

**Planning Commission Meeting Minutes**  
**Worcester Township Community Hall – 1031 Valley Forge Rd., Worcester, PA 19490**  
**Worcester Township Planning Commission – Meeting Minutes - February 27, 2025**

**Meeting Details**

- **Date & Time:** Thursday, February 27, 2025, 7:06 PM
- **Attendees:** Planning Commission members (Tony Sherr, Bob Andorn, Lee Koch, Michelle Greenawalt)

**Approval of Previous Minutes**

- **December 12, 2024 Meeting Minutes:** Motion to approve was made and seconded. **Approved** by unanimous voice vote.
- **January 23, 2025 Meeting Minutes:** Motion to approve was made (with one member noting they were absent on Jan 23) and seconded. **Approved** by unanimous voice vote.

**Agenda Items Discussed**

**Land Development Issue: 2991 Mohill Road – Discussion**

**Overview:** The Planning Commission reviewed a sketch plan for a proposed two-lot residential subdivision at 2991 Mohill Road (zoned R-175 Residential). The applicant's engineer (Tim Woodrow) was unable to attend, so the Township Engineer provided a summary of the plan and issues. Key points from the discussion include:

- **Subdivision Details:** The existing parcel is 3.42 acres. The proposal would create two lots:
  - **Lot 1:** ~66,854 sq. ft., containing the existing single-family house and accessory structures (two sheds, a greenhouse, and a fire pit).
  - **Lot 2:** ~82,141 sq. ft. (75,338 sq. ft. net buildable area) as a flag lot for a future single-family dwelling.
- **Utilities:** Both the existing and future homes would be served by private well water and on-lot septic systems (no public water/sewer service).
- **Waiver Requests:** The applicant submitted a waiver request letter on the afternoon of the meeting (Feb 27). Three waivers from the subdivision/land development ordinance were noted:

1. **Road Width:** Relief from the requirement to widen the existing shared driveway/private road (Mohill Drive). It is currently ~17 feet wide, whereas ordinance requires 20 feet cartway width for a road serving these lots. The road serves three homes now; the new lot would make it four. The presence of utility poles along the road was noted as a constraint to widening.
2. **Private Street Standard:** Related to the above, a waiver to allow the private road to remain at 17 feet instead of the required 20 feet. (This reinforces that Mohill Drive, while within a township right-of-way, is privately maintained – the township does not pave or plow it and receives no state “liquid fuels” funds for it.)
3. **Sidewalk and Curbing:** A waiver from installing sidewalk and curb along the property’s frontage on the street.
  - **Discussion & Concerns:** Planning Commission members asked if there were any issues or comments on the proposal. There were no objections raised from the Commission or public at this sketch stage. One member sought clarification on the road widening issue, specifically about the utility poles interfering with widening the cartway. It was confirmed that the poles on one side of Mohill Drive would indeed prevent adding the full 2 feet of pavement on that side as recommended by the traffic review. It was also clarified that Mohill Drive, though within a township right-of-way, is essentially a private lane not maintained by the Township.
  - **Status:** This plan was presented as a **preliminary plan**, although no vote or binding action was required. The Township Engineer had issued a review letter on February 12, 2025, and the Township Traffic Engineer also issued two letters prior to the meeting, outlining technical comments. The applicant’s team has communicated that they will address all comments from these review letters in their next submission.
  - **Next Steps:** The Planning Commission **did not take any formal action** on the plan. Members agreed to wait for a revised plan to be submitted. They requested that the applicant return with their engineer present to discuss and address the technical issues and waiver requests in detail. The late submission of the waiver request letter on the day of the meeting was noted, and the Commission will formally consider those waivers at the time of preliminary/final plan review. The applicant has granted an extension of time. This item will come back to the Planning Commission at a future meeting after revisions.

