

BUCKINGHAM TOWNSHIP

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PLANNING COMMISSION

AGENDA

APRIL 7, 2021

Call to Order 7:30 p.m.

1. Consideration of approving the draft Planning Commission minutes of the February 3, 2021 Meeting.
2. Consideration of recommending Preliminary Approval of the **“McKee Development” Alternate Sketch of Major Subdivision Plan** dated 3/9/2021, Township File SA 2020-01, Tax Map Parcels 6-18-76 and 6-18-79, located along Durham Road / Creek Road / Lower Mountain Road, proposing a Living Community of 42 Units: 12 single family homes, 18 townhomes, 12 twin homes, total parcel size 79.17 acres, located in the AG-1 Zoning District, with an extended review period expiration date of December 31, 2021.
3. Consideration of recommending Preliminary Approval of the **“First Baptist Church of Wycombe – Parking Expansion”**, Land Development Plan dated 3/8/21, Township File LD 2021-01, Tax Map Parcel 6-24-7, located at 4174 Township Line Road, 1 lot, .95 acres to be developed, located in the VC-1 Zoning District, with an initial 90-day review period expiration date of July 6, 2021.

Buckingham Township Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes

The regular meeting of the Buckingham Township Planning Commission was held April 7, 2021 electronically via the Zoom application due to the current State and Federal regulations in place from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Present:	Andrea Mehling	Chairperson
	Patrick Fowles	Vice Chairperson
	Rebecca Fink	Member
	Louis Spadafora	Member
	Glenn Thomson	Member
	Erling Salvesen, Jr.	Member
	Dr. Marc Sandberg	Member
	Dan Gray	Township Engineer
	Louis 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 February 3, 2021 meeting.

Mr. Spadafora made a motion, seconded by Mr. Salvesen, to approve, as most recently presented, the draft Planning Commission meeting minutes of the February 3, 2021 Meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Consideration of recommending Preliminary Approval of the “McKee Development” Alternate Sketch of Major Subdivision Plan dated 3/9/2021, Township File SA 2020-01, Tax Map Parcels 6-18-76 and 6-18-79, located along Durham Road / Creek Road / Lower Mountain Road, proposing a Living Community of 42 Units: 12 single family homes, 18 townhomes, 12 twin homes, total parcel size 79.17 acres, located in the AG-1 Zoning District, with an extended review period expiration date of December 31, 2021.

Ed Murphy, Esquire and Mr. Greg Glitzer of Gilmore & Associates, were present along with Mr. Kevin McLaughlin from The McKee Group.

Mr. Murphy said on January 6, 2021 this project was before the Planning Commission, and there were concerns raised by the neighbors and the Planning Commission members regarding the increased traffic on Creek and Lower Mountain Roads that would be created if the development was placed on that side of the parcel. Mr. Murphy said since that meeting, they revised the plan according to those concerns and designed the development to be located on the Route 413 side of the parcel, and they are present this evening to listen to comments about this alternate concept.

Mr. Glitzer explained that one of the suggestions from the January meeting was to leave the development on the Creek and Lower Mountain Road side, but run a road over to Route 413, and not have entry/exits on the smaller roadways. Mr. Glitzer said after studying that option, they concluded that a ½ mile long straight road, running parallel to Buckingham Springs, would bisect the farming area, present a massive amount of road frontage, and end up being a drag strip. He said they would still need loops to turn the development in on itself as the ordinance prohibits cul-de-sacs. They concluded that was not a good concept.

Mr. Glitzer explained the new sketch shows the density moved from the Creek/Lower Mountain Road side to the Route 413 frontage, with the same 41 units but a much more condensed B14 layout following models and suggestions for this development type in the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.

Mr. Glitzer said the sketch shows two entry/exits onto Route 413 (which could be shifted up or down), has the spray fields in the upper left with the required 100' minimum setback to the homes, and the lagoons relocated to the middle of the Creek Road side with farming on either side of the lagoons. Mr. Glitzer said this plan is zoning compliant, but would require one fundamental waiver from the Subdivision and Development Ordinance for solar orientation. He said to comply they would need to align the long axis of the project on a SE/SW orientation which would fragment the spray field and push development closer to Buckingham Springs.

Mr. Glitzer said a 50' buffer is required along all roadways and they would plan to install that on the Route 413 side, however the Creek/Lower Mountain Road side would remain farmed to its current borders. Mr. Glitzer explained they planned to install the buffer near the development homes, with a 50' wide mixed evergreen shade tree, flowering tree and understory buffer. He said they would keep the cultivated area adjacent to Buckingham Springs as is.

