

**WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

Minutes of the first January meeting

January 5, 2021

*This was a virtual meeting; all participants attended on-line via Zoom.*

**Members Virtually Present**

Joe Altimari  
Dan Cote  
Brian Dunn  
Jeff Glisson  
Mark Gordon  
Mary Frances McGarrity  
Ray McKeeman

**Township Personnel Virtually Present**

John Weller, Planning Director  
Justin Smiley, Township Planner  
Mimi Gleason, Township Manager  
Pam Gural-Bear, Asst. Township Manager

Rajesh Kumbhardare, Board of Supervisors Liaison  
Theresa Santalucia, Board of Supervisors

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Vice-Chairman Mark Gordon called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the meeting was held virtually via Zoom, and Mr. Gordon asked that everyone observe video etiquette. He announced that the Planning Commission met in executive session on November 17, 2020 and again prior to tonight's meeting, both times to discuss matters of litigation.

Planning Commission members recognized Anita Nardone for her past service to the Township. Prior to being appointed to the Planning Commission in 2017, Ms. Nardone served on the Lincoln Highway/Whitford Road Corridor Study project and the Act 209 Plan Committee. She served as both Vice-Chair and Chair of the Planning Commission guiding it through the review of several difficult and complex applications. Ms. Nardone's expertise, preparedness, and professionalism will be greatly missed. West Whiteland Township is a better community for her service.

The Commission welcomed new member, Brian Dunn. Mr. Dunn is a long-time Township resident with over 12 years of service on the Township Zoning Hearing Board.

**II. REORGANIZATION**

MOTION: To elect Mark Gordon as Chairman.  
(McKeeman/Glisson)

ACTION: Passed, 7-0

MOTION: To elect Ray McKeeman as Vice-Chairman.  
(Gordon/McGarrity)

ACTION: Passed, 7-0

**III. REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES**

MOTION: To approve the minutes for the meeting of November 17, 2020.  
(Gordon/Glisson)

ACTION: Passed, 7-0

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment on items not on the agenda.

## V. PLANS

1. **Dunwoody Drive Outdoor, LLC**  
**Address: 1473 Dunwoody Dr.**  
**First Review: Conditional Use**  
**Request: Construction of an electronic billboard**

Attorney John Snyder was in virtual attendance on behalf of the Applicant. Mr. Weller provided an overview of the project and the approval process. The project proposes construction of a two-sided digital billboard located near the northwest corner of the lot along the south side of Dunwoody Drive, adjacent to the northbound lane of U.S. Route 202 expressway. This property was affected by a Zoning amendment adopted in May 2019 that permitted billboards at this location as a conditional use subject to certain requirements outlined in Mr. Weller's memorandum dated December 30, 2020 and posted in the meeting packet on the Township's website. While the proposed plan generally satisfies the requirements, Mr. Weller said there is concern regarding the impact on the neighborhood and the environment. He suggested that action by the Commission is premature until more details are provided on the amount of clearing to be done and mitigation efforts.

Mr. Weller explained the 2-step plan approval process which begins with the conditional use phase. Following review by the Planning Commission, a public hearing will be held before the Board of Supervisors at which time the Board may attach reasonable conditions to the project. Following conditional use approval, the plan must go through the land development process, which includes another review by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. Construction permits cannot be issued until the Board of Supervisors approves the final land development plan. Since tonight is the Commission's first review of the conditional use application, we are just beginning this process.

Mr. Altamari asked how the proposed digital billboard will be protected from potential hackers who could post offensive messages. Mr. Snyder did not know but will check with the Applicant.

Mr. Glisson questioned the ability of the Applicant to be able to meet the requirement of trees that are 35 feet tall on the day of planting. Mr. Snyder said the reasonableness of this requirement could be discussed during the land development process and suggested that a waiver from this requirement may be appropriate.

Noting the Applicant's association with Catalyst Outdoor, Mr. Weller asked Mr. Snyder if Catalyst would withdraw its curative amendment challenge filed with the Township. Mr. Snyder will check with his client but suggested not until a construction permit is issued. He further suggested the question that needs to be answered is "when is a billboard actually in existence."

