

**Minutes**  
**Walkersville Planning Commission**  
**January 22, 2019**

Commission Chairman Richard Brady called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. with members David Ennis, Mike Kuster, Tim Pollak, Ray Santullo, Russ Winch and John Zimmerman present. Also present were Town Commissioners Tom Gilbert, Mike McNiesh, Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis and Michael Bailey, Town Engineer Shawn Burnett and Town Planner Susan Hauver.

**1. Election of Officers**

***Member Kuster made a motion, seconded by Member Ennis, to nominate Dick Brady for the office of Chairman. Mr. Brady was unanimously elected Chairman of the Commission.***

***Member Pollak made a motion, seconded by Member Kuster, to nominate David Ennis to the office of Vice Chairman. Mr. Ennis was unanimously elected Vice Chairman of the Commission.***

***Member Pollak made a motion, seconded by Member Winch, to nominate Mike Kuster to the office of Secretary. Mr. Kuster was unanimously elected Secretary of the Commission.***

**2. Minutes**

***Member Pollak made a motion, seconded by Member Ennis, to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2018 meeting. The motion passed on a vote of 7-0.***

**3. Walkersville Self-Storage Monument Sign**

Planner Hauver presented plans for Walkersville Self Storage to add a monument sign at the corner of Stauffer Court and MD 194. The expansion of the facility allows 50 square feet of additional signage on the property. The proposed sign meets the standards of the zoning ordinance. Mr. Todd Samperton, owner of the facility, was in attendance.

Chairman Brady suggested to Mr. Samperton that a dying tree in front of the facility be removed and replaced with something smaller, to make the sign mounted on the building more visible.

***Member Winch made a motion, seconded by Member Ennis, to approve the plan for the new monument sign. The motion passed on a vote of 7-0.***

**4. Walkersville Middle School: Addition plat**

Planner Hauver presented the staff memo for the addition plat consolidating the two lots on which the middle school complex lies. She noted that the entrance to the proposed Rock Creek School is located on property owned by Frederick County and that there should be an agreement in place between Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) and Frederick County government. The utility easements on the property also need to be updated once the plans for the new school are in place. Other minor corrections to the plat were noted by staff.

Mr. Bruce Dean of Linowes and Blocher and representing FCPS, noted the necessity of the addition plat regardless of the plans for Rock Creek School. He also said that FCPS does have a right of access over the County parcel.

***Member Pollak made a motion, seconded Member Santullo, to conditionally approve the addition plat, subject to 1) presentation of a recorded access easement between FCPS and Frederick County, 2) correcting the recording***

***reference for the existing gas line easement along the southern property boundary, 3) extinguishing the utility easement crossing the property in the area of the new school building, and 4) addressing all noted typographical errors. The motion passed on a vote of 7-0.***

## **5. Rock Creek School Site Plan**

Planner Hauver reviewed the attached staff memo and submitted documents for the proposed school to be located on the Walkersville Middle School campus.

Bruce Dean of Linowes and Blocher and representing Frederick County Public Schools, introduced the following members of the design team for the new school: Brian Staiger, Senior Project Manager, Frederick County Public Schools; Kori Purdum Matheis, project architect, Proffitt & Associates; Jason Fritz, Adtek Engineers; Carl Wilson, The Traffic Group; Michael Norton, Norton Land Design; Tom Saunders, middle school instructional director, FCPS; and Paul Lebo, COO, FCPS. Mr. Dean, Mr. Staiger, Ms. Purdum-Matheis and Mr. Fritz presented the plans to the Commission, noting the following:

- The Rock Creek School serves students with severe disabilities and complex medical issues. The existing school in Frederick has narrow corridors and aged technology. The new school would provide an upgrade to the facility to accommodate the needs of the student population. The location on the middle school will provide a social and emotional connection to a typical student population.
- The process for selecting a site and preparing plans for the new location began with a feasibility study in 2016 followed by a site evaluation process in 2017. The site was approved by the Board of Education in December 2017.
- Very few students at Rock Creek School are dropped off by parents. Deliveries to the two schools will occur at the same time and will be received from the Maryland Avenue entrance to the property, just as they are received currently by the middle school.
- The plans for the new school include potential additions that could be built if funds are available. The County Parks and Recreation Department would like to co-locate a gym in the school that would be focused on provided recreational opportunities to the special needs population in the community.
- The basketball courts and athletic fields on the site will serve the middle school; however, they could be shared potentially.
- The plans show that three specimen trees will be saved and additional trees will be plants along all the property lines.
- The back drive along the Mill Run property line will be roped off to restrict traffic. The plans for stormwater management will accommodate water that is currently flowing onto the property from Old Town. An underground culvert will carry water which arrives on site to an underground detention facility under the new school's parking lot. Stormwater runoff generated onsite will be channeled to bioretention areas. The site development is designed to have no impact on the culverts running under the railroad tracks to the northwest.
- The plans were developed with the goal of saving as many trees as possible on site. Forest Resource Ordinance requirements will be met by purchase of offsite forest banking credits.