## **Methacton School District High School Redevelopment – Sketch Plan Presentation**

**Overview:** The Methacton School District presented a sketch plan for a major redevelopment of the Methacton High School campus. The high school property is approximately 63 acres (zoned Agricultural) located along Germantown Pike, with main access from Kriebel Mill Road and additional frontage on Mill Road. The school district's team (attorney, engineers, architect, and officials) walked through the conceptual plans and feedback from township consultants. This was an informational discussion; no formal application has been submitted yet beyond the sketch plan. Key points and discussion highlights include:

- **Project Scope:** The district proposes to **construct a new high school building** on the existing campus while the current school remains in operation. Once the new building is completed and ready for occupancy, the old school building will be demolished. The vacated area would then be used to create new parking lots, upgraded athletic fields, and possibly a new field house and other facilities. This phased approach allows continuity of school operations. The overall goal is to modernize the campus and address longstanding issues with the current facilities.
- **Objectives and Needs:** Several needs are driving the project:
  - **Parking Shortage:** The existing campus has about 602 marked parking spaces, which has proven insufficient. Students and visitors currently overflow onto nearby residential streets (e.g. parking along Anvil Drive and at a church across the street) and even park on grass or unmarked areas on campus during large events. The redevelopment will significantly increase on-site parking capacity. The sketch plan shows approximately **875 parking spaces** (an increase of ~273 spaces), which is intended to accommodate all student drivers and staff, plus provide extra capacity for events like football games. This should eliminate the need for parking on neighborhood streets and improve the situation for the community.
  - **Traffic Circulation and Safety:** Presently, there are **six different driveways/access points** along Kriebel Mill Road serving the school (including separate entrances for the administration building, various parking areas, and the bus depot). This causes internal traffic conflicts among buses, parent drop-offs, student drivers, and staff. The plan proposes to **consolidate entrances down to three** access points on Kriebel Mill Road to streamline traffic flow and reduce conflict points. In addition, a new dedicated **bus and emergency access road** is proposed from Mill Road (on the opposite side of the campus), which will be used only by school buses and emergency vehicles. By separating bus traffic from student/parent

vehicle traffic, the design will improve on-site safety and reduce congestion at peak times. A new roundabout is envisioned at the main entrance to help manage inbound and outbound traffic smoothly and prevent backups on Kriebel Mill Road. Parent drop-off/pick-up lanes would be extended on-site (in a chevron layout) to keep waiting cars off the public road.

- **Modernized Facilities:** The current school building has various issues (aging infrastructure, outdated design for educational needs, etc.). Building a new facility allows the district to address these and incorporate modern educational standards. The project will also retain or upgrade athletic facilities: the existing stadium will remain, as will the bus garage, auxiliary turf fields, varsity baseball field, and tennis courts. New or reconfigured fields will be added where the old building is removed, including retaining junior varsity baseball/softball fields that were initially considered for relocation. A new field house near the stadium is being considered as well.
- **Utilities and Stormwater:** The campus is currently served by public water but relies on an **on-site wastewater treatment plant** (private sewer). The plan is to **connect the school to public sewer** service. This would involve constructing a pump station on campus to send sewage to the existing public sewer system (ultimately connecting to the Grange Pump Station in Lower Providence Township). Stormwater management will be significantly improved; at present, the site has very limited stormwater infrastructure (only two small basins by some newer turf fields). The redevelopment will include modern stormwater facilities to control runoff from the increased impervious surfaces (roofs, parking lots), complying with current regulations.
- **Zoning Relief Requirements:** Because of the scope and design of the project, several aspects will require zoning relief (variances or conditional use approvals). The presenters outlined anticipated **zoning challenges**:
  - **Building Height:** The new academic building is planned to be three stories tall in portions (the rear classroom wing), which likely exceeds the township's height limit in this district. A variance will be needed for the building height.
  - **Impervious Coverage:** The zoning limit for impervious surface in the Agricultural district is 40%. The existing campus already exceeds that (around 43% impervious). The redevelopment, with additional parking, is projected to further increase impervious coverage (sketch plan showed

about 45%). This expansion of non-pervious area will need a variance for the overage (to legalize the new impervious percentage).

