

WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP

PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES

Minutes of the first April meeting

April 5, 2022

**Members Present**

Ray McKeeman, Vice-Chair  
Dan Cote  
Jeff Glisson  
MaryFrances McGarrity  
Andy Wright

**Township Personnel Present**  
John Weller, Planning Director  
Justin Smiley, Township Planner  
Ted Otteni, Township Engineer

Rajesh Kumbhardare, Board of Supervisors

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Vice-Chair Ray McKeeman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Commission observed a moment of silence to honor our veterans and first responders.

**II. REVIEW OF MEETING MINUTES**

MOTION: To approve the minutes for the meeting of March 15, 2022. (Glisson/McGarrity)

ACTION: Passed, 5-0

**III. PUBLIC COMMENT**

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

**IV. PLANS**

**1. 301 South Pottstown Associates, LLC**

**Address: 301 S. Pottstown Pk.**

**First Review: Sketch Plan**

**Request: Construction of a 5,240 sq.ft. financial building**

In attendance on behalf of the Applicant were attorney Michael Gill of Buckley Brion, Ryan Whitmore of Landcore Engineering, and Adam Rosenzweig of Axiom Realty.

John Weller provided an overview of the proposed project. The site is currently occupied by Futureline Auto Tops, an automotive service operation and a legally non-conforming use in this R-4 Residential zoning district. The Applicant proposes to demolish the existing building and construct a two-story office building, also a non-conforming use, which the Zoning Ordinance permits by conditional use if the Applicant can demonstrate that the proposed use will be similar to or less detrimental than the existing use. The Applicant will be seeking relief from the Zoning Hearing Board later this month from building setback requirements.

Mr. Weller explained that the Applicant chose not to have the Sketch Plan reviewed by our consultants and is seeking guidance only from the Commission and Staff. Issues to be discussed include sidewalk and landscaping requirements and widening Bartlett Ave. to facilitate fire trucks.

Mr. Rosenzweig noted the dangers and difficulties of placing a sidewalk along Pottstown Pk., due to both the volume of traffic and the slope, which would require a retaining wall. Several Commission

members expressed agreement, adding that the Applicant should contribute to the Township sidewalk fund in accordance with Township practice should a waiver of the requirement be granted. Ted Otteni agreed that a sidewalk was not appropriate along Pottstown Pk. but pointed out that a trail along Crest Ave. to the wooded area next to the bypass off-ramp could connect with a future path along the exit ramp to a sidewalk along the eastern side of Pottstown Pk., similar to the path constructed along the western side connecting the Chester Valley Trail to Exton train station. This would facilitate pedestrian access to the train station by residents of both Whiteland Crest and Exton Crossing. Mr. Wright pointed out that Whiteland Crest residents could safely cross Pottstown Pk. by walking north to the pedestrian crossing at Commerce Dr.

The possibility of widening Bartlett Ave. was discussed. While limited by an existing utility pole and the grade, it appears that enough additional width can be provided to improve significantly access for emergency vehicles. The Applicant indicated that he was open to this and will work with Staff during the conditional use and land development processes to create a satisfactory design.

Mr. Weller said he discussed the landscaping requirements with Theurkauf Design & Planning and felt they would not be a significant issue, requiring only three or four trees along Pottstown Pk. and some shrubs along the south side of the lot.

Mr. Gill thanked the Commission for their comments. The Applicant will proceed to the Zoning Hearing Board, then return with a Conditional Use plan.

## V. NEW BUSINESS:

### 1. Review Of Amendment to Zoning Ordinance Article XVI Historic Preservation

Mr. Weller explained that the Historical Commission has completed an update of the 1982 book, "A History of West Whiteland Township," that is the foundation for the historic preservation regulations in the Zoning Ordinance. The update not only revises the inventory of historic resources, but it also changes the classification system using a set of eight criteria in lieu of the previous method of grouping historic structures into one of three "classes." Under the new system, "designated historic resources" are those that meet at least three of these criteria. This change alone makes it necessary to amend the Zoning Ordinance, but Mr. Weller went on to describe other appropriate changes:

- He has discussed with Commonwealth Heritage Group (our historic preservation consultant) the existing sections describing the functions of a Historical Architectural Review Board ("HARB"), which is confusing since the Historical Commission is not a HARB.
- He is also seeking clarification about the status and proper procedures for "certified historic districts" (§325-93). Grove Village and the core of the Church Farm School campus are the only certified historic districts in West Whiteland.
- The impact of the new Battle of the Clouds historic district is unclear, as is the category of "historic resources," separate from *designated* historic resources.

Jeff Glisson suggested changing "should" to "shall" in §325-85.A so that it reads: "Unoccupied structures shall be tightly sealed and fenced off to standards set forth in the Township Building Code."

The proposed amendment will be reviewed with the Historical Commission and CHG before returning to the Planning Commission.

## VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mr. Otteni gave an update on the Ship Road Couplet. Township work on the north leg is moving forward, and Sunoco is dismantling the adjacent tank farm. The Township is also finalizing acquisition of

property from Aqua to accommodate the southern terminus of the Couplet. The developer of 690 E. Lincoln Hwy. - who is responsible for the south leg - has submitted plans to PennDOT for their review.

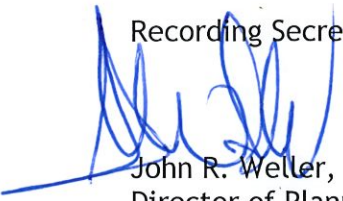
Mr. Weller announced that the agenda for the next Planning Commission agenda includes another review of the Columbia Cottage conditional use application. He also noted that PREIT has provided another extension for beginning the conditional use hearing for the apartment building they are proposing next to the existing Hanover apartment building. It was noted that this application will doubtless be affected by the recent announcement by PREIT that the Exton Square property is under agreement of sale to an as-yet unnamed party.

Mr. Weller and Mr. Smiley will be meeting tomorrow with the equitable owner of the Ship Inn to discuss a proposed brewery.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:05 p.m.

Recording Secretary,



John R. Weller, AICP  
Director of Planning