

**WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MINUTES
April 11, 2022**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Julie Bauer, Joe McCormick, John Prendergast, Joshua Anderson

TOWNSHIP STAFF: Justin Smiley, Township Planner
John Weller, Director of Planning & Zoning

Phil Yocum, Historic Consultant, Commonwealth Heritage Group
Theresa Santalucia, Board of Supervisors Liaison

I. Call to Order – Chairman Julie Bauer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was a hybrid meeting with participants attending both in person at the Township Building and on-line via Zoom.

II. Approval of Minutes for March 14, 2022

Motion: To approve the minutes of March 14, 2022
(McCormick/Anderson)

Vote: Passed, 4-0

III. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

IV. Plans

- 1. Commerce Pursuit Capital (Westrum)**
Address: 50-60 W. Boot Road
Historic Site: Greenway (Class II)
Request: Recommendation to the Zoning Hearing Board for approval of the construction of a 57,616 sq. ft. personal care facility to the rear of a historic resource.

Michael Maier of Westrum, introduced Steve Sauselein of E.B. Walsh Engineering, and Bob Wise of RGA, Inc. Mr. Maier provided an overview of the project to construct a personal care facility consisting of a 3-story building with 148 units, 45% of which will be for independent living. Three zoning variances will be needed: variance to allow building height of 41.6 feet; variance to allow reduction from required building setbacks from property lines; and a variance to allow reduction from required building setbacks from interior drives or parking lots.

Two existing buildings on the site (one of which is the historic resource known as Greenway) will be preserved, while some existing appendages/sheds will be removed. The seven businesses that currently occupy the two existing buildings plan to remain. The existing access to Boot Road

will be eliminated and replaced with an access from Darlington Drive, which will be significantly safer. Parking will be both above and below ground, and the existing shared parking area in the center of the site will be removed to provide a better viewshed into the property. Pedestrian connectivity to Boot Road and a second emergency access is proposed. Mr. Maier showed elevations and architectural renderings of the proposed facility. The Mercer Hill facility in Doylestown opened in November 2021 and is very similar to the proposed facility.

There was discussion regarding the height difference between the proposed facility and Greenway. Mr. Weller pointed out that the proposed facility will be set back 90 feet from the rear of Greenway with the area to be heavily landscaped.

Mr. Yocum felt taking down the existing sheds and removing the existing shared parking were positives. There was discussion regarding the parking for Greenway being so close to the building. It was suggested that the sidewalk and parking be shifted to the west if possible without sacrificing the nearby mature trees. When asked if the number of parking spaces could be reduced from 12 to 10, Mr. Maier explained that it was important to provide sufficient parking into the future so as not to render the building obsolete. The Applicant will look into shifting the parking further to the west and modifying the buffer for Greenway.

**Motion: To approve the zoning variance application with the understanding that the Applicant will look into modifying the Greenway buffer and shift parking to the west as discussed this evening.
(McCormick/Bauer)**

Vote: Passed, 4-0

2. Joe McCormick

Address: 522 Westfield Drive

Historic Site: Lost Acres/John Fisher House (Class II)

Request: Recommendation to approve renovations to the historic resource that includes but not limited to new addition, new windows and other exterior work to the rear of the residence

Mr. McCormick presented an overview of the proposed renovations to his home, noting that its history dates back to the 1760's. Proposed renovations include removing the existing one-story wood frame addition at the front, northeast corner of the existing stone house; a new addition to relocate a historic log structure 12 feet north of the house to serve as a master bedroom.; construction of a new one-story frame kitchen addition along the rear of the house connecting with the log master bedroom structure, and construction of a new glass enclosed entrance porch at east side of original stone house kitchen. A new opening will be cut through the rear exterior stone wall of the original kitchen, connecting the stone house with the new kitchen addition.

Mr. McCormick said all proposed work will be sympathetic and honor the original structure. Mr. Yocum said the proposed renovations are well thought-out and materials are appropriate and sympathetic to the historic resource. The only caution he offered was to advise through a plaque or other means be used to note that the log cabin is not original to the property.

Motion: To recommend approval of the application for renovations to the historic resource as described this evening.
(Bauer/Pendergast)

Vote: Passed, 3-0-1 (McCormick abstained)

3. Al & Andrew Markle

Address: 800 E. Swedesford Road

Historic Site: Benjamin Pennypacker House (Class I Listed)

Request: Recommendation to approve renovations to the historic resource that includes reroof, stucco repair and paint

Mr. Markle was in attendance and described the renovations proposed to the Pennypacker House which include a new shingled roof, repairs to flashing and stucco, and painting. Mr. Yocum said the proposed renovations and materials are in keeping with the goals for the building.

Motion: To approve the recommended renovations to the historic resource including asphalt shingles, stucco repairs and painting as proposed.
(Bauer/Anderson)

Vote: Passed, 4-0

V. New Business

1. Review of Amendment to Zoning Ordinance Article XVI Historic Preservation

Mr. Weller reviewed a red-lined version of the proposed amendment to the Zoning Ordinance. The amendment is necessary to bring the text in line with the historic resource update recently completed. The existing ordinance language references the Commission functioning as a HARB (Historic Architectural Review Board), which the Commission is not. To bring the Ordinance in line with how the Commission actually operates and avoid a possible legal action in the future, Mr. Weller recommended this language be deleted. Mr. Yocum agreed.

The Board of Supervisors is currently working to reduce the number of Commission members from ten to seven. This will reduce the current quorum issues the Commission has been experiencing and provide an odd number to avoid any tie-votes. Mr. Weller suggested the actual number of members be deleted from the Ordinance so that it can be easily changed by Resolution of the Board of the Supervisors in the future.

All references to the Class I, II, and III designations have been removed and replaced with the "Designated Historic Resource" designation. Mr. Weller asked Commission members to consider the chart in Section 325-86 (Special Use Provisions) for any additional uses it may want to accommodate for all Designated Historic Resources.

Mr. Weller asked the Commission to consider how much oversight it wants for districts such as Meadowbrook Manor and Whiteland Crest.

This was the Commission's first review of the proposed amendment. Further revisions will be made before returning for a second review.

VI. Historical Commission Concerns:

Mr. Smiley advised that Bobbie Eckman has resigned her position on the Commission. Ms. Bauer said she contacted John Kabli about his status as an Alternate member and is waiting to hear back. Ms. Santalucia advised that the Board of Supervisors has received applications for positions on the Commission but is waiting until the number of members is set by Resolution.

Ms. Bauer said there is no new update on the Witch's Cap. She reported that Nancy Karns is still interested in giving an oral history but is waiting to hear back whether she prefers virtual or in-person.

VII. Announcements

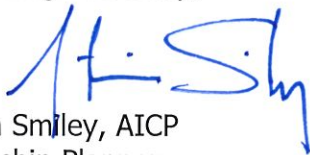
Mr. Smiley said he completed the update to "A History of West Whiteland" booklet with old and new photos and that it will be posted on the Township's website soon. He is also working on the interactive map and hopes to have that completed by the end of the month.

VII. ADJOURNMENT:

**Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 8:54 p.m.
(Bauer/McCormick)**

Vote: Passed, 4-0

Recording Secretary,



Justin Smiley, AICP
Township Planner