

EDGEWORTH BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
May 11, 2022

MEETING was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with Chairperson Keane presiding and the following members of the Commission and officials of the Borough present: Mr. Patrick Keane, Mrs. Mary Ferris, Mr. Patrick Auth, Mr. David Aloe, Mr. David Martin, and Mr. John Schwend, Borough Manager. Chairperson Keane led the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

ACTION CONCERNING APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON OF THE EDGEWORTH PLANNING COMMISSION: Mr. Schwend stated that the Commission must appoint a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson at the first meeting held each year. A motion was made by Mr. Aloe with a second from Mrs. Ferris to appoint Mr. Keane as chairperson. All present voted in favor of the motion. Next, a motion was made by Mr. Aloe with a second from Mr. Martin to appoint Mrs. Ferris as Vice-Chairperson. All present voted in favor of the motion. Mr. Keane and Mrs. Ferris thanked the Commission for the appointments.

MINUTES of the Regular Meeting held on August 11, 2021 presented to the Commission. After some discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Martin with a second from Mr. Aloe to approve the August 11, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes as presented. All present voted in favor of the motion.

The following visitors were present:

Mrs. Andrea Aloe – 504 Beaver Road
Mr. Jim Miller – Sewickley Academy
Mr. Dave DeNardo – Sewickley Academy
Mrs. Ashley Birtwell – Sewickley Academy

NEW BUSINESS:

PRE-APPLICATION CONFERENCE WITH SEWICKLEY ACADEMY REGARDING NICHOLS FIELD: Mr. Jim Miller came before the Commission to discuss potential changes to Nichols Field. He highlighted issues with the current space, which houses tennis courts, a grass soccer field, and a grass baseball field that experience flooding during heavy rain events, in addition to limited parking in the area, and concerns over student and visitor safety when accessing the site. He then presented preliminary site renderings for potential changes to the site. Proposed changes include synthetic turf soccer and baseball fields, additional parking, a field house, and an indoor sports complex used for training and practice facilities. Mr. Miller explained that Sewickley Academy has contracted Gateway Engineers to address the Borough's stormwater management requirements and erosion and sedimentation concerns, as well as for securing necessary National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP). He stated that stormwater management systems would be more effective with synthetic turf, compared to the existing conditions on the property. Additionally, as the site is located within a flood plain, Sewickley Academy has begun the process of applying to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to request a modification to the flood plain maps in order to remove the site from the flood plain.

Mr. Miller then explained the preliminary site renderings in further detail. The two synthetic athletic fields would be located toward the rear of the site, with bleachers located at each field. The one-story field

house would be located to the left of the property, and the proposed indoor sports complex would be located in the middle of the property, positioned between the athletic fields. The existing tennis facilities and single-family residence currently in that location would be removed from the site. Walkways would connect each area from the parking lot. A proposed parking area of one hundred and twenty spaces, with four additional bus spaces, would be accessible off of Beaver Road, and Sewickley Academy is in the process of securing a traffic engineer to perform a traffic analysis of the area. Mr. Miller emphasized the importance of creating an aesthetically pleasing design, and highlighted a proposed six-foot decorative wall that would be placed between the parking lot and Beaver Road in order to reduce the visibility of the parking areas from the road. He explained that the increased parking areas would reduce current congestion and parking impacts on surrounding streets, and stated that the facilities would have very limited use on weekends and late evenings. Additionally, Mr. Miller stated Sewickley Academy's intent to establish nature trails around the perimeter of the property, as well as to establish a riparian buffer between the back of the athletic fields and Little Sewickley Creek.

Mr. Miller then presented cross sections of the elevations at the property, and addressed neighboring property owners' concerns regarding lighting and sound. He explained that LED zero cut-off lighting would be installed at the athletic fields, as well as for any other security lighting necessary, to reduce glare. A wooded buffer would be maintained in order to reduce lighting and sound impacts on adjacent property owners overlooking the property, and a six-foot fence would be installed along the hillside. Mr. Miller concluded his presentation by stating that Sewickley Academy has met with neighboring property owners, and will continue to consider their concerns throughout the planning and application process.