Mr. Snyder said the Applicant will address all Consultant questions and concerns at the public hearing before the Board of Supervisors, which is scheduled for January 27. Mr. Gordon, Mr. Weller, and Ms. Gleason all explained to Mr. Snyder that it is the Township's process that a recommendation be received from the Planning Commission before advancing to the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Snyder will return to the Planning Commission at its next meeting on January 19 and address outstanding issues including the amount of clearing proposed, the impact on wooded areas, environmental mitigation, and security of the digital billboard.

Mr. Gordon then asked for comments from the public. Lynn Deithorn, resident of 14 Whitewoods Lane, East Whiteland Township, was in virtual attendance, and expressed concerns that she and others in her development would see the billboard from their homes. She also voiced concern about the impact upon abundant wildlife in the area.

Mr. Smiley estimated the distance from the proposed billboard site to the nearest residence to be approximately 1,200 feet. Mr. Gordon explained that the neighboring residents may see the rear of the sign, but the light panels will only face Route 202. Mr. Smiley asked if the Applicant could provide a view shed analysis showing the reach of the light. Mr. Snyder will check with the Applicant.

Ginny Kerslake, resident of Shoen Road, believes the light will be visible from the homes at the top of Dunwoody Dr. [the Reserve at Glenloch community now under construction] when foliage is off the

trees. She asked if these residents will receive advance notice of the hearing. Mr. Weller said the Applicant is responsible for notifying all property owners within 300 feet. Ms. Gleason said the Township will notify the HOA of the Reserve at GlenLoch development, and Ms. Deithorn indicated she would notify residents in her community in East Whiteland Township.

Mimi Beckman, resident of Fringetree Drive, expressed concern that approval of the proposed billboard will encourage even more billboards to be constructed in the area. Mr. Gordon and Mr. Weller explained that the Township must legally provide an area where billboards are allowed. It has done this through its Zoning Ordinance, but it also has included restrictions and regulations on the spacing required between billboards. In response to Ms. Beckman's question, Mr. Gordon confirmed that the Township will not receive any money from the operation of the proposed billboard other than the permit fees which are minimal.

The Commission took no action on the plan. Mr. Snyder will return to the Commission on January 19. Mr. Gordon thanked the public for their comments and participation in the meeting.

## VI. NEW BUSINESS:

### 1. West Chester University Student Project Presentation - Gabrielle Long

In the summer of 2020, Mr. Smiley contacted the Planning & Geography Department of West Chester University (WCU) to see if they would be interested in working together to develop an GIS model for West Whiteland using the WCU's new ArcGIS Urban software. The software provides an on-line 3-D platform that allows integration of multiple resources to provide various planning scenarios to aid in managing development.

In virtual attendance from WCU were Gabrielle Long, recent graduate; Dottie Ives-Dewey, Professor of Planning; Gary Coutu, Chair of the Geography Department; and Don Edmonds, student. Dr. Ives-Dewey noted that Ms. Long had just graduated and that Mr. Edmonds would be assuming responsibility for the project starting in the new semester.

Ms. Long's presentation showed how buildings, streetscapes, and other features can be added to the map to show proposed development and how it affects surrounding properties. Dr. Ives-Dewey presented different scenarios for the Township's Town Center area including metrics for energy use, population, daily vehicle and pedestrian trips, water use, etc.

Commission members were impressed with the platform and thanked Ms. Long for her hard work in creating the model. The Township looks forward to future work with WCU.

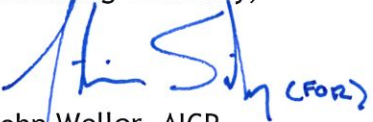
## VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mr. Smiley announced that plans for the January 19 agenda include Boot Road Storage, the Raj Real Estate project at 4 Tabas La., and the Dunwoody Outdoor conditional use application first discussed at tonight's meeting.

## VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:35 p.m.

Recording Secretary,

  
John Weller, AICP  
Director of Planning & Zoning