

**MINUTES OF THE PLANNING BOARD MEETING**  
**Thursday January 28, 2016 revised**

Present:

Chairman Tom Freeman  
Vice-Chairman Larry Lonergan  
Mayor Kevin Ryan  
Secretary Jim Kirby  
Mr. Jim Helb, Township Engineer  
Mr. Victor Lugo (Alternate #1)  
Mr. Greg Mascera, Planning Board Attorney  
Mrs. Bambi Dawn Fiorito, Planning Board Clerk

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**Notice of Meeting**

Chairman Freeman called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m. and asked the attendees to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Freeman made an announcement in regard to the application for 11 Durrell Street. He stated the application will be carried to the February 25th meeting. No further notice required.

**Minutes**

Board Member Kirby made a motion to adopt the minutes from the January 12, 2016 meeting. Mr. Lugo seconded the motion and the Board voted to approve the minutes as prepared by Bambi Dawn J. Fiorito.

**Public Hearing**

*PB-16-01 Verona Board of Education/Verona High School, Preliminary and Final Site Plan approval to Refurbish Upper and Lower Fields with Synthetic Turf, installation of sports lighting, scoreboard, fencing and other site improvements, 151 Fairview Avenue, Block 72, Lot 106.*

Chairman Freeman entered the Township's professionals' comments onto record, as follows:

**Exhibit B-10** Memoranda from the Shade Tree Commission, dated 01/28/2016.

**Exhibit B-11** Memoranda from the Environmental Commission, dated 01/21/2016.

The attorney for the applicant, Jonathon E. Drill from Stickel, Koenig, Sullivan and Drill, introduced his witnesses: Rui Dionisio, Superintendent of the Verona Board of Education; Andrew French of French and Parrello, Joseph Burgis of Burgis and Associates.

Mr. Drill called his first witness, Mr. Rui Dionisio, Superintendent of the Verona Board of Education. Mr. Dionisio was sworn under oath. He stated that the application was presented in order to address the current drainage issues on site; to improve access for students and athletes; and to install lights on the field.

Mr. Dionisio then gave a description of the intended use of the fields. He stated that the primary use of the school facilities is for Board of Education and the secondary use is recreation and community groups. He then reviewed the use of the Public Address system and its users.

There were no questions from the public for Mr. Dionisio.

Robert F. Simon of Herold Law Professional Association asked for a clarification on the number of games; starting times; light usage availability; light intensity; band practices; the use of both fields at the same time; the settings for the lights; possible rental revenue; and the PA system. He further asked for a clarifications on band practices; start times; percentage of usage for students verses non-students; the latest possible times for weekday light usage; access to the fields; onsite security; and the operators of the lighting system.

Mr. Drill stated that traffic and circulation studies were not performed.

Mr. Simon opined that the application requires a parking variance.

Chairman Freeman asked about scheduling of non-Board of Education use of the fields.

Joseph Devivo of 26 Laurel Court asked about rescheduling of rained out events.

John Quattrocchi of 44 Afterglow Way asked about traffic studies.

The Board took a recess at 8:33pm and reconvened at 8:44pm.

Mr. Drill then called his next witness, Mr. French. Mr. French then entered the following exhibits onto the record:

- Exhibit A-8** Sheet 18 of 25, Lower Field Athletic Field Landscape plan revised 01/28/2016, Alternate Plan 1
- Exhibit A-9** Sheet 18 of 25, Lower Field Athletic Field Landscape plan revised 01/28/2016, Alternate Plan 2
- Exhibit A-10** Sheet 17 of 25, Upper Field Athletic Field Lighting Plan, revised 01/28/2016, Alternate Plan 1
- Exhibit A-11** Sheet 17 of 25, Upper Field Athletic Field Lighting Plan, revised 01/28/2016, Alternate Plan 2

Mr. French gave a description of the revisions including additional shrubs and the separation of the evergreens to accommodate the request by the Environmental Commission.

Mr. Helb, Township Engineer, asked about moving the trees from one proposed location to another.

Mr. Simon asked screening of neighbors along the Dodd/Sampson side.

Mr. Kirby asked about the scoreboards and its visibility with the new tree plantings.

Mr. Drill called his next witness, Joseph Burgis. Mr. Burgis gave his credentials and was accepted as a Professional Planner. He gave a description of the property and stated there are a number of pre-existing non-conformities, including:

- 1- The six foot high chain link fence in the front yards of Sampson and Grove Avenue.
- 2- The six foot high chain link fence located within 25 feet of the corner of the intersection of Sampson Drive and Grove Avenue.
- 3- The fence along Sampson Drive with one foot of the front property line.
- 4- The four existing lights that illuminate the existing tennis courts.
- 5- The existing school building within the buffer area.
- 6- The failure to have twelve loading spaces on the Property.
- 7- The failure to have 360 parking spaces on the Property.

Mr. Burgis then turned to the variances required to approve the application as submitted and amended in testimony. These variances include:

- 1- A front yard setback of 13.1 feet whereas 30 feet is required.
- 2- (a) To permit a 6 foot high chain link fence within the front yard areas of Grove Avenue and Sampson Drive; (b) a 6 foot high chain link fence at the top of the retaining wall within the front yard of Sampson

Drive and (c) a 6 foot high chain link fence within the front yard of Sampson Drive where a maximum fence height of 3 feet is allowed.