Mr. Aloe stated that as an adjacent property owner, lighting and noise concerns are shared by most homeowners in the area. He suggested that Sewickley Academy conduct a lighting study, and provide renderings depicting what zero cut-off lighting would look like on the site. Mr. Miller stated that Sewickley Academy understands the concern and is working to create renderings showing lighting on the property. He also explained that due to the lack of a football program, very few athletic games or practices would occur at night. Mr. Aloe also suggested an established ending time for events in order to promote safety. Mr. Schwend stated that when Sewickley Academy submits a land development application, they will have to go through the conditional use process, at which time the Commission is able to make recommendations to Borough Council for reasonable conditions to place on any approval they may grant.

Mrs. Andrea Aloe asked where the tennis courts would be located once removed from the existing site. Mrs. Ashely Birtwell stated that Sewickley Academy will continue the tennis program, and is looking into potential partnerships and areas on campus that could house tennis courts. Mr. Keane asked how many parking spaces are currently on the property. Mr. Miller stated that there are fifty spaces currently, and parking would increase to one hundred and twenty spaces.

Mrs. Ferris asked how much lighting would be left on when the facilities on the property are not in use. Mr. Miller stated that security lighting in the parking lot and on the buildings would be used in order to deter nuisances. He also explained that the property would be fenced and gated to prevent unauthorized guests during off-hours. Mr. Schwend stated that lighting requirements are outlined in the Borough's zoning ordinance, and no strong or dazzling spill over is permitted.

Mr. Martin asked whether the elevation of the proposed fields would be raised to reduce flooding concerns. Mr. Miller stated that the entirety of the site is in a flood plain, and Sewickley Academy is submitting a request to FEMA to readjust the flood plain boundaries. The proposed synthetic fields would remain at the current elevation, however some cutting and filling of land would be necessary to achieve a level playing area. Mr. Miller also stated that the stormwater management systems designed for the proposed site would be much more comprehensive than what is currently on the property, and would be

properly maintained to ensure their efficiency. He stated that current flooding issues on the grass athletic fields are typically due to mud and debris build up that occurs during heavy rain events. Mr. Martin also asked whether Sewickley Academy has a formal process for transporting students to and from the property, and noted the safety of students running or walking to the property without crosswalks in place. Mrs. Ferris suggested placing a crosswalk across Beaver Road. Mr. Schwend stated that these concerns must be addressed in the traffic analysis that Sewickley Academy performs.

Mrs. Ferris noted the sparse landscaping shown on the proposed renderings along Little Sewickley Creek Road, and asked whether additional landscaping or a buffer zone would be created. Mr. Miller stated that the specifics of the green space would be included in the NPDES permit received by PA DEP, however a riparian buffer will be necessary in the area. Mrs. Ferris also asked what type of facilities would be included in the field house. Mr. Miller stated that bathroom facilities only would be located in the building.

Mr. Schwend stated that he and the Borough Engineer previously met with representatives from Sewickley Academy to discuss the proposed plans, and provided them with a list of considerations and requirements as they move forward with the application process. He explained that the application and plans will be reviewed by the Commission and Borough Council for land development and conditional use once submitted. The project may also require variances from the Zoning Hearing Board. Additional considerations and requirements include installing a new sewer line from Nichols Field to Shields Lane; parking, lighting and sound requirements as outlined in the Borough zoning ordinance; setbacks for the parking lot and field house; impervious surface maximums and stormwater management requirements; location of the flood plain; regulating the site with respect to third party rentals; enforceability of conditional uses; and traffic and pedestrian safety. Finally, Mr. Schwend stated that Sewickley Academy is a school use in a residential zoning district. He highlighted a former agreement when the tennis courts were constructed on the property that limited other uses, as well as allowed the property to remain taxable property. Mr. Schwend stated that the Commission should keep all of these considerations in mind as the process moves forward.

There being no further business, the meeting on motion duly made was adjourned at 7:54 p.m.
-John F. Schwend, Secretary