



DEPARTMENT of PLANNING & ZONING

John R. Weller, AICP, Director



2015 ANNUAL REPORT

SUMMARY

The Township granted final plan approval for the following development:

- 1,119 sq.ft. of additional institutional space (for Exton Elementary School)
- 86 new dwelling units, all "carriage home cluster" dwellings

The Township also approved revisions to a land development plan first approved in 2015 for 20 new apartment units in a single structure at the Northwyn Court site at 803 E. Boot Rd. No plans for commercial or industrial development were approved.

The Board of Supervisors approved the following amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance during 2015.

- Article VIII of the Zoning Ordinance was amended by the addition of a new **§325-28.3** to regulate surface facilities associated with transmission pipelines. The amendment also revised **§325-28**, "Definitions," to add new terms used in these regulations.
- The Comprehensive Plan was amended by the adoption of the "Lincoln Highway and Whitford Road Corridors Plan."
- A new Article XXII was added to the Zoning Ordinance to update the regulations for wireless communications facilities in light of new wireless technology. This replaced **§325-23.C**, which was at the same time amended to be applicable solely to amateur radio operators. Other portions of the Zoning Ordinance, including definitions in **§325-8**, were amended to assure internal consistency.
- The Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Map were amended to re-zone a 52-acre area along the west side of the US Rt. 202 expressway and south of the US Rt. 30 by-pass from O/L Office Laboratory to R-2 Residential.
- Article XXI of the Zoning Ordinance, "Rail Transit Overlay District," was amended to revise certain provisions in response to concerns expressed by Township residents when the Article was originally adopted in December 2014. These included the regulation of multi-level parking garages, the requirement of a traffic impact study for specified projects, and limitations on permitted retail commercial activity.
- The Zoning Ordinance was amended to implement the Comprehensive Plan as amended by the March 2015 adoption of the Lincoln Highway and Whitford Road Corridors Plan. The amendment included revisions to the definitions in **§325-8**, changes to the TC Town Center district regulations in Article IV, changes to the O/L Office/Laboratory district regulations in Article VI, and the further amendment of Article VI to establish a new O/R Office/Residential district and a new O/C Office/Commercial district. An Exhibit 4,

"Bonus Menu," was also adopted, and the Zoning Map was amended to change the configurations of the O/L and TC districts and to add the new O/C and O/R areas.

In addition to administering the plan reviews and ordinance revisions, Department staff worked on the following projects:

- In 2013, the Township received a Vision Partnership Program grant in the amount of \$43,470 from the Chester County Planning Commission to develop the **Lincoln Highway and Whitford Road Corridors Plan** as an amendment to the Township Comprehensive Plan. Work on the Plan began that year under the direction of a committee of Township residents appointed by the Board and chaired by Mr. Glenn Marshall; the Board named URS Corporation as our planning consultant for the project. The Corridors Plan Committee completed their work in September 2014 with a recommendation to the Board that the final plan document be adopted. The Board passed Township Resolution No. 2015-15 on March 31, 2015, thereby adopting the Corridors Plan as an amendment to the Township Comprehensive Plan.
- Among the recommendations of the Corridors Plan was the development of a Transportation Capital Improvements Plan, commonly called an **"Act 209 Plan,"** to identify road improvements necessary to accommodate new development and to establish transportation impact fees for those new projects. On June 11, 2014, the Board passed Twp. Resolution No. 2014-19 to establish a Traffic Impact Fee Advisory Committee ("TIFAC") and to establish the interim impact fee of \$1,000 per trip as permitted by the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. On July 9, 2014, the Board appointed the firm of Traffic Planning and Design as the project consultant for this work, pursuant to Staff recommendation, and on August 27, 2014 the Board appointed the members of the TIFAC. The TIFAC met for the first time on September 11, 2014, electing Mr. Glenn Marshall to be Chairman. The TIFAC met with the consultant more-or-less monthly through September 2015 to develop the three components of the Act 209 Plan, which were in turn adopted by the Board: Twp. Resolution 2015-30 was passed on June 17, 2015 to adopt the Land Use Assumptions Report; Twp. Resolutions 2015-49 and 2015-50 were both passed on November 24, 2015 to adopt the Roadway Sufficiency Analysis and Capital Improvements Plan, respectively. Also on November 24, 2015, the Board adopted Ordinance No. 427 to establish the Township's transportation impact fee of \$1,219.65 per p.m. peak hour trip.

