

**TOWNSHIP OF FALLS
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
SEPTEMBER 24, 2019**

Meeting commenced: 7:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned: 7:35 p.m.

Members present: Brian Binney, Edward Crohe, John Haney, Thomas Hughes, Mary Leszczuk

Members absent: None

Also Present: Thomas Jennings, Esquire (Fisher Broyles), William Lyons (McGill Fairless Hills Composting) and Dave Allen, P.E. (EarthRes Group) representing McGill Fairless Hills Composting Facility

For the Township: Joseph Jones, Township Engineer and Colleen Kane, Associate Engineer (Jones Engineering Associates) and Diane Beri, Recording Secretary

Item #1: McGill Fairless Hill Composting, 600 Tyburn Road, Morrisville; TMP #13-047-062; Zoned: FM. Owner: Warner Company. Preliminary Land Development – construct a composting facility and ancillary structures

Thomas Jennings, Esquire, presents the application. McGill is seeking your recommendation for preliminary and final approval for land development. McGill has entered into a lease agreement and related easement with Warner Company, an affiliate of Waste Management, for a 15-acre parcel within the Warner North Side complex on Tyburn, a portion of 13-047-062. Warner, the property owner, supports this application. The property is within the Farming and Mining zoning district. Warner has been engaged in outdoor composting (primarily yard waste) for decades at this location. The McGill facility represents the natural expansion of that use by bringing the compost raw materials indoors. McGill proposes to construct and operate a state-of-the-art, fully enclosed processing facility producing premier composting products. McGill has received and is preparing written responses to the comments from the Township Engineer, the Traffic Engineer, the Fire Marshal as well as the County Planning Commission. McGill will comply with all comments within the reviews with the exception of eight waiver requests. An updated waiver letter has been submitted to the Township.

William Lyons, President and co-founder of McGill Environmental Systems, continues and states that we have been in business for 29 years. We design, own and operate composting facilities. The process we use was developed by Rutgers University in the early 70's and meant to manage a wide variety of wastes. Our philosophy is that organic waste is all the same because it all came from the same place -- the earth -- and through our composting processes, convert that into something that will go back into the soil to rebuild healthy soils. We have composted 5 million tons of waste and converted that into 4 million cubic yards of product. Our customers range from municipalities, landscapers to multi-national companies. Our products are sold primarily to the professional market. Uses include sports turf, landscaping and erosion control. Our products are on over 200 golf courses and is used widely by parks and recreation departments in addition to landscapers and some homeowners.

There are approximately 5,000 composting facilities in the United States. Well over 99% of those facilities are outdoor operations. All our facilities to date are completely indoor, including this facility. We picked this location for two reasons – 1) the specific site itself – it is currently a composting facility which sets it up nicely to be expanded and upgraded by moving to an indoor one; and 2) the marketplace has greatly improved for our products – within the last 5 years the recognition of the issues of climate change and soil health and the use of compost products makes a very meaningful contribution for all those problems.

We operate in most of the jurisdictions in the U.S. and in Ireland. We have an excellent regulatory compliance record in all of those jurisdictions. The facility itself would be a reinforced concrete building with a very significant amount of air handling equipment. Materials would move through the various steps of the process. We intend to process about 100,000 tons of material and making a little less than 100,000 cubic yards of product. We will employ about 16-20 people.

Chairman Binney asks if the current outdoor operation will become completely indoor or will there still be storage of compost outside.

Mr. Lyons states that there will be storage of compost outside.

Dave Allen, P.E. (EarthRes) continues and states this operation will be part of the Warner operation. The property is quite large (435 acres). Our plan shows the lease area of 15 acres which is the existing composting facility. This will be an upgrade to that operation; we are taking the existing windrows that are outside and replacing them inside a 124,000 sq. ft. building. The quarry is a sand and gravel quarry. There is no discharge point from the lake; it just perks into the ground. Today that area drains into the water impoundment and that's what we are proposing to do. We are not changing access to the site, so there is an existing entrance at Tyburn Rd. and New Ford Mill Road. That section of Tyburn Road was recently improved in 2016; the traffic signal the pavement and the drainage were all upgraded. That is one of the waiver requests. We are not adding a lot of truck traffic to the road.

Chairman Binney asks if the facility will be open to landscapers to pick up product.

Mr. Allen says he doesn't believe so.

Mr. Lyons continues and says that it is tractor trailer sized sales only.

Discussion occurs with Member Hughes asking how full time employees inside the composting facility (3-4), if the restrooms go into a holding tank (yes), and not enough site lighting for the employees (they will add more site lighting on the plan).

