

MIDDLETOWN TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2, 2025

PRESENT:

Richard Nuttall

Peter Tantala

Joseph Antonelli

Tom Piacentino

Keith Auerswald

Ryan Leighton

Amber Watson-Tardiff

Jim Ennis – Building and Zoning Director

Dominic Cundari– Township Engineer – Remington & Vernick, RVE

Jim Esposito – Township Solicitor Curtin & Heefner

ABSENT:

Keith Auerswald

1. Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call

Mr. Nuttall called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The pledge of allegiance was recited. Amber Watson-Tardiff took roll call with 9 members present.

2. Approval of Minutes –March 5, 2025

Ryan Leighton made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 5, 2025, Planning Commission meeting. Amber Watson-Tardiff seconded, and the motion passed with a vote of 6-0.

3. Application for Minor Subdivision, 580 Middletown Boulevard, Langhorne, PA 19047, TMP 22-057-056, 22-057-057, & 22-057-059, GB- General Business District, S/LD 25-2.

Ed Murphy, Attorney, representing 580 Middletown Boulevard, discussed the minor subdivision within this property to make two lots. Mr. Murphy went over how the property currently stands with four (4) commercial buildings. Mr. Murphy also covered the review letters that had been given for the proposal and explained that all comments will be complied with. Dominic Cundari,

RVE, stated that there were minor cleanup items within this project but that is the comments that are currently working on complying with. Richard Nuttal asked the question as to why this was being put into place. Mr. Murphy stated that it is for mortgage and financing purposes that will benefit the property.

The board made a recommendation of approval of S/LD #25-2 – Application proposing the minor subdivision of an approximately 5.12 acre property into two lots – one containing approximately 1.6 acres and the second containing approximately 3.53 acres – at Middletown Boulevard, Langhorne, PA 19047/ BCTMP #22-057-057 (the Property). Recommendation is based on Plan entitled “Minor Subdivision Plan” comprising 2 sheets and dated February 4, 2025. Plan is prepared by James A Conway Jr. PE, Dynamic Survey, LLC of Newtown PA. Recommendation is further based on compliance with the comments provided in the –

- A. February 25, 2025 letter from Isaac E. Kessler, P.E., of Remington and Vernick Engineers, Middletown Township Engineer*
- B. March 26, 2025 letter from Matthew D Johnston, P.E., of Pennoni Associates, Inc., Middletown Township Traffic and Transportation Engineer*
- C. March 21, 2025 review letter from the Bucks County Planning Commission*
- D. February 14, 2025 letter from Alan Welsh, Middletown Township Fire Marshal*

Amber Watson-Tardiff made a motion to approve. Peter Tantala seconded the motion which passed with a 6-0 vote.

No public comment

4. Revisions of the Petition on behalf of Woods Schools to Rezone Woods Services, Inc., and Woods Services Foundation to Create an Overlay District for Certain Parcels in Middletown Township, Woods Schools, Langhorne, PA 19047, TMP Nos: 22-040-042; 22-030-006; 22-030-004; 22-030-005; 22-030-003; 22-030-002; 22-030-001; 22-021-083; 22-021-055; and 22-01-055-002, R-1 – Residence, S/LD 24-7.

Mr. Mike Meginniss, Attorney, was present to represent Woods School. Mr. Meginniss discussed the plan from the previous meeting and acknowledged the questions that had been asked by residents and the Planning Commission board. He went over the scope of the new plan and the reduction in acreage. He also explained how Woods aligns with this proposal.

Dawn Diamond, a representative of Woods, then began discussing the visual aspects of the campus and the new overlay proposed. Mrs. Diamond explained that there are now eight (8) parcels involved, totaling approximately 137 acres. She also stated that no mixed use would be included in this new overlay.

Mrs. Diamond continued by explaining what Woods Services provides, including cycle care for children and adults with intellectual disabilities and autism, brain injuries, and/or mental

health challenges. She also described how Woods offers education, employment, healthcare, and residential care. Mrs. Diamond then elaborated on the vision and mission that this overlay could help achieve. She stated that this ordinance would allow Woods to develop on its main property, making it more flexible for future uses such as medical office space, new education centers, retail space for their existing social enterprises that employ people with disabilities. Additionally, the proposed apartment building would include nine (9) units, which would be dedicated to individuals with disabilities, and the remaining units would be designated as low-income housing being 20% of the apartments are for those individuals with disabilities.

Mr. Meginniss then stepped in to discuss the use of Woods and the ordinance proposed. He explained that they are just ratifying what is already existing. The only thing that is not a part of Conditional Use is the Apartment building. Mr. Meginniss went on to explain that the language in the ordinance is also changed and that from the previous plan 97 acres have been cut off. He ended by stating that with this proposal, this would allow Woods to stay Woods.

