



**WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP
Planning Commission
Agenda
Tuesday, May 3, 2022
7:00 P.M.**

[Etiquette for
hybrid meetings](#)

Meeting will be held in-person and via Zoom

[Register for Zoom Meeting](#)

Call by Phone: 1-646-558-8656

Meeting Packets can be found on Township website

Reminder to meeting participants: Please speak clearly into the microphone

CALL TO ORDER

REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes: April 19, 2022

PUBLIC COMMENT/CONCERNS/QUESTIONS

PRESENTATIONS

1. WCU Planning Studio: Exton Crossroads Presentation

PLANS

1. Keva Flats (Expansion)
Address: 301 W. Lincoln Hwy.
First Review: Sketch Plan
Request: Construction of 2 additional apartment buildings (72 units), associated parking and floodplain restoration.

OLD BUSINESS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

Next Meeting: May 31, 2022



MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 29, 2022
TO: Planning Commission
FROM: John R. Weller, AICP
Director of Planning and Zoning
SUBJECT: Keva Flats
Sketch plan

APPLICANT: Keva Flats, LP
707 Eagleview Blvd., Ste. 400
Exton, PA 19341

SITE ADDRESS: 350 Waterloo Blvd.
Exton, PA 19341

TAX PARCEL: 41-5-30.5

ZONING: TC, Town Center

DESCRIPTION: Construction of two multi-family residential buildings with a total of 72 dwelling units and a floodplain restoration project on a 21.5-acre lot currently developed with 242 apartment units in six buildings.

Background

The subject property is the site of Keva Flats, a residential community of 240 apartment units in five buildings with two additional units in the historic Ivy Cottage. The lot is generally rectangular and has a gross area of 21.5 acres, although the floodplain associated with Lionville Run and some smaller constrained areas reduce the developable area to 15.3 acres. The property has road frontage on three sides: Keva Dr., W. Lincoln Hwy., and Waterloo Blvd. The fourth side abuts the Whiteland Towne Center shopping center and Miller Park.

The Keva Flats development was first approved on July 13, 2016; revisions were approved on April 13, 2017 and February 28, 2018. The Applicant intends to construct two new apartment buildings: Building 6 at the northeast corner of the lot along Waterloo Blvd. with 48 units and Building 7 at the southeast corner along Lincoln Hwy. with 24 units. These two buildings will increase the total number of apartments on the property from 242 to 314. The project will also include a floodplain restoration project. The accompanying feasibility study prepared by Land Studies notes that the Lionville Run stream channel has been modified over time - both by natural processes and human intervention - and that its functionality has been damaged by gravel and sand deposits; the remnants of Hurricane Ida in early September 2021 were especially damaging.

The Township Comprehensive Plan has established that the Town Center (“TC”) zoning district is meant to accommodate the highest density of development in the Township. For this reason, our Zoning Ordinance uses a “form based” approach to the regulation of development; that is, we control the size of buildings by limiting their height and the percentage of the lot they may cover as well as requiring setbacks from streets, property lines, and other buildings. Quite intentionally, there is no limit on the number of dwelling units allowed per acre in this district. The Zoning Officer has determined that the development proposed here complies with the applicable provisions of the TC district.

Tonight is the first presentation of this Sketch Plan to the Planning Commission.

Consultant Reviews

Sketch plans are not a required step in the development process, so Applicants have the option of having one or more of our consultants review the plan or proceeding with just a Staff review. This Applicant has opted to proceed with only Staff review, so there are no consultant comments, just this memo and the attached memo from the Township Engineer.

Staff Comment

The development will result in a 30% increase in the number of dwelling units on the site. The proposed buildings appear to be similar in scale and appearance to the existing buildings, and their proposed locations fit well into the overall layout. However, the most interesting aspect of this project is the proposed floodplain restoration. While this may improve the appearance of the site, it may also provide other, significant benefits to the Township.

Since December 2002, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection has enforced the stormwater-related provisions of the Federal Clean Water Act through the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System program, commonly referred to as “MS4.” Among other things, the MS4 program requires local governments to protect and to enhance surface water quality. Communities with a long history of both farming and development - like West Whiteland - often have historically degraded streams with long-standing impairments from past farming practices and poor - or non-existent - stormwater management for other development. In West Whiteland, excessive sediment is a particular concern. Modern stormwater management practices only came into effect around 1990, by which time much of West Whiteland was already developed. While we scrupulously enforce our stormwater regulations, that doesn’t address legacy issues: we do well with protection; not so much with enhancement.

As outlined in the attached memorandum from Township Engineer Ted Otteni, the floodplain restoration element of this project may provide the Township with an opportunity to get credit toward our mandate to reduce the sediment in our streams. The restored floodplain would also provide more effective flood control and be more attractive. As Mr. Otteni describes, it could even be the first part of a larger project to enhance even more of the Lionville Run corridor, expanding the benefits of stream restoration and flood control to more of our residents.

