

WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP

PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES

Minutes of the first May meeting

May 3, 2022

Members Present

Mark Gordon, Chairman
Dan Cote
MaryFrances McGarrity (via Zoom)
Ray McKeeman
Andy Wright

Township Personnel Present

Pam Gural-Bear, Interim Township Manager
Ted Otteni, Director of Engineering
Justin Smiley, Township Planner
John Weller, Planning Director

Rajesh Kumbhardare, Board of Supervisors

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mark Gordon 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 April 19, 2022. (McKeeman/Cote)

ACTION: Passed, 4-0 (Ms. McGarrity had not yet arrived).

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

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

IV. PRESENTATIONS

1. WCU Planning Studio: Exton Crossroads Presentation

Nine students from the West Chester University Planning Studio presented their study of redevelopment options for Exton Crossroads. The study process included a field visit, review of key documents, and interviews of members of the Planning and Historical Commissions. Documents reviewed included the Future Land Use element of the Comprehensive Plan, the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, the Lincoln Highway/Whitford Road Corridors Plan, and the October 2020 study by the Urban Land Institute. Interviewees included Julie Bauer, Jonathan Martin, and Joe McCormick from the Historical Commission, and Ray McKeeman, Andy Wright, and MaryFrances McGarrity from the Planning Commission.

The presentation featured demographic, environmental, and economic development data, and focused on three areas within the Town Center zoning district: the Eastern Gateway, at the point where the Chester Valley Trail crosses Lincoln Hwy.; the Northern Gateway area around the intersection of Pottstown Pk. and Swedesford Rd./Waterloo Blvd.; and the Whiteland Town Center shopping center.

One conclusion was that there is too much land dedicated to parking, and the Township was encouraged to consider ways to make this space more sustainable by including green space or space for EV chargers, solar panels, or seasonal retail. The group also recommended a capital improvement plan to fund improvements like better wayfinding signage, an elevated crosswalk

and/or shuttle service to connect destinations, and the creation of a Business Improvement District. Floodplain improvements were suggested to reduce flooding around the Crossroads area, including planting more trees and providing open space available to the community. In regard to historic preservation, the group suggested creating self-guided walking tours to highlight our historic resources and exploring the possibility of converting a historic structure into a museum.

Members and Staff thanked the students for their hard work and recommendations.

V. PLANS

1. Keva Flats (Expansion)

Address: 301 W. Lincoln Highway

First Review: Sketch Plan

Request: Construction of an additional 72 units in two apartment buildings and floodplain restoration

Neal Fisher of The Hankin Group and Len Bradley of RGS Associates represented the Applicant.

John Weller gave an overview of the project to construct two additional apartment buildings at the Keva Flats residential community on Waterloo Blvd. The design complies with the provisions of the Town Center zoning district. The submission is a Sketch Plan, so no action is required of the Commission; there are no consultant comments.

Mr. Fisher described the site and showed pictures of the completed improvements, which were approved in 2016. The proposal includes a development component (the two buildings) and an environmental component. Mr. Fisher described how Lionville Run, which bisects the Keva site, had been diverted in the past into a defined channel. Stormwater management and flood control strategies have changed over the years, and experts now realize that it is better to allow streams to spread out when they flood to reduce stormwater and flood water velocity and thereby reduce erosion and sedimentation. The Applicant proposes to restore the floodplain by reducing the depth of the existing stream channel to facilitate such shallow flooding. Mr. Bradley reviewed the Floodplain Restoration Concept Plan, which eliminates the existing stormwater basins providing more land for development and open space. He added that the restoration would remove 45,000 lbs. of sediment per year from the watershed and transform the floodplain from a "nuisance" to a "commodity" allowing for the highest and best use of the land. Ted Otteni noted that the Township is under a mandate to reduce stream sediment by 10% and that the proposed project will help the Township achieve this without spending taxpayer dollars.

Regarding the site layout, the Applicant agreed with the Staff comment that Building 6 related poorly to the rest of the project and said that they would address this by shifting it to the west and placing some of the parking behind the building.

Mr. Weller noted that project may be subject to both a transportation impact fee and an open space requirement. He stated that he would ask if the Applicant's construction of Keva Dr. as part of the first development should also be credited toward this project. Calculation of the open space requirement is complicated by the fact that what may be credited toward the requirement has changed since the approval of the original Keva development. If it turns out that additional permanent open space (or a fee in lieu of such space) is required for this new development, Mr. Weller stated that he would support crediting the cost of the floodplain restoration toward the fee. Mr. Fisher noted that DEP requires Township participation if we intend to take credit for the sedimentation reduction resulting from the project; the credit toward the fee may qualify as the Township contribution. The Commission did not object to

this, and it was agreed that the details on these matters could be resolved during the conditional use or land development review.

Members were generally in favor of the proposed Sketch Plan. The Applicant's next step will be submission of a Conditional Use application for review.

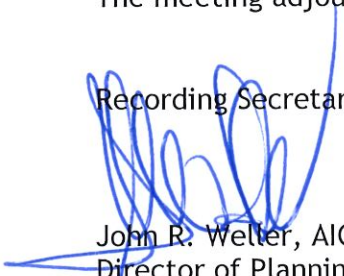
VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The next meeting of the Commission will be May 31 when three plans will be ready for review: a 4-lot subdivision at 296 Boot Rd., a conditional use application to use a historic home and barn as a wedding and special event venue, and the CPC Westrum conditional use plan for a continuing care facility at 50-70 W. Boot Rd.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:08 p.m.

Recording Secretary,



John R. Weller, AICP
Director of Planning