- The plans include a driveway that will allow cars to queue for student drop-offs and pick-ups at the middle school. The 1800 foot long drive will accommodate 90 vehicles.
- Member Winch asked about who will conduct the monthly maintenance required for bioretention facilities. He noted that the maintenance of the existing middle school requires routine mowing and care and that the bioretention areas will require specialized care, as specified by the County Environmental Compliance office. Mr. Staiger said that the bioretention areas would be maintained as required by FCPS staff.
- Member Winch noted that nearby residents have experienced flooding which they blame on the Mill Run development. The development of the middle school property with large impervious surfaces will lead to the perception that future flooding will be caused by the development. He asked what guarantees FCPS will give to area residents that the new school won't cause flooding of neighboring properties. Mr. Fritz noted that 2018 was the wettest year in over 100-150 years. It was an anomaly. They planned for the 100 year storm and the stormwater management on site will accommodate it.
- Member Winch noted that there have been sinkholes along the tree line near Mill Run. Ms. Purdum Matheis said that they had a geo-tech study the site. They took borings and did electromagnetic mapping and did not find a lot of voids underground.
- Member Winch asked about the path from the Mill Run development, which is important to the residents of Mill Run. He wondering if steps were the best way across the swale at the property line. Other Commission members also expressed concern about the path and its accessibility (ADA). Ms. Purdum Matheis said they would have to explore alternatives. The underground utilities in the area present a challenge. Mr. Winch also noted that the path needs to be lighted for safety.
- Member Santullo noted that he likes the loop for queuing. He asked about the configuration and Ms. Purdum Matheis said it the entrance opposite Nicodemus Road would be one way at drop-off and pick-up times. He also asked about the overnight storage of buses. A FCPS design team member said that 9 would be the maximum stored overnight. The sixteen chevron spaces accommodate the 16 buses that serve the middle school.
- Member Santullo asked about the specimen trees on site, noting the red oak along Frederick Street near the northeastern property corner. Mr. Mike Norton showed where two specimen trees would be removed to accommodate driveway into and around the new building. Specimen trees are larger than 30 inches in diameter. They worked hard to save as many as they could. The Planning Commission must grant approval of the removal of the two specimen trees.
- Member Ennis noted the reduction in ball fields on site. Mr. Saunders noted that the track is not necessary for the middle school program and that the proposed field configuration gives plenty of teaching station opportunities. They are excited about the possibilities. Mr. Ennis asked if they were concerned about the hardscaping in the area of the playing fields and the possibility of injuries. Mr. Saunders said they were not concerned.
- Member Ennis noted that the town had never approved overnight parking of buses on site and requested that a note be added to the plan that overnight

parking would not occur. He suggested the high school for parking. Mr. Dean said they would take the comment under advisement, but that they had provided more separation of the buses from the neighboring properties in Glade Village.

- Member Ennis asked if the traffic engineer had evaluated the traffic if the third entrance on Frederick Street were not added. Mr. Carl Wilson said that they had not, but that separating the traffic entering and exiting the site allows for better accessibility. The problem times are from 7:38 to 7:54 am and 3:00 – 3:11 pm.
- Member Ennis wondered about the number of parking spaces proposed for the Rock Creek School, since the staff to student ratio is 1 to 1 but there are 120 parking spaces and 70 students.
- Mr. Wilson also noted that they assumed that the traffic to and from the Rock Creek School would coincide with the traffic entering and exiting the middle school. However, the schools operate on different time schedules so the traffic is likely to be more dispersed.
- Member Ennis asked about the traffic studies and assumptions made about future growth. He wondered if the projected level of service for any of the intersections was borderline. Mr. Wilson said that they projected a 1% annual growth rate in traffic volumes. The new developments in Town were not specifically considered in the study.
- Member Ennis noted that a storm drain that ends before it gets to the underground storage (see manhole 58).
- Member Ennis asked if the drainage area map included the storm pond in Colony Village. He wondered if all the storm water draining to the site was being accounted for. Mr. Fritz said the study was consistent with the study completed for Mill Run.
- Member Ennis asked about how the landscaping along the Glade Village property line would work with the swale in that area.
- Member Ennis noted that the Town requires all stormwater management areas be lined due to the karst geology. All joints must be water tight. He wondered if the applicant studied options for locating the underground storage area.
- Member Ennis noted that the building elevations do not show vertical dimensions. Ms. Purdum Matheis said that they could be added to the plans. The tallest part of the new school would be 28-30 feet tall.
- Member Kuster said that parking at the middle school is already limited and the amount of parking for the middle school is being reduced. He noted that there is not enough parking now when there is a special event or field trip that brings more parents to the school during the day. The applicants noted that parking on the site could be shared between the two buildings. Mr. Kuster said he liked the loop for car riders. He also asked how the angle spaces for the buses would work and it was noted that buses would not be backing out of the spaces.
- Member Zimmerman asked how many more emergency calls would be expected with the new school. The applicants said one per month. He also asked who would police the traffic pattern in the mornings and afternoons and it was noted that the school staff do it. He also noted that WMS staff park along Nicodemus Road.
- Member Winch asked where portable classrooms would be located if ever needed at the middle school. The applicants said that the school is operating

