

**WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MINUTES
May 9, 2022**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Joe McCormick, John Kabli, Joshua Anderson, Jonathan Martin

TOWNSHIP STAFF: Justin Smiley, Township Planner

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

I. Call to Order – Vice-Chairman Joe McCormick called the meeting to order at 7:03 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 April 11, 2022

Motion: To approve the minutes of April 11, 2022
(Anderson/ McCormick)

Vote: Passed, 2-0-2 (Martin and Kabli abstained)

III. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

IV. Plans

1. Commerce Pursuit Capital (Westrum)

Address: 50-70 W. Boot Road

Historic Site: #156 Greenway (Class II)

First Review: Conditional Use

Request: Recommendation to construct a 148-unit personal care facility

In attendance on behalf of the Applicant were attorney John Jaros, Michael Maier of Westrum, and Bob Wise of RGA, Inc.

Justin Smiley provided an overview of the project which was previously reviewed by the Historical Commission last month for a recommendation to the Zoning Hearing Board. Tonight's review is for Conditional Use approval. Mr. Smiley explained that a previous concern of the Commission when it reviewed the project last month was the new western parking lot being placed too close to the Greenway historic resource. The plan has since been revised to address this issue.

Mr. Maier described the revision advising that the parking lot has now been aligned with the front of the Greenway building, and the setback from Greenway has been increased from 7' 2" to 10' 3". A further setback would have sacrificed mature trees in the area. The existing planting bed will retain the 6' 6" minimum width.

Mr. Yocum suggested the existing hedges be cut back to show the windows in Greenway. There was discussion regarding the grade of the area. Greenway is about 5 feet above grade and the

proposed facility is set back 90 feet from the historic resource which will minimize the visual impact of the new building from Boot Road.

Motion: To recommend to the Board of Supervisors approval of the conditional use application of Commerce Pursuit Capital to construct a personal care facility at 50-70 W. Boot Road. (Anderson/ Martin)

Vote: Passed, 4-0

2. 296 Boot Road

Address: 296 Boot Road

Historic Site: #158 – Tenant House (Class II)

First Review: Subdivision

Request: Recommendation to construct 3 additional single-family homes to the south of the historic resource at 296 Boot Rd.

Mr. Smiley introduced the project to create a 4-lot subdivision retaining the historic resource (#158 Tenant House) on lot #1 and constructing 3 additional single-family homes on 3 lots to the south with frontage along Burke Road.

Amanda Schneider, civil engineer with D.L. Howell, was in attendance on behalf of the Applicant. She confirmed that the historic resource will remain as is, and all landscaping and buffering recommended by the Township's consultant will be provided. All lots will be connected to public sewer and water. No waivers or variances are requested. No elevations of the proposed single-family homes are available at this time as the Applicant has not yet contracted with a builder.

Mr. Yocum said the proposed plan presents no real adverse effect on the historic resource. Mr. Anderson questioned one of the proposed driveways running through the adjacent lot. Ms. Schneider said this was done to avoid the steep slope and will be discussed further with the Planning Commission.

Mr. Martin expressed the need to define vegetative screening. Mr. Yocum recommended a mixture of evergreen and deciduous, and Mr. Smiley confirmed that the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance spells out specific buffer requirements.

Motion: To recommend to the Board of Supervisors approval of the Subdivision application to construct 3 additional single-family homes to the south of the historic resource at 296 Boot Road and to lessen the impact on the historic resource, a vegetative landscaped buffer shall be provided that meets the requirements of the Township's Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance. (Martin/Anderson)

Vote: Passed, 4-0

3. Cross Gables Estate

Address: 701 Old Valley Rd.
Historic Site: #322 & 323 Colfelt House/John Bell Farm & Tenant House (Class I LNR)
First Review: Conditional Use
Request: Recommendation to allow Historic Resources at 701 Old Valley Rd. to be adaptively reused into a wedding/special events venue using the Special Use Provision in the R-1 district

Joe Conahan and Jena Kendra were in attendance and described the proposed uses for the various structures on the site. The Colfelt Mansion will be used for smaller weddings and shower events and can seat 75 people. Tents that hold a maximum of 300 can be erected when needed, and the tasting patio seats approximately 125. The site has limited parking, but the Applicant has received permission from the Valley Creek Corporate Center to use its parking lot on weekends. The bull pen will feature a raised patio with railing all around. For additional parking at the Mansion, plastic mesh pavers are proposed that will allow parking in rainy weather.

Mr. Yocum said the Applicant has respected the historic nature of the property (both inside and out) and has confidence in the renovations. From a conditional use standpoint, he said the proposed use is a good one.

Motion: To recommend to the Board of Supervisors approval of the Conditional Use application of Cross Gables Estate to allow Historic Resources at 701 Old Valley Road to be adaptively reused into a wedding/special events venue using the Special Use Provisions in the R-1 District. (Anderson/Martin)

Vote: Passed, 4-0

V. New Business

The equitable owners of the Ship Inn, Jason Van Keuren and Najib Abiaad, were in attendance to introduce themselves to the members of the Historical Commission and speak informally about their plans to open a brewery/restaurant at the Ship Inn. They plan to renovate the existing garage to house the brewing operation and use the existing restaurant for serving beer and food. Mr. Yocum advised that they retain any historic fabric when renovating. The new owners hope to open for business in September.

VI. Historical Commission Concerns:

Mr. Smiley showed an overview of the newly revised Historic Resources Map and Site Listing which is now available on the Township's website. The updated "History of West Whiteland" book is also on the website for viewing. No hard copies will be printed for sale.

Mr. Smiley also reported that Brandywine Realty Trust is currently researching the Exton Mall property and leases associated with it and plan a mixed-use redevelopment.

The current make-up of the Commission was discussed. Bobbie Eckman has resigned her position, and the Board of Supervisors is currently considering decreasing the number of members from 10 to 7 to avoid future tie votes as well as address recent quorum issues.

Alternate positions were discussed. Mr. Smiley will check to see if an Alternate Member would qualify for fulfilling the CLG requirements.

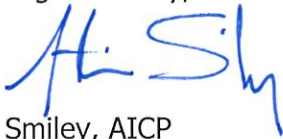
Mr. Kabli urged the Commission to begin thinking about upcoming Revolutionary War anniversaries in 2026 and 2027 to avoid last-minute problems and lack of man-power. He also commented on the success of the Ashbridge apartments and the satisfaction of its residents. He encouraged the Township to continue emphasizing mixed-use retail and noted a need for upscale retail to keep consumer dollars in the Township that are currently being spent in King of Prussia. He also stressed the need for competition to keep prices competitive.

VII. ADJOURNMENT:

**Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m.
(Anderson/Martin)**

Vote: Passed, 4-0

Recording Secretary,



Justin Smiley, AICP
Township Planner