

# Elementary plan wins variance

## Proposed Vernfield school would be built on Long Mill Road

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FRANCONIA — The Franconia Township Zoning Committee approved an application Monday night allowing a new elementary school to be built in the Souderton Area School District.

The proposed Vernfield Elementary School would be constructed on Long Mill Road. All residents owning property within 500 feet of the tract were informed of the plans to build the two-story elementary school.

Souderton Area filed for a sign variance, and neighbors had some concerns about the initial plans.

One major point of contention was a proposed community baseball field, which has been removed from the plans.

Another potential problem was the proposed school sign, which would exceed the township code's length limit.

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#### **WHAT'S NEXT:**

■ The Souderton Area School Board has authorized a public hearing for the Vernfield Elementary School at 7 p.m. Thursday.

The freestanding sign, which would run perpendicular to the road, would be approximately 6 feet 3 inches tall and 25 feet long. The limit set by the township is 15 feet long.

Representatives for the school district argued that it is not so much a sign as it is architectural detailing, citing the integrity of the sandblasted engraving being used.

The unanimous variance approval set in motion the land-development process for the estimated \$17 million, 29-classroom, 83,000-square-foot facility.

The next step for the plan is the proposal of various sewage and water treatments and land excavation. There is also a

motion being made to attempt to lower the speed limit on surrounding roads.

Nicholas Chubb, assistant to the superintendent of the Souderton Area School District, came to Monday's meeting in support of the project. Chubb cited constant growth in the area as the reason for the needed space.