Dominic Cundari stated that their review had lengthy comments but all is going to be going through the Engineer review in the future and a lot of the items have been addressed already. Richrd Nuttal had concerns that there seems to be a ton of items on that review. Mr. Cundari answered that there were items missing in the review that wouldn't come to them until the Land Development process. Pennoni then went through the traffic study.

Mrs. Watson-Tardiff wanted to clarify that (9) of the apartments will be for those with disabilities and the rest would be low income. Mrs. Diamond confirmed. Mrs. Watson-Tardiff then continued to ask if this will be carried on into the future if property is sold. Mr. Jim Esposito stated that it will be in the ordinance that it will have to stay that way. Mrs. Watson-Tardiff had also asked the question of those who move into the apartments who are not through Woods and how that would work. Mrs. Diamond answered that there would be a property manager / third party in charge of those things. Ryan Leighton then had questions based off the availability and pricing of the apartments, if it was open to employees, if there was a way to keep them affordable, and if the family gest house was a better choice. Mrs. Diamond that the employees will be offered but only will get approved if they are qualified. Jim Esposito stated that PHFA has requirements that they must abide by also with restrictions. Mr. Nuttal showed concern for precedence in the future if this was to be approved and asked why Woods would not just come in and ask for the variances as the projects were happening individually instead of a full overlay and was also concerned of how this benefits Woods. Mr. Tom Piacentino showed concerns about whether the apartment building would impact on other surrounding projects close to the road it would back into. Eric, Gilmore Associates, stated that this would not affect anything. Peter Tantala's first concern

spoken about was buffering the land that they have. Also, Mr. Tantala had multiple concerns about many items in the ordinance draft that was given to them with the language used in that draft. Mr. Meginniss then went through those concerns with Mr. Tantala to explain the items further. Mrs. Watson-Tardiff then went back to her original question about the apartment units and (9) being for those with disabilities, she wanted to know if they would be willing to raise the number of units for those individuals. Mrs. Diamond stated that the number came through PHFA and would have to speak with them.

Public Comment

- Fran Grous (360 Green Ridge) – Had concerns about only 20% of the units being for those with disabilities and concerned about “co-existing” with those members who would not belong to Woods campus.
- Sue Termyna (301 Penncrest Drive) – This resident had concerns about the third parties being put in charge of operations and not caring for the right thing for Woods campus. Also concerned about the dangers of high-rise apartments.
- Kathy Peasley (373 E Marshall Ave) – had questions about the comprehensive plan and where it came from. Mr. Jim Ennis stated that Middletown Township has its own Comprehensive Plan. Mrs. Peasley also had questions based on the R-1 Zoning District Restrictions, Mr. Ennis stated that the overlay would supersede the ordinance and will be deed restricted. Also, had concerns about the traffic impact.
- Ralph Demarco (1039 St James) – Resident made a statement that if Woods is still running and working why not leave it the way it is.
- Carol Zetterberg (129 W Marshall) – This resident stated that this project does not seem to be close to ready and there are a lot of things that need to be addressed before going further.
- Todd Lomas (1141 St. James) – This resident agreed with resident Ralph Demarco about keeping Woods the same. He also stated that this project seemed to be about paying their employees less by giving them an opportunity to stay there.
- Larry Zetterberg (129 W Marshall) – This resident showed concerns of how this project that could affect Langhorne Borough.
- Ken Banks (500 E Maple) – This resident spoke in support of Woods campus and stated he thinks it is great what they want to do for those individuals.
- Ed Termyna (301 Penncrest) – This resident spoke about how he is not against Woods in itself but is opposed to the way it is being sold. Resident requested that a study be done on the low income rentals because he does not want to bring that “danger” to this area. He also stated he strongly suggests that they rebuild what is already there.

End public comment 9:50p.m

The board made a recommendation for denial of S/LD #24-7 – Petition of Woods Schools to amend the Middletown Township Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map to create a Community Development Transitional Overlay District (CDT) covering approximately 137.41 acres of land and multiple parcels in Middletown Township’s R1 Residence Zoning District and containing BCTMP #22-021-084, 22-030, 006, 22-030-004, 22-030-005, 22-030-003, 22-030-002, 22-030-001, and 22-021-083. Recommendation is further based on the comments provided in:

- A. March 26, 2025 memorandum and April 2, 2025 supplemental memorandum from Remington and Vernick Engineers.*
- B. March 26, 2025 letter from Matthew Johnston of Pennoni Associates, Inc.*
- C. April 2, 2025 letter from Bucks County Planning Commission*
- D. March 31, 2025 letter from the Middletown Township Environmental Advisory Council*

Mr. Tom Piacentino made a motion to deny. Ryan Leighton seconded the motion which carried over a 6-0 denial from the board.

5. Review of Zoning Hearing Board Advertisement

Upcoming Projects

6. Other Business

N/A

7. Adjournment

Ryan Leighton made a motion for adjournment at 9:55 PM. Peter Tantal seconded the motion, which carried on a 6-0 vote.