Township Planning Commission was held March 6, 2024 in the Township Building, 4613 Hughesian Drive, Buckingham, Pennsylvania.

Present:	Andrea Mehling	Chairperson
	Rebecca Fink	Vice-Chairperson
	Frank Ripp, Jr.	Member
	Erling Salvesen, Jr.	Member
	Dr. Marc Sandberg	Member
	Louis Spadafora	Member
	Glenn Thomson	Member
	Dan Gray	Township Engineer
	Luke Rosanova	Bucks County Planning Commission

Mrs. Mehling called the regular meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Consideration of approving the draft Planning Commission minutes of the September 6, 2023 and February 7, 2024 meeting.

Mr. Thomson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Salvesen, to approve the draft Planning Commission minutes of the September 6, 2023 and February 7, 2024 meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of recommending Preliminary/Final Approval of the “Buckingham Valley Veterinary Center Expansion” Land Development Plan dated revised February 16, 2024, Township File LD 2023-03, Tax Map Parcel #06-019-011, 1 Lot, 3.38 Acres, located in the AG-1 Zoning District, with an extended review period expiration date of January 2, 2025.

Dr. Chris Feaster and Dr. Lisa Miernicki of Buckingham Valley Veterinary Center, and Mr. Chirag Thakkar and Mr. Ashwin Gubbi Kotte of Arna Engineering were present to discuss the proposed plan.

Dr. Feaster explained that he and Dr. Miernicki are the 3rd group of vets to own Buckingham Valley Veterinary Center since 1955, and they have exhausted and outgrown the space due to changing standards in veterinary practices. Dr. Feaster said their goal is to modernize as there have been no changes to the facility since 1990. Dr. Feaster explained that they are expected to offer services such as dental, surgical, ultrasound, x-ray, laser and more, and will be able to provide these services with the additional space proposed by this plan. Dr. Feaster said they have been working with Mr. Kevin Miller of Professional Design & Construction, who is experienced in veterinary centers, as well as Ms. Manicone and Mr. Gray, to refine the project.

Mr. Thakkar distributed aerial images of the site as it exists, and an overlay of the proposed structure which shows the plan and parking area. Mr. Thakkar explained the existing building is 3,300 square feet, with half of it utilized by Dr. Feaster for his personal residence. He said they are proposing to expand the practice. Mr. Thakkar said the practice has its own driveway access, and

they are proposing 14 parking spaces, with one designated ADA accessible. Mr. Thakkar said the parking will be configured closer to the building than the current parking lot, and the driveway will be upgraded for current standards. Mr. Thakkar explained they will provide a stormwater facility to be sure runoff does not exceed current conditions.

Mr. Thakkar said they met with the Zoning Hearing Board in December and were granted a variance to increase the impervious surface to 18%, where 10% is allowed by the Zoning Ordinance in land underlain by carbonate geology.

Mr. Thakkar said they received review letters from the Landscape Review Committee and Knight Engineering and had coordinated and met with them to resolve outstanding issues. He said most of the comments were technical items that are “will comply”, and there are no major plan changes anticipated.

Mr. Gray reported that in his March 4, 2024 review letter, he supported most of the waivers as requested, with landscaping topics deferred to the Landscape Review Committee.

Mr. Gray said there is one waiver deferred to a future time, as follows:

SALDO § 9.1.B.1 The SALDO requires that sidewalks or bicycle/pedestrian paths be provided along all existing and proposed streets. Mr. Gray recommended deferring this waiver request as there are no immediate plans along Route 413 for a bicycle/pedestrian path, and there is a limited area for the improvement on this site. Mr. Gray explained that regional planning shows a bicycle/pedestrian path on the other side of Durham Road, but there is an issue that part of that area is preserved farmland. Mr. Gray said there is an existing path in front of Buckingham Elementary School and it would be logical to carry it down on the same side of the street.

Mrs. Mehling asked if there were any outdoor kennels on the site, and Dr. Feaster replied no, they do not board animals and there are no outdoor kennels. Dr. Feaster said that very rarely do they hospitalize any pets, however the architect will make sure the building is soundproofed.

Mr. Spadafora asked if more traffic was expected due to the expansion, and Dr. Feaster replied yes, and said they hired a traffic engineer to conduct a study to submit to PennDOT. Mr. Thakkar said the traffic assessment was submitted to the township with the application.

Mr. Thakkar said that currently the parking lot is not striped, but the new one will be striped for 14 spots. Mr. Gray explained this is not a significant increase as they currently have approximately 10 spaces. Mr. Spadafora asked if they would need a turn lane on Durham Road, and Mr. Gray said he did not believe so, however the PennDOT review would cover this.

Mr. Spadafora noted there did not seem to be neighbors nearby, and Dr. Feaster said to the far right is house, and that he has met with the neighbor who is fine with the proposed project.

Ms. Manicone said she had reviewed the plan with Mr. Thakkar and it will be tweaked as some items were missed on the plan. Ms. Manicone said she supported the requested waivers pertaining to landscaping, adding that it will be a very attractive site with the proposed landscaping to include flowering street trees and evergreen screening between this property and the neighbors', and

around the solar management area. Ms. Manicone said that Dr. Feaster's peony bed will be transplanted to the other side of the site.

Mr. Rosanova said that Bucks County Planning Commission had no concerns regarding this plan.

Mr. Ripp questioned the parking. Mr. Thakkar confirmed there will be 14 parking spaces. Mr. Ripp confirmed they cannot expand the parking to the left, as that is the stormwater management facility – he asked if soils dictate where the stormwater facility is installed. Mr. Thakkar said yes, the stormwater facility has to be downstream, so it has been constricted to fit into the designated area. Mr. Thakkar said they do not foresee any parking extension, adding that they meet zoning requirements for parking with this plan. Mr. Gray explained that the septic system is installed between the proposed expansion and the stormwater management facility, so it was also worked around. Mr. Gray proposed if additional parking were needed, the stormwater basin would need to become an underground system.

Dr. Sandberg asked how they dispose of medications and waste products from the animals. Dr. Feaster explained they have special containers for unused medications, or they take them to a township disposal program. He confirmed they do not put any medications or animal waste into the septic system. Mrs. Mehling asked about deceased animals or removed parts, and Dr. Feaster said they have a freezer in the office that gets picked up weekly by a reputable crematory service.

Mr. Gray explained there is a waiver request for preliminary/final approval that he supports conditioned upon acquiring the PennDOT permit. Mr. Gray said if there were any significant changes required by PennDOT, the plan would most likely return to the Planning Commission for review.

Mrs. Fink made a motion, seconded by Mr. Thomson, to recommend preliminary/final approval of the "Buckingham Valley Veterinary Center Expansion" Land Development Plan dated revised February 16, 2024, Township File LD 2023-03, Tax Map Parcel #06-019-011, 1 Lot, 3.38 Acres, located in the AG-1 Zoning District, conditioned upon approval by PennDOT of the driveway entrance and any necessary roadway improvements. The motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Fink made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Mehling, to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 8:03 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Lori Wicen.

Minutes approved by Planning Commission on May 1, 2024.