

BUCKINGHAM TOWNSHIP

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BUCKINGHAM TOWNSHIP Board of Supervisors Work Session Agenda June 24, 2020 6:00 p.m.

Manager's Items:

Windsor Square – Island
Water and Wastewater Facility Bid

6:30 p.m. "Covenant Church – New Parking Lot" Township File LD 2019-01

Buckingham Township Board of Supervisors
Work Session
Minutes

The work session of the Buckingham Township Board of Supervisors was held June 24, 2020 in the Township Building, 4613 Hughesian Drive, Buckingham, Pennsylvania.

Present:	Jon Forest	Chairman
	Maggie Rash	Vice-Chairman
	Paul Calderaio	Member
	Dana S. Cozza	Township Manager
	Daniel Gray	Township Engineer
	Craig A. Smith, Esquire	Township Solicitor
	Gary Weaver	Township Water/Wastewater Consultant
Not Present:	Luke Rosanova	Bucks County Planning Commission

The work session commenced at 6:00 p.m.

Water and Wastewater Operations Center - Bid

Mrs. Cozza advised the Board of the bid opening results for the Water and Wastewater Operations Center contracts. She said there are 4 separate contracts: 1) General Contractor, 2) Plumbing, 3) Electrical, and 4) Mechanical. Mrs. Cozza explained that there was only one bid submitted for plumbing, zero bids for mechanical, and 4 bids for electrical, which were all higher than expected.

Mrs. Cozza said the site work was higher than expected because the estimator did not include running utilities down the long drive from Route 263, installation of a generator, and wiring. She said scaffolding expense for the garage was also not included.

Mr. Robb, Indian Walk, asked if solar panels could be used, and Mrs. Cozza said that was not included as part of this bid package, however the garage would be oriented for solar panels which could be added in the future.

Mr. Forest asked if the project would be rebid, and Mrs. Cozza said yes, the mechanical and plumbing would be rebid immediately. She expected the bid opening to be prior to the next Board of Supervisors meeting in July.

Mrs. Cozza also said when this project was discussed during the fall budget meetings, it was thought that money from the water and wastewater fund (user fees, not taxpayer money) would pay for it, however she proposed with financing and borrowing money at very low rates currently, it may make sense to borrow some of the money for the project and pay it back. The Board was agreeable to the suggestion.

Mr. Weaver left the meeting.

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Windsor Square – Island Maintenance

Mrs. Cozza explained there is a planted island in the connector road between Windsor Square and Buckingham Forest. She said it is planted and was being cared for by Orleans, and then by the Windsor Square Homeowners Association, however the Homeowners Association does not want to maintain it any longer, and has asked the township to do so. Mr. Gray clarified that the island is actually included in the Buckingham Forest subdivision plan on land that the township owned as part of their dedication, but was built as part of the Orleans subdivision, with anticipation that their homeowners association would take care of it.

Ms. Manicone said there was a simple planting plan originally, with shrubs, grasses and daylilies. She said it now has an assortment of flowers and shrubs, and is nowhere near the originally planting plan. Ms. Manicone asked if the township could turn it into a grass circle with big canopy trees in the middle. Mrs. Cozza said that would require the township to mow and maintain it.

Mr. Robb said as a taxpayer, he doesn't want to pay for the maintenance of the island, and suggested that the township tell them they will take it over, but it will be concreted.

Mr. Gray suggested asking the neighbors who live closest to the island if they would like to maintain it, adding that cul-de-sac islands are usually assigned to the person who lives closest to it. Mr. Forest said if it was just planted with grass, it wouldn't be difficult for them to mow when their own yard is mowed.

Clearwater Court – Island Maintenance

Mrs. Cozza said the township received a request for maintenance of the cul-de-sac island on Clearwater Court to be transferred from the resident of lot 42 to the resident of lot 41. She said it appears an error was made many years ago with the record plan showing maintenance responsibilities assigned to lot 42, however the maintenance agreement indicated lot 41; and the lot 41 homeowners have been maintaining it. Mrs. Cozza said that the township received a letter from lot 41's attorney with the request for transfer of maintenance, saying that the lot 42 resident was amenable to the change.

Mrs. Cozza suggested replying to the attorney that he composes a revised maintenance agreement for the township to review. The Board agreed.

"Covenant Church – New Parking Lot" Township File LD 2019-02

Ms. Kim Freimuth, Esquire provided a brief background of the Covenant Church project, explaining they currently have 383 existing parking spaces, and are proposing to add 76 spaces between the existing church building and Route 202 entrance, for a total of 459 spaces.

Ms. Freimuth said the church submitted the Land Development plan over a year ago, received review letters, revised the plan and resubmitted, and has had 3 meetings with the Planning Commission. She explained the Planning Commission had concerns regarding the location and the need for the additional parking, and tabled the plan pending guidance from the Board of Supervisors. She said the Planning Commission preferred the parking lot to be located near Mechanicsville Road, which is not an ideal location due to it being the furthest location from the building, would present stormwater management challenges, and is closer to neighbors, one who voiced opposition to that location.