Mrs. Mehling asked if there could be walking path to Creek Road or to Upper Mountain Road, and if persons could traverse through the farm area. Mr. Glitzer said they are obligated to keep large tracts in cultivation, but could design a path along the edge and connect it to Buckingham Springs. He said there also was an opportunity for trails in the upper right area, which is wooded.

Mrs. Mehling asked if just a quiet little park area could be installed, rather than a "tot lot". Mr. Glitzer said it will be a small area ringed by alleys, and could be called a "pocket park".

Mr. Fowles said he was very happy with the new direction, and had two questions. He said he disagreed with one of the comments in Knight Engineering's sketch plan review to slide the development down towards Buckingham Springs, as that seems to reduce the contiguous farming area. Mr. Fowles asked if it was necessary to place the lagoon in the middle of the parcel; and suggested it be moved over and up towards the adjacent parcel and away from Creek Road, which would allow the top farming area to extend very usefully along Creek Road.

Mr. Glitzer replied that the lagoon was placed per Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's requirements of at least 250' from any occupied residence; and is actually placed 250' from the building envelope. Mr. Glitzer said there may be opportunities to slide it to the right, as he agreed it would provide a larger viable farm field. Dr. Barrie Barr, Creek Road, agreed with this suggestion, as did Mr. Fowles and Mrs. Mehling.

Ms. Pat Bridenbaugh, Bent Pine Circle, shared concerns about stormwater runoff and drainage issues she currently has and stated the field is higher than her property and rain and chemicals from farming pour into her yard. Ms. Bridenbaugh suggested a concrete barrier may work better than a tree and flower buffer, especially with construction dirt and mud that will be created.

Mr. and Mrs. Barry Claus of Silverwind Court stated they have battled stormwater management for 26 years now. She said The McKee Group installed stone when they moved in, but the water just spreads out all over. Mrs. Claus asked if there would be a retention basin.

Mr. Glitzer explained there will be a series of stormwater management features including infiltration, seepage beds and surface basins. Mr. Glitzer asked the residents for more information on the drainage areas of concern so they can integrate their controls to work and benefit the area. Mr. Gray said as both properties have the same owner there should be opportunities to improve the drainage concerns in Buckingham Springs.

Ms. Janet Sutton, Acorn Court, said as a realtor, she has concerns regarding adding two entrances onto Route 413 as this development will increase traffic immensely. She said there are already 600+ houses coming onto that road from Buckingham Springs. Mr. Matt Hammond, traffic engineer for The McKee Group, explained that Route 413 is a state road and is maintained by PennDOT. Mr. Hammond said that they will apply for a Highway Occupancy Permit from PennDOT which is a process that involves review of studies and documentation, including site distances from curves and existing intersections. Mr. Hammond said they have to prove to PennDOT they can provide compliance with all requirements in a safe and efficient manner before being issued the permit.

Mr. and Mrs. Claus asked who would be responsible to monitor the sewage spray fields as they have concerns about their well. Mr. Gray said the plans do not detail that yet, however typically the sewer and water improvements are dedicated to the township. Mr. Murphy confirmed that their intention is to dedicate the sewer and water improvements to the township.

Mr. Murphy thanked everyone for their time, said they would proceed with this sketch to the Board of Supervisors for their input and then hopefully, return to the Planning Commission soon. No action was taken by the Planning Commission.

Consideration of recommending Preliminary Approval of the “First Baptist Church of Wycombe – Parking Expansion”, Land Development Plan dated 3/8/21, Township File LD 2021-01, Tax Map Parcel 6-24-7, located at 4174 Township Line Road, 1 lot, .95 acres to be developed, located in the VC-1 Zoning District, with an initial 90-day review period expiration date of July 6, 2021.

Mr. Phil Johnson and Pastor Josh Brownfield were present to represent the First Baptist Church of Wycombe. Mr. Gray explained the design engineer was not present due to illness, and that he would do his best to explain the technical issues and field questions regarding the proposed plan.

Mr. Gray explained that several years ago the church had submitted a similar plan to expand the parking area to the rear of the existing church. He said this plan does not change any existing improvements except to add a new driveway to the proposed parking areas at the top of the hill and to provide two stormwater management facilities to control runoff and divert water away from the village properties, pipe it underneath the railroad tracks and to Mill Creek.

Mr. Gray said the church has addressed former septic issues and has worked with the neighbors about buffer yards and plantings. He said his understanding is that the neighbors would prefer to keep the area somewhat open, and that buffer plantings will be installed near the parking and stormwater facilities.