- **Front Yard Setback/Parking in Front Yard:** The ordinance requires a 250-foot front yard setback along Germantown Pike within which no parking is allowed. Currently, some parking encroaches into that setback (a legal non-conformity). The new plan proposes a large parking area and a field house that would extend into that 250-ft front yard buffer. The district will seek relief to allow parking (and the small building) in that front setback area.
- **Sports Field Lighting:** The project includes adding or upgrading lights for the athletic fields (specifically varsity baseball and softball fields at a corner of the site). Modern field lights can be tall and bright. One planned light pole location may be too close to the property line, and the lights in general may exceed height or glare limits. This triggers the need for approvals: likely a conditional use (as required by ordinance for tall outdoor lighting in residential proximity) and possibly a variance. The team acknowledged they will need to go before the Board of Supervisors for conditional use approval for the lighting.
- **Parking Lot Lighting Height:** Related to lighting, the zoning ordinance caps parking lot light poles at 12 feet height in this district. To adequately illuminate large parking areas, the plan will use industry-standard poles (often 20 feet or more). A variance will be sought to allow typical parking lot lighting heights (commonly around 20 feet) for safety and practicality.
- **Steep Slope Disturbance:** The high school property has a rolling, **tiered topography** – it slopes down in terraces from the high point at Germantown & Kriebel Mill toward lower areas near the proposed bus access road. Some existing man-made slopes (berms or embankments) will need to be regraded/disturbed to construct the new improvements. The ordinance restricts disturbance of steep slopes over a certain grade, so the project will require a variance to disturb those slopes as part of regrading.
- **Presentation and Feedback:** The project team displayed slides of the site, existing conditions, and the conceptual layout. They have had preliminary meetings with township staff and have received initial review letters from the Township Engineer and the Township's planning and traffic consultants). The team expressed willingness to address all comments as the design progresses. They emphasized improvements the plan brings, especially in parking and traffic management, which

will benefit both the school operations and the surrounding community. Planning Commission members and consultants asked questions and provided feedback:

- **Timeline:** The Commission inquired about the anticipated timeline. The school district hopes to start construction as soon as possible once approvals are in place, with the goal of aligning the opening of the new school with a new academic year. Because it's a functioning school, timing is critical – they aim to minimize disruption and ensure the new building is ready for students by the fall of the targeted year.
- **Traffic Study:** The school's traffic engineer (Matt Hammond, TPD) noted that they have begun a detailed traffic study. Traffic counts were conducted last year while school was in session to establish baseline volumes. Although the new building will be larger, **student enrollment is not expected to increase significantly**, so the daily traffic demand should remain roughly the same. However, with reconfigured access points and on-site circulation, the traffic flow should improve. The study will analyze key intersections around the school to determine if any off-site roadway improvements or signal adjustments are needed. The Commission and the Township's traffic consultant will review this study once completed.
- **Community Impact:** Commissioners acknowledged that the added parking and removal of on-street overflow are positive steps. They encouraged the design team to continue considering buffering and outreach to neighbors, especially regarding lighting and traffic changes. The school district had already held a neighborhood meeting to gather local input, which brought the parking issues to light. By addressing these concerns (parking and reducing access points), the plan is attempting to be responsive to community feedback.
- **Next Steps:** No action was taken by the Planning Commission on the sketch plan (sketch plans are not subject to approval). The **school district will proceed with the required zoning relief applications** in the coming months and continue refining the plans. They will incorporate feedback from the Commission and the consultants' review letters. A full **Preliminary/Final Land Development Plan** is expected to be submitted once zoning matters are addressed. At that time, the Planning Commission will formally review the plan and provide recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. The Commission will also look for a complete traffic impact study and detailed

engineering plans in that future submission. This item will come back for further review when ready.

- **Public Comment:** John Antonelli expressed concern about the cost of the project and what seems, to him, the lack of consideration of a renovation.

Jim Mollick echoed the comments made by Mr. Antonelli.

### **Adjournment**

With no further business or public comment, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 PM.