and projected to operate below capacity for next 10 years. There are no plans for expansion of the facility.

Public comments were received by the following individuals:

- Town Commissioner Michael Bailey, 230 Cobble Way, commented on the lack of green space on the campus, except for the area at the end of Maryland Avenue. He also asked about the construction schedule in relation to the middle school operation. The applicants said that construction would start in the summer. Playing fields would be relocated first and paving would be placed. The contractor would use the entrance by the former library. Construction would be completed in the summer of 2021.
- Town Commissioner Tom Gilbert, 56 Hampton Place, noted that all five Town Commissioners were in attendance. He wondered if there would be fencing along the Glade Village side of the property and how those property owners would be protect. Ms. Purdum Matheis said that they pulled the driveway back from Glade Village. Fencing is not planned since most of the residents backing up to the property have fences already. Lighting will be designed to minimize light pollution on neighboring properties.
- Mr. Gilbert also noted that the property owner closest to the existing drainage culvert at the back corner of the property has had a significant problem with flooding this past year. He also expressed concern that more water would flow through that culvert as well as the culverts under the railroad tracks.
- Mr. Charles Eaves, 30 Georgetown Road, said that the field behind his house will be filled in and that they will need bigger pipes under the railroad tracks. Mr. Fritz explained that the underground storage system would hold the 100 year storm and that they are trying to improve the existing conditions.
- Mr. Lamar Estridge, 106 Ports Circle, and president of the Mill Run HOA, said that the existing culvert behind Glade Village is on property owned and maintained by their association. He also expressed concerns about the privacy of Mill Run residents during construction. Ms. Purdum Matheis reviewed plans for screening with trees and said they would screen as much as possible. She noted that the Rock Creek School operates without bells.
- Mr. Smith, Glade Village resident, asked about proposed landscaping along Glade Village.
- Town Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis, said that the nine buses parked overnight should be moved to the high school. She asked how many fields the middle school will have in relation to other middle schools in the County. Mr. Saunders said they are all different, but that a lot of schools have only one. Ms. Brodie-Ennis said she is an advocate of green space.
- Town Commissioner Michael McNeish, Deer Run Drive, asked Commission members if the plan had been significantly changed since they first viewed the concept plan and Mr. Winch had said it was a “bait and switch”. Mr. Winch noted his continued concerns with the intensity of the plans and suggested that the site should have been re-evaluated.
- Ms. Kasey Ramsburg, 117 Ports Circle, loves the concept of the Rock Creek School, but is concerned about the proximity of its driveway to her home. She wondered how many stories the building will be. The applicants responded by noting that the access drive on that side of the property will be blocked with

removable bollards for emergency access only. They expect it to be used for pedestrians, bicyclists and as a play area.

Chairman Brady noted mistakes in the site tabulations table. The whole table needs to be reviewed and corrected. He also noted that Sheet C1A is a waste because it is unreadable. He asked about the details for the retaining wall. He also questioned the location of the stormwater detention under the parking. The applicants said it has to be in the lowest hydraulic area. He noted that on Sheet C3B, a headwall structure is located part-on/part-off the property. He also had questions about the FRO worksheet shown on the plans, since an updated version was submitted to the County. He suggested that the forest banking credits be located within the local watershed. He also asked about the use of the existing storage shed on the middle school property. He asked about the height of the lights on site and the applicants responded 25 feet. He also noted that the lighting planned for the new parking area in front of the middle school be reviewed now that four additional parking spaces were added to the plan.

Mr. Dean requested that the site plan be approved.

Commission members expressed concerns about the stormwater management concept. They wanted to see approval by County staff before moving forward.

***Member Winch made a motion, seconded by Member Pollak, that consideration of the site plan be continued until Frederick County staff approve the stormwater management concept and the comments from this hearing be incorporated in the plans. The motion passed on a vote of 7-0.***

## **6. Announcements**

Mr. Brady noted that the Biggs Ford Solar Center was recommended for denial by the County Planning Commission. He also announced that the final version of the Livable Frederick Plan is currently available for public review and comment.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan J. Hauver