While we are excited by the prospect of these environmental benefits, we must still consider the sort of impacts more typically associated with a project of this magnitude. We expect that the revenue stream anticipated from this project will be needed to finance the substantial cost and ongoing maintenance of the restored floodplain, but we must also

consider other impacts. As already stated, Staff finds the overall design generally consistent with and complimentary to the existing development. We also note:

- Keva Flats was one of five residential projects¹ approved in the three-year period between August 2015 and August 2018 that added nearly 1,400 dwelling units in this immediate area. Many residents had concerns that the market would not be able to absorb this many units. As the projects were completed, Staff kept track of sales and leasing activity, and - in spite of the challenges of the pandemic - found that in all cases, sales and leasing rates equaled or exceeded the expectations of the developers. Today, occupancy in all these communities is between 90% and 100%, and the market remains strong. Staff has no concern about the ability of the housing market to absorb the 72 units proposed here.
- The location of Building 7 nicely complements Buildings 4 and 5, creating what has the potential to be a pleasant, enclosed courtyard area. The placement of Building 6 is less successful as it does not relate well to any of the other buildings and feels somewhat isolated from them, although we expect that there will at least be a sidewalk connection along Waterloo Blvd. One possible solution may be to reverse the placement of the building and its parking lot.
- The sole road access to Buildings 4 and 5 is a driveway to Lincoln Hwy. We question the impact of the 24 additional dwellings in proposed Building 7 on the functionality of this driveway.
- A new driveway from Waterloo Blvd. is proposed to serve Building 6. This access is only about 150 from the existing driveway for Building 2, and we have concerns about the functionality of this access, especially with increasing traffic volume on Waterloo.
- The site is in our Transportation Service Area and may therefore be subject to payment of a traffic impact fee. There is some question on this point, as this developer constructed Keva Dr. in lieu of payment of the traffic impact fee for the original project. The cost of that construction far exceeded the amount of the required fee, but it is not clear to us whether this new project may still take advantage of this credit. While we do not need to resolve this question tonight, all parties should be aware that this matter will need to be addressed.
- Similarly, the original project had an open space requirement of 484,000 sq.ft., which the design exceeded by a considerable margin.² In January 2020, we revised our open space standards. The requirement to provide 2,000 sq.ft. of permanent open space per dwelling unit remained the same, but we revised our definition of what lands were eligible to be counted toward the requirement. In addition, we included provisions applicable only to projects in the TC zoning district in light of our desire to promote higher density in this district. As with the traffic fee issue, this concern does not need to be resolved tonight, but the Commission may wish to begin discussion and provide guidance on the matter.

¹ In order of approval they are: Waterloo Reserve (86 townhouses, approved August 2015); Keva Flats (242 apartments, first approved July 2016); Ashbridge at Main Street (410 apartments, approved May 2017); J Creekside (291 apartments, approved December 2017); Hanover at Exton Square (342 apartments, approved August 2018).

² This figure represents the requirement of the project as it exists now. The first approved plan showed office space in Ivy Cottage and therefore a slightly smaller open space requirement. When Ivy Cottage was converted into two dwelling units, the open space requirement rose slightly to 484,000 sq.ft. Also, at that time, up to 25% of required open space could be environmentally constrained, so of the 484,000 sq.ft. required, only 363,000 sq.ft. had to be unconstrained. The approved plan showed a total of 552,241 sq.ft. of open space of which 458,333 sq.ft. was unconstrained.

Staff supports the concept of what is depicted on this sketch plan. Multi-family development at this location is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and the proposed buildings complement the existing development and comply with the Zoning. We strongly support the floodplain restoration element of the plan, noting not only the benefit to the Township regarding our MS4 responsibilities but also the potential for a more attractive feature that will manage flood events more effectively. We expect that we can come to agreement with the Applicant regarding the traffic and open space issues described above.

As a sketch plan, it is not appropriate for the Commission to make an official motion regarding this submission; however, you may wish to summarize your principal concerns and suggestions in the interest of providing useful feedback to the Applicant.

Attachment

1. Township Engineer memo dated April 29, 2022.
2. Sketch plan prepared by RGS Associates dated April 19, 2022, no revision date.
3. "Floodplain Restoration Concept Plan" and accompanying narrative prepared by Land Studies, dated November 15, 2021, no revision date.

Plans\JKLM\Keva II\PC memo - 220429

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 29, 2022

TO: John Weller, Director of Planning and Zoning

FROM: Theodore D. Otteni, P.E.
Director of Engineering

**SUBJECT: Keva Flats Expansion
Sketch Plan Review**



I have reviewed the information submitted for the sketch plan of the Keva Flats expansion, particularly with respect to the floodplain restoration. I offer the following for consideration and ongoing coordination efforts:

1. It is my understanding that the Township can take advantage of MS4 credit only for sediment reduction above and beyond the development requirements of the site. The study indicates a preliminary estimated sediment reduction of 44,880 lbs/yr.
2. The feasibility study also notes that a financial contribution from the Township may be required in order to utilize sediment reduction credits for the Township's MS4 program. I believe this may be a good partnership to improve a stream corridor, enhance water quality as well as work toward our MS4 requirements
3. There may be an opportunity to extend the floodplain restoration project to achieve a greater impact. The adjacent 350 ft. upstream from the project is on private property (Whiteland Town Center, LLC). It is feasible that an easement could be secured to perform floodplain restoration. The subsequent 1,400 ft. of upstream channel is within the Township's Miller Park. The stream channel through the park has a highly erosive nature and sometimes breaks out of its banks. There is also evidence of measurable sediment and gravel deposition.
4. Floodplain restoration is widely supported by the Department of Environmental Protection as it provides opportunity for infiltration, reduction of floodwaters, as well as habitat restoration. The legacy sedimentation which is evidenced by the highly eroded streambanks significantly contributes to high sediment loads in our streams, high velocity, as well as increased volume of water (i.e. flooding) during storm events. I believe floodplain restoration projects are a prudent and mutually beneficial approach to current stormwater regulations.
5. The feasibility study notes that the location for placement (disposal) of excavated fill may be a price consideration. Upon compliance with regulations, there may be a mutually beneficial location within nearby Exton Park to create the amphitheater seating proposed in the park master plan.
6. As the footprint of proposed building 6 is progressed, it would be prudent to verify it is at a safe distance from the road to account for errant vehicles from the curved roadway alignment.