- 3- (a) To permit a 6 foot high chain link fence with a setback of zero feet from the front lot line on Grove Avenue; (b) a 6 foot high chain link fence at the top of the retaining wall with a setback from one to ten feet from the front line on Sampson and (c) a 6 foot high chain link fence with a one foot setback from the front lot line on Sampson Drive where no fence shall be installed within 10 feet of the front lot line.
- 4- (a) To permit the installation of a retaining wall adjacent to the lower athletic field which is 21.7 feet from the property line within the buffer zone; (b) the installation of a 6 foot chain link fence within the buffer zone; and (c) permitting an existing chain link fence located within the buffer zone where no principal or accessory structure or use shall be located within the buffer zone.
- 5- To permit the installation of a new baseball scoreboard set 23.4 feet from the right of way line of Sampson Drive and a new multi-sport scoreboard set 26.1 feet from the right of way of Sampson Drive as well as pre-existing nonconforming structures with less than the required setback of 30 feet from the right away of Sampson Drive including but not limited to bleachers, a concrete building, and ticket booths and a preexisting nonconforming front yard setback of 23.3 feet from Fairview Avenue for the existing school building where a minimum front yard setback of 30 feet is required.
- 6- To permit the proposed athletic sport lighting (4 poles) for the upper athletic field at a height of 70 feet whereas 20 feet is permitted.
- 7- To permit a total of 6 signs including the existing 'Paul "Doc" Goeltz' identification sign on Sampson Drive; the relocation of the existing scoreboard to the proposed softball field; the removal of existing scoreboard on the upper field and the replacement with a new scoreboard; proposed new scoreboard for the baseball field and the proposed new scoreboard for the multipurpose field whereas a maximum of 2 signs are allowed.
- 8- To permit a proposed football scoreboard with an area of 50 square feet and a height of 15 feet; a proposed baseball scoreboard with an area of 50 square feet and a height of 15 feet; the proposed multi-sports scoreboard with an area of 21 square feet and a height of 13 feet; the relocated baseball scoreboard for the new softball field with an area of 57 square feet and a height of 16 feet; the existing 'Verona High School' sign with an area of 51 square feet at a height of 9.3 feet and a setback of 7 feet from the Fairview Avenue right of way line; and the existing 'Paul "Doc" Goeltz' field sign with an area of 32 square feet and a height of 6.9 feet and is setback 6 feet from the Sampson Drive right of way line where no sign shall exceed 20 square feet in area; and if a ground sign stands no more than 5 feet above ground level or be closer than 10 feet to any property line.

The Board asked about the scoreboard as an accessory to the principal use; the location of the scoreboard in the buffer zone; the pre-existing nonconforming fence; the number and location of sheds; the types of signage; the parking lot's distance to the principal structure and the number of signs.

Mayor Ryan asked for a clarification of the variances sought.

Mr. Simon asked about the surrounding towns that use similar lighting, and P.A. system. He then asked about the surrounding properties; minimum lot sizes; intensification of the use; the utilization of the fields; previous experience with turf fields; increased usage; variances for height and parking; the light fixtures; and sufficient landscaping buffers.

The Board took a break at 10:27pm and resumed at 10:35pm.

Kathryn Kauh of 152 Franklin Street asked about other lighted fields in other municipalities and zoning of adjoining properties of those municipalities.

Mr. Simon then presented his case. He called Mary Wilks of 155 Franklin Street. Ms. Wilks was sworn under oath. Ms. Wilks expressed concern for the possible traffic, noise and light spillage, the landscaping plan, the view of the new poles and the possible devaluation of surrounding property.

Mr. Simon then called Melissa Ruberto of 24 Dodd Street. Ms. Ruberto expressed her concerns for crowd noises, parking, safety, the alteration of the character of the neighborhood, and possible reduced property values.

Frank Ferrari of 46 Howell Drive made a statement in support of the application.

Eamonn Ryan of 58 Morningside Drive made a statement in regard to the possible changes to the sound in that area.

Kathy Kauhle made a statement in support of the process.

Tom Kiernan of 17 West Lincoln Street made a statement in support of the application.

Mr. Drill then gave a summation of the application.

The public portion was closed.

The Board discussed the application. Vice Chairman Lonergan made a motion to approve the application. With a second from Mayor Ryan, the Board voted unanimously to approve the application with the following conditions:

- 1- No games to start later than 7 p.m. and all practices must end by 10 p.m.
- 2- Applicant agrees to request the Verona governing body to review the parking situation on Dodd Terrace during high school activities and to modify parking regulations accordingly.
- 3- Applicant to abide by the modified land scape plan so that trees are more widely disbursed on the Property as per Exhibit A-9.
- 4- The fields, when lit, shall be used only by the Board of Education, the Verona Recreation Department and teams and organizations that are based in Verona and comprised primarily of Verona residents.
- 5- The Applicant will add more access manholes if and where Hatch Mott MacDonald suggests.
- 6- The Applicant to provide additional soil information as necessary to determine water flow and the necessity for improvements including anchoring to assure adequate drainage at the lower field.
- 7- The Applicant will relocate the existing sanitary sewer line prior to any construction of the field.
- 8- The stormwater management plan must be approved by the Planning Board stormwater consultant Hatch, Mott MacDonald for approval in accordance with the township's stormwater management ordinance and the NJDEP Stormwater Management Regulations.
- 9- The Applicant will provide access manholes at all changes in pipeline alignment and will provide buoyancy calculations of the pipeline at detention systems.
- 10- All manholes shall be accessible for interior cleaning
- 11- The retaining walls must be inspected by a licensed professional structural engineer approved by the township engineer during construction and the applicant must pose sufficient escrow money to cover this inspection.

12- The Applicant must provide a construction and maintenance bond in accordance with municipal land use law.

13- The Applicant must provide an escrow deposit as required by the township engineer for inspection services.

**Adjourn**

After a motion made by Board Member Kirby, Chairman Freeman seconded it and there was a unanimous vote to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,



Bambi Dawn Fiorito  
Planning Board Clerk

*PLEASE NOTE: Meeting minutes are a summation of the hearing. If you are interested in a verbatim transcript from this or any proceeding, please contact the Planning Board office at 973-857-4805.*