

**WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MINUTES
April 12, 2021**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Julie Bauer, Joe McCormick, John Prendergast, John Kabli,

TOWNSHIP STAFF: Justin Smiley, Township Planner
John Weller, Planning Director
Phil Yocum, Historic Consultant, Commonwealth Heritage Group
Candice Strawley, Commonwealth Heritage Group
Joshua Anderson, Supervisor

I. Call to Order – the meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the meeting was held virtually, via Zoom.

II. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

III. New Business

Applicant: Ship Run Developers, LLC
Address: 500 E. Lincoln Hwy.
Historic Sites: 307 (Turnpike Station Tenant House – Class III), 308 (House at Turnpike Station – Class I E), 309 (Exton Hotel – Class IL), 348 (Williams Deluxe Cabins – Class IL)
Request: Recommendation for Subdivision/Land Development Approval for the construction 95 single-family homes.

Alyson Zarro, attorney for the Applicant, introduced Dave Gibbons, project engineer, and provided an overview of the project to construct 95 single detached homes at 500 E. Lincoln Highway. The plan previously received conditional use and subdivision approval. The zoning district allows for high-density single family detached dwellings. A new road from Route 30 through the development is proposed. Two historic resources, the Exton Hotel, and the Williams Deluxe Cabins, are located within 300 feet of the proposed project. Mr. Yocum's review letter dated March 26, 2021 recommends additional screening be provided for the six proposed units closest to Route 30. Ms. Zarro said the Applicant will comply with this recommendation.

Mr. Yocum noted that there are two additional historic resources that will be affected by this project: site #307 (Turnpike Station Tenant House) and site #308 (House at Turnpike Station). However, he said this does not change his original recommendation. He added that the remainder of the proposed development is well hidden from the historic resources, as well as adequately screened from St. Mary's Chapel adjacent to Ship Road.

Members approved of the architectural renderings of the proposed units. Mr. Kabli felt they were well designed.

Motion: To approve the recommendation for the Subdivision/Land Development construction of 95 single family homes, with the additional screenings recommended by Mr. Yocum, which Ms. Zarro indicated will be complied with by the Applicant.

Vote: Passed 4-0 (Kabli/McCormick)

IV. Old Business

1. Historical Resource Survey Update

Ms. Strawley presented a map representing the online database of the various historic properties within the Township. All properties from the existing inventory (210) have been visited, but 40 properties lacked public right-of-way to take photos, so letters will be sent to those property owners.

Ms. Strawley said a number of additional outbuildings were discovered that were not in the original inventory. Decimal point numbers originating from the main house/resource number will be given to these outbuildings. She will check for additional ruins/buildings pointed out by Members. If a resource has been demolished, a note will be provided stating so in the description area.

Mr. Yocum suggested adding ".0" to the main number of the resource, but after discussion, it was decided not to add this. Mr. Weller pointed out that the County does not use ".0" in numbering tax parcels, and Mr. Smiley said the ".0" could cause problems with Excel data bases.

Noting the large gaps in the current numbering system, Mr. Smiley asked if newly-identified resources (those now 50 years old) will be given those "missing" numbers. Ms. Strawley said the gaps would fill up quickly depending on the quadrant in question (a development with numerous units, such as Meadowbrook Manor). Ms. Speirs recommended checking with the County to see how they number the Historic Resource Atlas.

There was general discussion about newly-identified resources (post-war development) and the need to recognize their historic value without the burden of requiring Township review (Historical Commission/Zoning Hearing Board) for minor renovations/modifications. Establishing a Heritage District was suggested by Mr. Weller. Mr. McCormick referenced the Grove Historic District – the collective vs. individual nature of the area. The Commission will consider this further upon completion of the historic survey. Ms. Strawley hopes to still finish the project on time, despite COVID interruptions.

V. Historical Commission Concerns

Mr. Smiley presented proofs of the plaques for the 2020 Historic Preservation Awards. There will be an article in the Township's Spring Newsletter and hopefully some type of awards ceremony in late Spring.

Members reported no luck in finding someone interested in the Witch's Cap. Mr. Yocum indicated that transporting it appeared to be the biggest concern.

VI. Approval of Minutes for March 8, 2021

**Motion: To approve the minutes of March 8, 2021
(Kabli/McCormick)**

Vote: Passed, 4-0

VII. Township Update:

The Urban Land Institute Brainstorming Committee will conduct its first meeting tomorrow evening via Zoom.

Mr. McCormick asked when the Township plans to resume in-person meetings. Mr. Smiley said that has not yet been determined but indicated that when in-person meetings do resume, a Zoom link will probably still be provided for those who cannot attend in person.

VII. ADJOURNMENT:

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m. (McCormick/Kabli)

Vote: Passed, 4-0

Recording Secretary,

Justin Smiley

Justin Smiley, AICP
Township Planner