PLANNING COMMISSION

The Planning Commission met 21 times during 2015: 23 meetings were scheduled at the beginning of the year, but three regular meetings were cancelled due to a lack of business and one workshop was added to review proposed amendments to the Zoning.

Andy Wright was re-elected chairman and Jon Bonnett was re-elected vice-chairman of the Commission at the reorganization meeting on January 6, 2015; Mr. Wright and Mr. Bonnett served in these positions for the entire year. There were no changes to the membership of the Commission during 2015; the Commission has no vacancies.

During 2015, the Commission reviewed 12 conditional use applications (six more than 2014) and 10 land development plans (two fewer than 2014); they also reviewed two sketch plans, which was the same as 2014. The following chart lists the projects reviewed in alphabetical order. Note that "approved" in the "Status" column indicates the date of the meeting at which

the Commission passed a motion recommending that the Board of Supervisors approve the plan or conditional use application, not the date of approval by the Board.

#	Project Name	Type	Description	Status
1	BT Exton Carriage Home Cluster Development	land development	Development of a 42.3-acre tract at 200 N. Whitford Rd. for a carriage home cluster development with 86 dwellings. The property is the former site of Waterloo Gardens.	Approved 7/6/15
2	Chandler Tract	conditional use	Construction of 240 apartment units in 6 buildings and a clubhouse in a seventh building on a 21.5-acre tract at 301 W. Lincoln Hwy.	Approved 11/16/15
3	Church Farm School	preliminary land development	Master Plan for development of the campus at 1001 E. Lincoln Hwy., including additions to Greystock Hall, a new student center, improvements to the existing student housing, new faculty housing, and improvements to vehicular access and circulation.	Approved 7/6/15
4	Dante's Run	sketch plan	Subdivision of an 8.4-acre lot at 1339 Burke Rd. to create lots for 7 single-family homes, 1 open space lot, and a new cul-de-sac street.	n/a
5	Dante's Run	conditional use	Same as above; conditional use review required for disturbance of steep slope areas.	Approved 7/20/15
6	Dante's Run	land development	Same as above.	Under review
7	Day Care Center at 759 E. Lincoln Hwy.	conditional use	To operate a day care center in the existing building on this 1-acre property.	Under review
8	Exton Elementary School	conditional use	Construction of additions to the existing school building as well as improvements to the parking and student drop-off areas at 301 Hendricks Ave.	Approved 7/20/15
9	Exton Elementary School	land development	Same as above.	Approved 11/2/15
10	Exton Train Station	conditional use	Improvements to the existing train station, including construction of an enclosed building to replace the existing shelter along the south (inbound) side of the tracks, improvements to facilitate handicapped accessibility, additional parking, and improvements to the stormwater management facilities.	Approved 3/16/15
11	Exton Train Station	land development	Same as above.	Approved 4/20/15
12	Fairfield House Day Care Center	conditional use	For use of a portion of the existing building at 305 N. Pottstown Pk as a child day care center.	Approved 6/15/15
13	Glen Loch II Subdivision	conditional use	Development of a 56.5-acre tract bisected by Dunwoody Dr. along the west side of US Rt. 202 south of the Amtrak/SEPTA line for a carriage home cluster development with 152 dwellings.	Under review
14	Health and Wellness Suites of Exton	conditional use	Development of a 5.7-acre tract at 501-545 Thomas Jones Way in the Oaklands Business Park with a 80,338 sq.ft., 120 bed transitional care facility.	Under review

15	Main Street at Exton Apartments	conditional use ¹	Construction of 410 apartment units in 8 buildings (plus adaptive re-use of 2 historic structures) on a 19.6-acre tract along Commerce Dr. and Indian Run St. in Main Street at Exton.	Approved 10/5/15
16	Northwyn Court Apartments	conditional use and land development	Modifications to land development plan approved 7/23/14 to construct a 20-unit apartment building and renovate 2 existing apartment buildings on a 4.89-acre lot at 803 E. Boot Rd. Board agreed to simultaneous conditional use and land development review due to minor nature of changes.	Approved 2/2/15
17	Parkview at Oaklands	conditional use	Construction of 276 apartment units in 4 buildings on a 36.1-acre tract at 350 and 385 Creamery Way in the Oaklands Business Park.	Under review
18	Roberts Automall	land development	Construction of a 4,140 sq.ft. addition and other improvements to existing dealership at 421 W. Lincoln Hwy.	Under review
19	SS. Philip and James Roman Catholic Church	sketch plan	Construction of a 2,176 sq.ft. addition and other site improvements to existing church at 701 E. Lincoln Hwy.	n/a
20	SS. Philip and James Roman Catholic Church	land development	Same as above.	Under review
21	Sunshine Management	land development	Subdivision of a 7.5-acre tract at 1354 Old Pottstown Pk. to create lots for 7 single-family homes.	Under review
22	Whole Foods	conditional use	Demolition of existing K-Mart store at 175 N. Pottstown Pk. and construction of a 55,000 sq.ft. grocery store and various site improvements adjacent the Exton Square shopping center.	Approved 9/21/15
23	Whole Foods	land development	Same as above.	Under review