Mr. Gray said there is no new lighting proposed and there are no changes to the front of the property. Mr. Gray stated there are technical issues to be worked out between the engineers, but he doesn't have very many review items of concern. Mr. Gray said the waiver request letter will need to be revised with some additions.

Mr. Joseph Sellecchia, Township Line Road, said as a neighbor to this property, he has ongoing issues with water in his basement since the church replaced their septic system three years ago by installing a sand mound. Mr. Sellecchia said he now has concerns regarding the plans to install a water garden retention basin along his property line, with the basin placed within 100' of his well. Mr. Sellecchia said he has young kids and the basin will be a danger, also that any fluids leaked from the cars will run into his well.

Mr. Gray explained that the stormwater facility must be approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and Buckingham Township, including the required testing to insure water infiltrates into the ground or underdrains. Mr. Gray said the current plan pipes the discharge around Mr. Sellecchia's property to a pipe and under the railroad to the creek. Mr. Gray said any concerns regarding the septic system should be directed to the Bucks County Department of Health as that does not relate to this plan.

Mr. Sellecchia asked the surface of the proposed parking, and Mr. Gray said crushed gravel, impervious surface.

Ms. Jerilyn Balent, Township Line Road, explained that she is the immediate church neighbor on the south side, and that the church has been pumping the water from their basement and property onto her side for years. She said that she understands this will be alleviated by the current plan to pump the water to the northwest side of the lot, and then pumped uphill to another pipe which will run towards the railroad track. She asked if the church is taking all of the water from their basement and pumping it uphill. Mr. Johnson replied no, that some of the water that runs onto the property will be reduced, however water from properties further up will continue to drain downward. Ms. Balent concluded that she didn't believe any of the stormwater procedures will address existing problems since 31 parking spaces were added. Mr. Gray replied that the run off draining through the rear of Ms. Balent's property may be caused by additional stormwater from the parking spaces which were built without township approval. Mr. Gray added that drainage from the existing parking and upstream properties will continue to drain through the existing stormwater system as it exists today.

Mr. Fowles said these stormwater problems are ongoing and he was not sure how to please everyone. He thought that at the last discussion there was a pipe installed at the rear of Ms. Balent's property to address the matter, and Ms. Balent said yes, but the pipe had since collapsed. Mr. Fowles asked who had installed the pipe, and Ms. Balent replied the church did.

Mr. Gray said the ongoing existing stormwater problems continue to need to be worked out between the church and their neighbors and is a different process than the review of the current plan.

Mr. Johnson said the issue tonight is how to address stormwater generated from the proposed parking extension, and he believes they have addressed that by planning to divert the water in an entirely different direction which should alleviate Ms. Balent's concerns. Mr. Gray clarified for a rainfall event, that should be correct, however the sump pump drainage from the church is a different issue and will not be fully alleviated by the capture of stormwater.

Mrs. Fink stated from a planning point of view, she was not comfortable approving or disapproving the proposed plan until the neighbors issues could be resolved by speaking with the design engineer. Mr. Thomson agreed, and stated the project plan should have scope and objective, and he was not getting that. Mrs. Mehling said there were too many questions present to be making any decisions this evening, that this discussion was meant to acquaint everyone with what they intend to do.

Mr. Gray agreed that the neighbors' concerns regarding water and the septic system need to be discussed with the design engineer, with a proposal put forth for assurance that everyone is not opposed to the project.

Mr. Sellecchia said his main problem is the plan to pump water from the lower property up towards his house. He said the ground is shale and does not drain, adding that he has 24" of stone under his basement and still has water problems from the church's septic system.

Mrs. Mehling addressed a question from Ms. Lutzi Fischer, Lower Mountain Road, saying this plan will not increase traffic onto Township Line Road, and Mr. Gray confirmed there are no new building additions or improvement included in this plan, it is only to support the existing congregation by providing more parking.

Mr. Fowles made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Mehling, to recommend Tabling the Preliminary Approval of the "First Baptist Church of Wycombe – Parking Expansion", Land Development Plan dated 3/8/21, Township File LD 2021-01, Tax Map Parcel 6-24-7, located at 4174 Township Line Road, 1 lot, .95 acres to be developed, located in the VC-1 Zoning District, with an initial 90-day review period expiration date of July 6, 2021. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Fowles made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Mehling, to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 8:37 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes approved August 4, 2021.
Minutes respectfully submitted by Lori Wicen.