

COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2025

Present: David Bialek, PharmD, R.Ph, Carissa Ciuca, Susan Powell- Chair, John McMullan, Andy Parker, Traffic Engineer, Meredith Merino.

LAND PLANNING COMMITTEE

1. Presentation of a concept plan for a proposed new Kindergarten - First Grade (K-1) Early Learning Center project at the former 15.8-acre Riddle Health property located at the intersection of Rose Tree Road and Middletown Road.

Ms. Powell called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Mr. Gus Houtmann, G. D. Houtman and Sons, stated this is the second time this proposed project has been presented. Mr. McMullan corrected him and stated this is the first time before Council. Mr. Bialek stated this is the first time he has seen the proposed project. Council heard from residents about how things are being portrayed at school board meetings. Mr. Houtmann stated he met with Township professionals at the first of the year to discuss the proposed project located at the former Riddle Health property. The property is located at the northwest corner of Rose Tree Road and Middletown Road and is 15.8 acres. Mr. Houtmann presented a plan of the proposed project. Mr. Bialek asked him to point out on the plan where the proposed development and the current Penncrest High School property is located. Mr. Houtmann stated the first scope of the project is the conversion of the athletic fields for soccer, baseball, and softball. There will be a parking area of 75 spaces for the fields. This area will be accessed through Penncrest High School. Mr. Houtmann stated the buses will use Barren Road while parents dropping off their children will use Rose Tree Road. He stated they are expecting 750 children by the second year. Mr. Bialek stated a key element in the project concerns the traffic on Rose Tree Road. Mr. Houtmann stated a traffic study is being done. Ms. Ciuca stated it would be helpful to know the number of students who are bused compared to the number of drop-offs. Mr. Bialek stated the proposed PaDOT project on Rt. 352 will impact the traffic. Mr. Parker, Township Traffic Engineer, stated the school access plan should be coordinated with PaDOT. Mr. Bialek stated they may need to relook at the traffic on Van Leer Avenue.

Mr. Houtmann pointed out there will be a geothermal well for heating and cooling needs for the K-1 school. Mr. Bialek asked if students driving to school will have access from Penncrest to Rose Tree Road. He suggested perhaps a gate to stop this. Dr. Joseph Meloche, Ed.D, said they can address this. Mr. Parker said this was brought up in a meeting as well. Dr. Meloche said this is a full-day Kindergarten program. Ms. Ciuca asked if there would be before and after care and he replied yes. Ms. Ciuca asked if the improvements of the athletic fields and the K-1 school are one project. Dr. Meloche stated it made sense to do this at the same time. Mr. Houtmann stated they will do a reverse subdivision and merge the properties into an 81.5-acre tract. He stated the property is Zoned I-1 which is a permitted use per the zoning code. He stated there will be 202 parking spaces provided and added the 75 parking spaces can be used as overflow in the case of an event being held at the school. He stated the property will be served by public water and sewer. The sewer will connect at the Vernon Lane connection. Mr. Bialek asked if this would impact the residents at Vernon Lane. Mr. Houtmann stated it will be an 8-inch line connection to an existing 8-inch line which will lead to a manhole terminus on Vernon Lane.

Mr. Bialek asked about students parking at the Promenade at Granite Run and then walking across the street to the school and will there be a pathway. Dr. Meloche stated they do not want the students to park there and will not encourage this by putting in a pathway. Mr. Bialek asked about the liability in case a student is hurt would this liability be on the Township or the School District? Ms. Powell asked if there have been any complaints from management at the Promenade about students parking and the answer was no. Ms. Powell then asked about the impervious surface of the project. Mr. Houtmann stated they did the calculations on the combined tracts, and they meet the I-1 standards. Ms. Powell asked about the stormwater basin and whether this would be satisfactory for the new project. Mr. Houtmann pointed out the locations on the plan.

Dr. Meloche stated the need for a K-1 school is real and seven years passed discussion. He said the demand for a full day kindergarten is real. This building is specifically geared for K and 1st grade. The school board is trying to meet the needs of the community. He added they are using ten trailers now with six being at Glenwood Elementary. Ms. Powell asked if the board considered building at Springton Lake as there is a lot of open space available. Dr. Meloche stated they looked at that, but it is not buildable. They also looked at Sleighton property, the Franklin Mint property, as well as property in Edgmont Township.

Mr. Bialek asked when the project enrollment will happen. Dr. Meloche stated they plan for September of 2028 for kindergarten and September 2029 for K-1. Mr. Bialek stated they need to come back with a completed traffic study and more information for Council's guidance to progress. Mr. Houtmann stated they are looking for an accelerated submittal. They will have preliminary plans prepared by next week. Mr. McMullan stated this is the first step in the process, appearing before the Land Planning Committee, then the Planning Commission, the Council workshop meeting, then before Council again. Mr. McMullan added there may be more than one Planning Commission meeting needed. Mr. Bialek stated he has heard from some residents that they think the Township is doing some "back door" deal or a "done deal" with the School Board. He wants more transparency with the public. Mr. Houtmann stated he did not intend to imply this was the case. Mr. Bialek added moving forward they need to convey clarity of the next steps, a timeline of the project, traffic study information, and transparency to the public.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:04 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Sharon Browne