The preceding section is provided in part to satisfy the requirements of §207 of Pennsylvania Act 247, the Municipalities Planning Code.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The Historical Commission met eleven times in 2015 to review a variety of projects affecting the Township's historic resources. Under the terms of the Township Zoning Ordinance, the Commission advises the Board of Supervisors and the Zoning Hearing Board regarding subdivisions, land developments, conditional use applications, and variance applications that include or are within 300 feet of an identified historic resource. The Commission also reviews building permits, demolition permits, sign permits, and zoning permits for historic resources.

At the reorganization meeting on January 22, 2015, the Commission elected Kevin Kilgallen to be chairman, James Christ, Jr. vice-chairman, and Roberta Eckman secretary/treasurer. The Commission welcomed new member Bradley Roeder in 2015. At this time, the Commission has no vacancies.

¹ Development within Main Street at Exton is controlled by a Settlement Agreement. The approval recommended by the Commission was to amend this Agreement to allow the development as described. This action is substantially similar to a conditional use approval, so it has been listed as such here.

In addition to reviewing many of the same development projects seen by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors, Historical Commission activity in 2015 included:

- Participation in several events celebrating the 250th anniversary of the Township. At the February opening ceremony at the Chester County Library, Commission members presented an informative display of Township history and offered a brief account of the dairy industry in the Township. On August 20, 2015, the Commission in cooperation with the 250th Anniversary Committee conducted a Trolley Tour of the northeastern part of the Township as part of the Town Tours and Village Walks series of the Chester County Planning Commission. Approximately 450 people attended during the four-hour period that the tour was offered.
- Presentation of 2015 Historic Preservation Awards for three deserving properties. The event was held on Sunday, October 25, 2015 at the Parish House of St. Paul's Episcopal Church. The Parish House received an award for outstanding rehabilitation, the Davis Dairy Farm springhouse was awarded for outstanding restoration, and the Evian Clubhouse – the former Colebrook Farm – was recognized for excellence in preservation efforts. Approximately 50 people attended this celebration of the achievements of the owners and custodians of these historic assets in our Township.
- Participation in the annual Chester County Preservation Network Recognition Dinner on June 17, 2015 at Grove Methodist Church in the Township. Members provided an informational display about Township history and assisted with set-up.
- Attendance by three Commission members at a workshop on October 24, 2015 sponsored by the Chester County Preservation Network. The workshop provided valuable information about historic structures and building elements and guidance for identification of architectural periods. This training qualifies for the continuing education required for Certified Local Governments, should the Township seek such designation.
- Artist Jeff Schaller was commissioned to produce a work of art commemorating the Guernsey Cow Dairy Bar, pursuant to a bequest by its late owner, Mr. Larry Polite. The contract was executed in 2015, and the artwork will be completed in early 2016.
- Procurement of a 1933 Franklin Survey map of West Whiteland, which was conserved and hung in the lobby outside the Main Meeting Room in the Township Building.

Although not an official Commission project, Commission Member Janice Earley worked with Arcadia Publishing to produce a book about West Whiteland Township in their "Images of America" series. Working entirely as a volunteer, Ms Earley did extensive research into the history of the Township as documented by photographs. The book complements [A History of West Whiteland](#), published by the Commission in 1982, which remains the definitive account of Township history. [Images of America: West Whiteland Township](#) may be purchased at the Barnes & Noble store at Main Street and was also available at various events related to the 250th anniversary celebration.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS – PLANNING ACTIVITY

The Board has the final authority to approve or to deny applications for subdivision, land development, and conditional use. The Board is advised by the Planning Commission, the Historical Commission, a variety of consultants, and Staff. In 2015, the Board approved six conditional

use applications, one less than in 2014, and granted final approval to four land development plans: eight fewer than in 2014; one land development plan received preliminary approval.