Ms. Freimuth said the Zoning Hearing Board granted impervious surface relief to allow the parking area near the Route 202 entrance in an area that was since discovered to intrude into wetlands, so the location was shifted slightly from the specific area granted by the Zoning Hearing Board.

Ms. Freimuth presented a parking study which indicates the current parking is at capacity, and said the church is experiencing significant growth and needs the additional parking to support the growth.

Mr. Knab, engineer, pointed out the project will require a waiver from the Zoning Ordinance as the proposed location is technically in the front yard, even though it is outside of the setback area. He said the property actually has two front yards.

Mr. Knab discussed landscaping, saying the church is committed to planting larger than required evergreen trees in the approach to the building, parking lot screenings to enhance the existing tree line, and to preserving the original evergreen tree line along Route 202. Ms. Manicone said she had not seen a plan to this effect, but agreed that the larger evergreen materials would be welcomed.

Several members of the Planning Commission were present. Mr. Thomson said there are 2 decisions: 1) the need for, 2) the plan of. Mrs. Mehling said that several persons had visited the parking lot at various times and services, and concluded that the existing parking lot is not utilized, raising the concern about the “need”. Mrs. Mehling said they were told initially this area would be so that parents could park and take their children into the nursery or Sunday School, adding this convenience did not present a “need”. Mrs. Rash said the Board of Supervisors are bound by laws, not by what they think is “needed”.

Mr. Smith advised that based on the Zoning Ordinance, the church technically is allowed 300 more parking spaces, and what they propose is a lot less than the required amount based on square footage of the building.

Mrs. Fink said she was on the Planning Commission when this church originally was planned, and she had asked them if 24 acres would be enough for what they want, and they said it wouldn’t grow, and would be fine. She said she is offended by how it has grown into a mega church. Mrs. Fink said she would like to see the parking study, but does not feel the additional parking is necessary if needed only 2 times a year. Mr. Smith

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stated the building addition was included in the original plans. He also said that growth is constitutionally protected.

Ms. Freimuth said they had a parking study performed since the last meeting with the Planning Commission using counts from Sunday services, and they now have that data.

Mr. Gray clarified the Planning Commission had tabled their action so that the applicant could meet with the Board of Supervisors to determine if the location and the need were acceptable, so that the church wasn't designing something the Board was not in favor of.

Mr. Forest said he did not want the parking lot added near Mechanicsville Road due to the neighbors, he said that closer parking to the church is safer for the users, and that he could not address the "need" as it is not his church and that is their business. Mrs. Fink asked what he thought of the "need" based on the parking study. Mr. Forest said he is not a parking engineer; however, he knows people who attend the church and they say they need it.

Mrs. Rash said the Board bases their decisions on the zoning ordinance, adding that she is glad that they could have had more spaces but are choosing to have less. She agreed that locating the lot near Mechanicsville Road would impact the neighbors. She likes the idea of the building and parking lot clustered in an area, and leaving the space along Mechanicsville Road as a viewshed while protecting the closest residents.

Mr. Calderaio said the board does not need to defend their value of open space and environmental issues, adding that he agrees it is better to cluster the building and parking lot rather than place it near Mechanicsville Road. Mr. Calderaio said they are conforming to the look of Buckingham by valuing and preserving the trees. He said if they are allowed to have the additional parking by zoning, then that is their choice. Mr. Calderaio stated churches are the pillars of the community.

Mr. Thomson clarified that he now understood the "need" was out of their scope, and the conversation should be about the design. Mrs. Mehling thanked the board for their guidance.

Mr. Robb asked about proposed runoff; who makes the decision of the size, stormwater management, etc. Mr. Gray explained the applicant is required to comply with township ordinances which outline the standards and calculation methodology, adding that his office reviews the plan and verifies its conformity.

Ms. Freimuth said they appreciated the feedback and participation so the church can move forward.

Ms. Freimuth said based on the conversation and appreciation for the time that will be needed to continue through the review process, she would amend the review period extension date to December for the Boards consideration this evening. Mr. Smith agreed to the verbal request and asked that it be confirmed in writing for the records.

Summer Concert Series

Mrs. Cozza said with the County expected to enter the Green Phase of the COVID-19 recovery plan this Friday, did the Board want to consider scheduling some of the summer concerts, and what did they think about resuming rental of the park fields and the community room in the township building.

Mr. Forest suggested scheduling a couple of concerts towards the second half of July and beginning of August. Mr. Calderaio agreed. Mrs. Rash did not agree.

Mrs. Cozza asked about opening the restrooms at the park, and Mr. Forest said to follow Bucks County's lead, but added that if it was determined the restrooms could open, they should open only if township staff could maintain their current cleaning schedule.

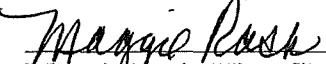
7:30 p.m. The Work Session adjourned.

Approved by the Board of Supervisors on the 29th day of July, 2020.

Buckingham Township Board of Supervisors



Jon Forest, Chairman



Maggie Rash, Vice-Chairman

Paul Calderaio, Member

Attest:



Dana S. Cozza, Secretary

Minutes respectfully submitted by Lori Wicen.