

**WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MINUTES
September 13, 2021**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Julie Bauer, Joe McCormick, John Prendergast, Jonathan Martin, Roberta Eckman

TOWNSHIP STAFF: Justin Smiley, Township Planner

Phil Yocum, Historic Consultant, Commonwealth Heritage Group
Candice Strawley, Commonwealth Heritage Group
Joshua Anderson, Board of Supervisors Liaison

I. Call to Order – the meeting was called 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. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

III. New Business

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 1. Applicant: | Columbia Cottage |
| Address: | 930 & 936 E. Boot Rd. |
| Historic Sites: | 046 – William Everhart House (Class I Listed NR) |
| Request: | Recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to approve the application to construct a 72-bed senior living facility |

Michael Gill, Attorney for the Applicant, introduced Steve Schmidt from Horst Senior Care. The proposed plan is to construct a 72-bed senior living facility at 930-936 E. Boot Road within 300 feet of the historic William Everhart House, a Class I resource. In addition, some of the heaviest fighting of the Battle of the Clouds (1777) took place in this area. Mr. Gill said the Applicant will comply with landscaping recommended in Commonwealth Heritage's review dated August 31, 2021. The Applicant also agrees to follow prescribed protocol should any archeological artifacts be found in developing the site; that is to pause work, notify the Township, and deliver any artifacts to the Township.

Mr. Yocum confirmed that with the recommended landscaping, the proposed project would have no negative impact on the historic resource. He added that should any artifacts be found; they should be left in place (not dug up). Ms. Strawley noted that a 1951 aerial photograph of the area shows structures that are no longer in existence.

Motion: To recommend to the Board of Supervisors approval of the conditional use application to construct a 72-bed senior living facility at 930-936 E. Boot Road.

Vote: **Passed 5-0 (Bauer/Eckman)**

2. Applicant: **690 E. Lincoln Associates, LLC**
Address: **690 E Lincoln Highway**
Historic Sites: **032 – St. Mary’s Chapel (Class I NRE), 311 – Ship Inn (Class I LNR), & 343 SS. Philip & James Rectory (Class III)**
Request: **Recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to proceed with the development of the proposed Wawa convenience store and gas station with the architectural design presented**

Eli Kahn provided an update on the project advising that while Wawa previously terminated its lease for the site during the height of the COVID pandemic, Wawa is now interested again and negotiating a new lease. Mr. Kahn said the Applicant’s ability to build the southern leg of the Couplet Road is contingent on having a convenience store on the site.

While Wawa’s typical store is stone and stucco, Mr. Kahn said they have agreed to use stone and brick with an A-frame canopy over the gas pumps. In addition, the Applicant purchased additional land to the west to provide a larger green buffer for St. Mary’s Chapel and will construct a few extra parking spaces for the Chapel. All existing buildings on the site will be demolished and 68 townhomes will be constructed to the rear of the convenience store.

Ms. Eckman commended the Applicant for purchasing additional land to provide a larger buffer for St. Mary’s Chapel and soften the view from Ship Inn as well.

Mr. Kahn said Wawa’s prototype is a mixture of stone and stucco, but they have agreed to stone and brick for this particular store to blend in better with the surrounding neighborhood. The A-frame canopy over the gas pumps will have a stone base.

Mr. Yocum said the design is sensitive to the area, and while the stone is a contemporary stone, it is appropriate. He suggested eliminating the banner signage and lowering the lighting overall. Pictures of a Wawa store in Claymont, Delaware was shown with a brick wall. Mr. Yocum suggested a wall at the corner of Route 30 and the Couplet Road, and relocation of the pylon sign further to the west so it’s not directly in front of the Ship Inn.

Mr. Kahn said he will ask Wawa about removing the banner signs, reducing lighting, and constructing a brick wall, but he did not think they would be agreeable to the wall because of visibility and maintenance issues. Sidewalk will be constructed along Route 30 to the Chester Valley Trail connection.

Motion: To recommend that the Board of Supervisors approve the land development plan for the Wawa convenience store and gas station with the architectural design as presented at the Historical Commission meeting of September 13, 2021. In the interest of respecting the historic character of the area and of mitigating impact upon nearby historic resources, we recommend the following:

- **Removal of the illuminated Wawa banner signage on the canopy entirely to preserve the historic character of the area**
- **Lower intensity exterior lighting to the Canopy and Store overall**
- **Reduce the elevation of the pylon sign to a reasonable height to minimize overall impact to historic resources**
- **Move the pylon sign to the west as far as possible from St. Mary's Chapel to mitigate impact**
- **Construct a 30-36 inch high brick wall along the Route 30 Wawa frontage from the Route 30 access (right-in-right-out) west to the Ship Rd. Couplet.**

Vote: Passed 5-0 (Bauer/McCormick)

IV. OLD BUSINESS

1. Historic Resource Survey Update

Ms. Strawley provided an update on the Historic Resource Survey project. The contract was originally set to expire at the end of October, but a six-month extension has been granted to the end of April 2022, due to the delay of field work caused by the COVID pandemic. Ms. Strawley expects to finish all properties by the end of September and provide a summary of new resources added and old ones removed at the December meeting. The update for the West Whiteland booklet is anticipated for the January meeting and a presentation of final results to the Board of Supervisors before the end of April 2022.

2. Historic Preservation Awards Discussion

Mr. Smiley said the Township has a license agreement with Mr. Wolfson to use Ashbridge Manor on November 8, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. for the Historic Preservation Awards ceremony. All recipients have indicated they will be in attendance. Mr. Smiley said the brochure has been completed and the presentation is almost completed. He will send a copy to the members for their review.

Mr. Smiley will check with Mr. Wolfson on logistic details such as whether tables and chairs will be available and if the serving of alcohol is allowed. Details of food orders, etc. will be discussed at the October meeting.

V. Approval of Minutes for June 14, 2021

Ms. Eckman made a correction to the minutes.

**Motion: To approve the minutes of August 9, 2021, as amended.
(Eckman/Bauer)**

Vote: Passed, 5-0

VI. Historical Commission Concerns:

Ms. Bauer advised that a person from Bucks County has indicated he will take the Witch's Cap in mid-October.

VII. Township Update

Mr. Smiley said the Ship Run residential development is looking for ideas for names of three roads in its development. After discussion, the Commission decided on Coffman, Brazier, and Beale to honor the names of previous property owners.

Mr. Smiley advised that PREIT (owner of the Exton Mall) has submitted an application for a 380-unit apartment complex to be constructed in the area of the old Sears automotive site. He expected this may be ready for review at the October meeting. Also, PREIT will hold a special public meeting on September 29 at the Township building to present its master plan for the Mall. This will be both an in-person and virtual event. Details include demolition of the Mall (with the exception of Boscov's, Round One, and the eastern-most parking garage) to be replaced with various mixed-use buildings.

VII. ADJOURNMENT:

**Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 9:07 p.m.
 (Bauer/McCormick)**

Vote: Passed, 5-0

Recording Secretary,



Justin Smiley, AICP
Township Planner