

WEST WHITELAND TOWNSHIP

PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES

Minutes of the first October meeting

October 4, 2022

Members Present

Mark Gordon, Chair
Dan Cote
MaryFrances McGarrity
Ray McKeeman

Township Personnel Present

John Weller, Planning Director
Caroline O'Connor, Asst. Township Planner
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 September 20, 2022. (McKeeman/Cote)

ACTION: Passed, 3-0-1 (with Ms. McGarrity abstaining)

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment on items not on the agenda, but John Weller announced that Gravers Road Advertising requested to be removed from tonight's agenda, noting that on September 29 the Zoning Hearing Board denied their request for relief to allow the project as shown. Resident Virginia Kerslake asked if Staff had any further information on the Applicant. Mr. Weller said he had no information beyond what is listed on the conditional use application.

IV. PLANS

1. Chic Studios

Address: 321 N. Pottstown Pk.

First Review: Subdivision/Land Development

Request: Consolidation of 2 lots into 1 lot, demolition of existing structure, and construction of a 3,774 sq. ft. commercial building.

Denny Howell of D.L. Howell & Associates and Applicant Doug Strickland were in attendance.

Mr. Weller provided an overview of the project. The subject tract consists of two contiguous lots at the southeast corner of the intersection of N. Pottstown Pk. and Coeway La. - a private road - in the Town Center zoning district. The Applicant wishes to demolish the existing building, consolidate the two lots, and construct a 3,774 sq. ft. commercial building that will provide studio space for hair and make-up stylists and massage professionals. The proposed activities are all "personal services" as defined in §325-8 of the Zoning Ordinance and are therefore permitted here by right pursuant to §325-13.(2)(c) of the Zoning. The project does not require conditional use review.

Outstanding concerns from the Township's consultants' reviews include stormwater management, compliance with the Town Center architectural design standards, sidewalks, and parking provisions.

Mr. Howell said the Applicant has a revised geotechnical report that addresses SSM's stormwater comments. Regarding parking, Mr. Howell said many options were explored, but they ultimately chose a design similar to the World of Beer restaurant in Main Street at Exton, which provides angled parking off of a private drive. The plan provides the 34 parking spaces required by the Zoning, and Mr. Strickland noted that, while this was sufficient, the spaces along Coeway La. will be critical during their busiest periods. Mr. Strickland described the business operation: the building will provide equipped salon spaces for up to 16 individuals on a rental basis.

Mr. McKeeman expressed concern about the placement of the trash dumpster and how it would be serviced. Mr. Howell responded that there was enough space for the collecting trucks to maneuver but agreed that the dumpster could be relocated to a more accessible spot. The Applicant agreed to work with Staff on relocating the dumpster.

Ms. McGarrity noted that the area is very narrow. Mr. Howell acknowledged that it was not ideal but the project will improve the existing condition by eliminating the existing entrance from Pottstown Pk. Mr. Weller added that Coeway La. is a private, dead-end street and that the Township prefers that it remain this way. No formal maintenance agreement could be found for Coeway, but the owners of the abutting lots have an informal arrangement to address maintenance; the road was re-paved three or four years ago at the owners' expense.

The Applicant agreed to provide sidewalk along the Pottstown Pk. frontage. Mr. Otteni's review dated September 29, 2022 recommended that the sidewalks be at least 5 feet wide and set back at least 4 feet from Pottstown Pk. This may require placing the sidewalk outside the Pottstown Pk. right-of-way, which the Applicant is willing to do provided it does not result in a violation of the impervious cover limit. Mr. Weller said he did not favor sidewalks along Coeway La. as it is a private street with little pedestrian traffic.

The Applicant is still working on the architecture of the proposed building but acknowledged that it will need to comply with Town Center design standards. The Applicant also stated that the plan will comply with the Township landscaping requirements.

The Commission took no action on the plan. The Applicant will revise the plan in response to tonight's discussion and return for further review by the Commission.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mr. Weller reminded Commission members to respond to the recent survey regarding their preference for a Thanksgiving turkey, ham, or pie as a token of appreciation from the Board of Supervisors.

The October 18, 2022, agenda will have a second review of the Bank of America plan and possibly the Gravers Road billboard project originally scheduled for this evening. Mr. Weller explained that billboard as proposed exceeds the limits on sign area and height. After being denied relief from the Zoning Hearing Board, the Applicant may choose to appeal the decision or revise the design to comply with the Ordinance. Ms. Kerslake asked about the "scenic byway designation." Mr. Weller said that PennDOT designated the "middle portion of the Exton bypass" as scenic but did not define "middle portion." The Applicant has appealed the matter to PennDOT but has not yet received a decision. Mr. Weller said the Township Zoning Ordinance allows billboards, largely because there are no residents nearby. Ms. Kerslake questioned if the new residences at the end of Clover Mill Rd. will be impacted. Mr. Weller said he didn't know, but he will notify East Caln Township if the project moves forward.

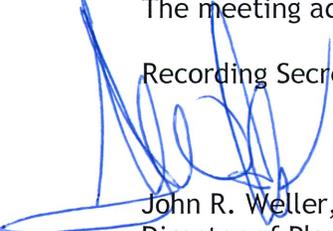
Ms. O'Connor asked members if they are interested in a membership to the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Planning Association (APAPA). Membership would entitle them to receive the electronic newsletter and attend various webinars, which can be a good resource for members. All agreed to renew the membership.

Mr. Weller announced that Ted Otteni has left his position as the Township's Director of Engineering. Mr. Gordon wished Mr. Otteni the best.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:00 p.m.

Recording Secretary,



John R. Weller, AICP
Director of Planning