Member Leszczuk asks where the compost will be stored outside (the existing grinding facility to the west of the building) and how long will it take to build (approximately 12 months).

Jones Engineering Associates Review Letter dated September 19, 2019

All items are a will comply, with the exception of the following:

- 191-8(D) Requesting a waiver – consider this application preliminary & final land development
- 191-30(I)(4) Requesting a waiver – a traffic impact study for development over 50,000 feet
- 191-36(D) Requesting a waiver – curbs along the driveways
- 191-37(B) Requesting a waiver – 15 ft. open space between curblines of uncovered parking & building; 12 ft. of separation from parking and the property line; curbing requirement
- 191-37(G)(1) Requesting a waiver – curbed planting islands at the end of each parking row
- 191-37(G)(2) Requesting a waiver – curbed raised planting beds with one shade tree per bed
- 191-37(G)(4) Requesting a waiver – one tree of 1-1/2 inch caliper minimum for every six parking spaces
- 191-43(C) Requesting a waiver – all lots must abut street frontage

Chairman Binney asks regarding the last waiver, since this leasehold is land locked, if there should be a dedicated easement that gives access to the property.

Atty. Jennings says that there is. Warner has granted an easement to McGill to cover all those purposes. The language of the easement expressly states and insists on compliance with any requirements of Falls Township for land use and would be noted on the plans.

Chairman Binney asks if the access to this property is mostly by dirt road – correct?

Mr. Lyons says the driveway into the site is paved for approximately 150 feet. When you go left to the mining operation or right to this facility, it is heavily compacted dirt / gravel road.

Chairman Binney asks if there is a reason why you intend to pump and haul the sewage instead of building a septic system?

Mr. Lyons says the close proximity to the quarry is one reason (could be problematic), the existing mining operation has a holding tank and the public sewer connection is 3,000 to 4,000 ft. away. Because of these reasons, the holding tank makes the most sense.

Mr. Jones states that the applicant has agreed that before going before the Board of Supervisors, the applicant and Township Solicitor will be drafting the pump / haul agreement and easement agreement.

Discussions occur about the time table for submission to the Board of Supervisors.

Member Hughes asks about the Fire Marshal's review letter regarding no construction plans for sprinklers/suppression/life safety plans and if they are working on those plans. What are the plans for sprinklering the facility?

Mr. Allen states there will be fire protection – might not be a sprinkler system. It will be more of concrete control area based. This same type of facility was built in Waverly, Virginia, without sprinklers.

Member Haney asks what will be in place to contain the possible spontaneous combustion of the compost inside the facility if there will not be sprinklers.

Mr. Lyons states that typically fires of mulching facilities are due to mismanagement of large piles. Inside the processing facility, materials are never stockpiled above 9 feet. As we move along with the design, if the Fire Marshal determines that we need a sprinkler system, we will be putting in a sprinkler system. Approximately, 50 percent of the floor and walls are reinforced concrete and about 50 percent of the roof will be reinforced concrete.

Chairman Binney asks what the benefits are of the indoor facility – does it speed up the process?

Mr. Lyons states yes, it speeds up the process very dramatically. At an outdoor facility it might take 4 or 5 months; an indoor facility would take a little under 30 days. It's more about having a controlled environment for any biological activity. It also allows us to contain and manage any odors.

Mr. Haney asks if these buildings will be temperature controlled with the same temperature 365 days per year.

Mr. Lyons states yes. The open aisle width where the loaders drive up and down will not be temperature controlled, but where the processing is being done, there is continuous monitoring.

Mr. Haney asks what type of additives will be added to the process outside of the normal things added for compost.

Mr. Lyons states the only thing we add on occasion is a little water after the primary phase going into the curing phase.

No public comment.

Member Leszczuk makes a motion to recommend approval for Preliminary and Final Land Development application of McGills Fairless Hills Composting Facility, 600 Tyburn Road, Morrisville, PA 19067, TMP #13-047-062, Zoned FM, based on Remington Vernick's review letter dated September 10, 2019, the Fire Marshal's review letter dated August 26, 2019, and Jones Engineering Associates' review letter dated September 19, 2019, with waivers requested for 191-8(D), 191-30(I)(4), 191-36(D), 191-37(B), 191-37(G)(1-4), and 191-43(C).

Member Haney seconds the motion.

All in favor 3-1 (Crohe abstained due to lateness; Hughes dissenting) – Motion carries. APPROVED FOR PRELIMINARY AND FINAL LAND DEVELOPMENT.

Item #2 Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve minutes from August 27, 2019.

All in favor 4-0 (Haney abstained)

Meeting adjourned 7:35 p.m.