The following chart lists in alphabetic order all plans considered by the Board during 2015. Note that the "type" column indicates how the plan was approved: our Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance states that the first plan submitted for a subdivision or land development plan is a "preliminary" plan, although the Board may approve it as a "final" plan if they choose, so plans shown as receiving final plan approval may have been submitted as preliminary plans.

#	Project Name	Type	Description	Status
1	BT Exton Carriage Home Cluster Development	final land development	Development of a 42.3-acre tract at 200 N. Whitford Rd. for a carriage home cluster development with 86 dwellings. The property is the former site of Waterloo Gardens.	Approved 8/12/15
2	Church Farm School	preliminary land development	Master Plan for development of the campus at 1001 E. Lincoln Hwy., including additions to Greystock Hall, a new student center, improvements to the existing student housing, new faculty housing and improvements to vehicular access and circulation.	Approved 8/12/15
3	Chandler Tract	conditional use	Construction of 240 apartment units in 6 buildings and a clubhouse in a seventh building on a 21.5-acre tract at 301 W. Lincoln Hwy.	Under review
4	Dante's Run	conditional use	Subdivision of an 8.4-acre lot at 1339 Burke Rd. to create lots for 7 single-family homes, 1 open space lot, and a new cul-de-sac street.	Approved 9/23/15
5	Exton Elementary School	conditional use	Construction of additions to the existing school building resulting in a net increase of 1,119 sq.ft. of floor area as well as improvements to the parking and student drop-off areas at 301 Hendricks Ave.	Approved 8/26/15
6	Exton Elementary School	final land development	Same as above.	Approved 12/9/15
7	Exton Train Station	conditional use	Improvements to the existing train station, including construction of an enclosed building to replace the existing shelter along the south (inbound) side of the tracks, improvements to facilitate handicapped accessibility, additional parking, and improvements to the stormwater management facilities.	Approved 4/22/15
8	Exton Train Station	final land development	Same as above.	Approved 4/22/15
9	Fairfield House Day Care Center	conditional use	For use of a portion of the existing building at 305 N. Pottstown Pk. as a child day-care center.	Approved 7/22/15
10	Main Street at Exton Apartments	conditional use ²	Construction of 410 apartment units in 8 buildings (plus adaptive re-use of 2 historic structures) on a 19.6-acre tract along Commerce Dr. and Indian Run St. in Main Street at Exton.	Approved 11/24/15

² Development within Main Street at Exton is controlled by a Settlement Agreement. The approval granted by the Board was to amend this Agreement to allow the development as described. This action is substantially similar to a conditional use approval, so it has been listed as such here.

11	Northwyn Court Apartments	conditional use and final land development	Modifications to land development plan approved 7/23/14 to construct a 20-unit apartment building and renovate 2 existing apartment buildings on a 4.89-acre lot at 803 E. Boot Rd. The Board agreed to simultaneous conditional use and land development review and approval due to the minor nature of the changes from the prior plan.	Approved 2/25/15
----	---------------------------	--	---	------------------

ZONING

The Zoning Hearing Board held hearings for two variance applications, a decrease from the four variance applications received in 2014. The 2015 applications were:

- West Chester Area School District applied for relief for improvements to Exton Elementary School at 301 Hendricks Ave. The requested relief was to allow a smaller building setback than required from interior drives and to allow a smaller parking setback than required from the property line. The hearing was held on August 13, 2015, and the Board granted the variances requested with conditions.
- Mr. Christopher Payson applied for relief to allow the subdivision of the property at 219 Hendricks Ave. into two non-conforming lots, the construction of a single-family dwelling on one of the lots, and an addition to the existing dwelling. The hearing was held on November 12, 2015, and the Board granted the variances requested with conditions.

The Zoning Hearing Board heard no challenges to the validity of the Ordinance, no appeals from the determination of the Zoning Officer, nor any applications for special exception in 2015.

STAFF TRAINING

The Director attended the following conferences and workshops during 2015.

- Attended the "Breaking Ground" conference conducted by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission at the Union League in Philadelphia on March 12.
- Attended the annual conference of the Pennsylvania chapter of the American Planning Association in Pittsburgh from October 18 to October 20. Attending this conference provided the Director with credits toward maintaining his status as a Certified Planner.
- Attended workshop presented by the American Planning Association entitled "Planning, Economic Development, and the New Normal." The presentation was hosted by the Chester County Planning Commission at their office in Westtown Twp. On November 2.